

- B31 -

Because JACL believed that the credibility of such as Dr. Galen Fisher, a distinguished theologian, Secretary of the Committee for Fair Play, and adviser to the Institute of Pacific Relations, and Miss Annie Clo Watson, executive director of the International Institute of San Francisco, was greater than its own, we requested them to present our suggestions in this regard to General DeWitt. He rejected it almost out of hand, claiming that time was of the essence in this "military necessity", even though it took until the end of May 1942, or about three months after Executive Order 9066 was promulgated, for the last evacuee to be lodged in some WCCA Assembly Center.

Interestingly enough, some 200 national leaders of America, representing almost every facet of our society, wrote President Roosevelt urging him to use loyalty hearing boards as a means of screening the Nikkei instead of arbitrarily mass evacuating them from their homes and associations. The President failed to respond to this request.

Secretary McCloy, though, thought enough about the proposition that he came up with an idea to license potentially dangerous German and Italian "enemy aliens". The licensing benefits would not be extended to the Japanese, however. General DeWitt quickly killed the concept because it was administratively impossible to implement.

So, when we were told by the Western Defense Command that "military necessity" dictated our removal from the Military Zone, how could we--a tiny ethnic minority of less than 120,000, with no political connection, wealth, or "grass roots" support from the people at large--refuse to believe the Department of War?

More than two years later, when more of the facts were public knowledge concerning the true state of affairs on the West Coast, the country's Court of Last Resort, the nine Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, also believed these same arguments, facts, and appeals. And they were not under the same urgency pressures as we were.

Generals and Colonels in full uniform, members of the Congress who constituted the Toland Committee (Congressmen John Toland of California, John Sparkman of Alabama, Laurence Arnold of Illinois, Carl Curtis of Nebraska, and George Bender of Ohio), Presidential Assistant Tom Clark, Assistant Secretary of War John McCloy, West Coast directors of the Farm Security Administration, of the Federal Reserve Bank, of the Federal Security Administration, WRA Director Milton Eisenhower, and others recited the grim facts of "military necessity" and urged us to "cooperate" with the Federal Government in this program, with the implicit understanding that such "willing collaboration" would result in reciprocal goodwill and understanding on the part of the agencies involved, in order that the movement might be as humane and as convenient as possible.

We were warned, though, as Colonel Karl Bendetsen, Director of the Wartime Civilian Control Administration, explained in much milder terms to

- B32 -

the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco in May 1942, that the Army had an alternative, or contingency, plan in case the Japanese American population failed to respond "properly" to Army orders.

At various meetings of the JACL leadership, we had discussed what our position, as American citizens concerned with the short-term and long-range welfare of those of Japanese ancestry in this country, had to be.

Personally, all of us were convinced within our hearts that it was the 50-year-old racism against the Japanese, now fired by greedy interests clothed in the colors of patriotism, that was really responsible for much of the drive against us. At the same time, we appreciated angry public reaction if we forced the Army into bloody actions, with troops with bayoneted guns and grenades and possibly even tanks moving into the so-called Japan towns, to move us out of our homes and possessions by force.

We agreed, as difficult and onerous as it was, because we could not come up with any viable option, to agree to the evacuation or removal movements, for that was the only issue at the time, if it were for reasons of "military necessity".

None of us thought about possible permanent, or semi-permanent imprisonment, because such exigencies were not mentioned even casually by the Government, the Army, or any of our group of non-Nikkei friends who informally made up our special, emergency advisory group.

That is why, on behalf of JACL, I made the following statement to the Tolman Committee at its first San Francisco hearing on February 21, 1942:

...We have been invited by you to make clear our stand regarding the proposal for all Japanese on the West Coast. When the President's recent Executive Order was issued, we welcomed it as definitely centralizing and coordinating defense efforts relative to this evacuation program. Later interpretations of the Order, however, seem to indicate that it is aimed primarily at the Japanese, American citizens as well as alien nationals. As your committee continues its investigations in this and subsequent hearings, we hope and trust that you will recommend to the proper authorities that no undue discrimination be shown to American citizens of Japanese descent.

Our frank and reasoned opinion on the matter of evacuation revolves around certain considerations of which we feel both your committee and the general public should be apprised. With any policy of evacuation definitely arising from reasons of "military necessity" and national security, we are in complete agreement. (emphasis supplied) As American citizens, we cannot and should not take any other stand. But also, as American citizens believing in the integrity of our citizenship, we feel that any evacuation enforced on ground violating that integrity should be opposed.

- B33 -

If, in the judgment of the military and Federal authorities, evacuation of Japanese residents from the West Coast is a primary step toward assuring the safety of this nation, we will have no hesitation in complying with the necessities implicit in that judgment. But, if on the other hand, such evacuation is primarily a measure whose surface urgency cloaks the desires of political or other pressure groups who want us to leave merely from motives of self-interest, we feel that we have every right to protest and to demand equitable judgment on our merits as American citizens. (emphasis supplied)

In any case, we feel that the whole problem of evacuation, once its necessity is militarily established, should be met strictly according to that need.

...I now make an earnest plea that you seriously consider and recognize our American citizenship status which we have been taught to cherish as our most priceless heritage.

At this hearing, we Americans of Japanese descent have been accused of being disloyal to the United States. As an American citizen, I resent those accusations and deny their validity.

We American-born Japanese are fighting militarist Japan today with our total energies. Four thousand of us are with the armed forces of the United States, the remainder on the home front in the battle of production. We ask a chance to prove to the rest of the American people what we ourselves already know: That we are loyal to the country of our birth and that we will fight to the death to defend it against any and all aggressors.

We think, feel, act like Americans. We, too, remember Pearl Harbor and know that our right to live as free men in a free Nation is in peril as long as the brutal forces of enslavement walk the earth. We know that the Axis aggressors must be crushed and we are anxious to participate fully in that struggle...

In this emergency, as in the past, we are not asking for special privileges or concessions. We ask only for the opportunity and the right of sharing the common lot of all Americans, whether it be in peace or in war...

Even as the courts later, including the highest tribunal in the land, were misled and deliberately misguided to accept the concept of "military necessity", so were we too in the spring of 1942.

Were the facts we now know known then, our response might very well be very different indeed.

But, because we had faith in our Government, when we were told that "military necessity" required our "constructive cooperation and collaboration", reluctantly and regretfully we complied with the harsh demands of military dicta.

- B34 -

Even General DeWitt was forced to acknowledge the importance of the "cooperation" extended by the evacuees, saying in his Letter of Transmittal of his Final Report to the Secretary of War: "To the Japanese themselves great credit is due for the manner in which they, under Army supervision and direction, responded to and complied with the orders of exclusion."

To this day, many throughout the world, marvel at the disciplined conduct of the evacuees, almost without exception paying tribute to it as "the most remarkable demonstration of nonviolent patriotic cooperation with an unpopular and unconstitutional movement and one which demands the plaudits of the American people".

This was before Watergate and all it means. It was before Abscam, Vietnam, and the exposures of the excesses and abuses of the FBI, CIA, etc. It was in a time of old-fashioned patriotism and heartfelt inspiration from the Flag.

So, though times have changed and allegiances too, rather than denying redress to us, should not our "collaborative cooperation" be recognized and redeemed in order that in another age, when our country and our ideals face survival, other individuals and minority groups will again voluntarily sacrifice and endure that this land, with all its mistakes and weaknesses, will remain man's last best hope.

As for detention, incarceration, imprisonment--call it what you will --that was never contemplated or made known when JACL agreed to the initial evacuation.

Had we done otherwise than "cooperate constructively", I fear that our status as citizens would be far less secure than it is. And, in spite of the criticisms and outcries as to what we might have done as an organization, no one has come up with an idea and/or concept that is more pragmatic, realistic, and beneficial to the whole population than the course of action that we ultimately agreed to.

And, if any progress is made, or implementation of H. R. 4110 completed, there can be no doubt that it was JACL's fundamental decision and the remarkable exploits of the Nisei in uniform in World War II that will be jointly responsible.

The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians makes the official case that: "The promulgation of Executive Order 9066 was not justified by 'military necessity', and the decisions that followed from it--detention, ending detention, and ending exclusion--were not driven by analysis of military considerations."

CWRIC concludes its section on Japanese Americans in these words:

- B35 -

In memoirs and other statements after the war, many of those involved in the exclusion, removal and detention passed judgment on these events. While believing in the context of the time that evacuation was a legitimate exercise of the war powers, Henry L. Stimson recognized that "to loyal citizens this forced evacuation was a personal injustice." In his autobiography, Francis Biddle reiterated his beliefs at the time: "the program was ill-advised, unnecessary, and unnecessarily cruel." Justice William C. Douglas, who joined the majority in the Korematsu opinion that held the evacuation constitutionally permissible, found that the evacuation case "was ever on my conscience". Milton Eisenhower described the evacuation to relocation camps as "an inhuman mistake". Chief Justice Earl Warren, who had urged evacuation as Attorney General of California, confessed "I have since deeply regretted the removal order and my own testimony advocating it, because it was not in keeping with our American concept of freedom and the rights of citizens." Justice Tom C. Clark, who had been liaison between the Justice Department and the Western Defense Command, concluded, "Looking back on it today (the evacuation) was, of course, a mistake."

These are impressive and eloquent witness to the great and gross judgmental error that these distinguished leaders made in a time of crises. But these are merely words that cannot begin to assuage and vindicate that which we endured and suffered as a consequence of military demagoguery and prejudice.

To help assure that such racism cannot again be repeated against any individual and/or minority, ethnic or otherwise, this legislation must be approved by a successor Congress to that which enacted the act that legitimized the Executive Order 42 years ago and signed into law by a successor President who not only proclaimed the damaging Executive Order in the first instance, but requested the necessary enabling statute.

This explains in small part our strong demand for passage of H. R. 4110.

8. Why Did Permanent Detention Camps Become Necessary?

Because eviction and imprisonment are used so often, one in conjunction with the other, many have the impression that General DeWitt's public proclamations intended that the evacuees remove themselves from their homes and associations on the West Coast and proceed to more or less permanent camps in the wilderness areas.

The fact is that both the War Department and General DeWitt never contemplated the need or the necessity for the semi-permanent camps in their early thinking. They envisioned that the evacuees, possibly like refugees from war zones, would wander away on their own and relocate and resettle themselves as well as they could.

- B36 -

In any event, on February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order No. 9066. Under terms of this extraordinary executive fiat, unprecedented in American history, 11 days afterwards, on March 2, Commanding General John DeWitt of the Western Defense Command designated the western half of Washington, Oregon, and California, and the southern portion of Arizona as a "military area" and announced that all persons of Japanese ancestry would eventually be moved from that area "in the interest of 'military necessity'".

In his Final Report on the evacuation, which was published late in 1943, General DeWitt took occasion to define what he meant by "military necessity" in this context. "Essentially," he wrote, "'military necessity' required only that the Japanese population be removed from the coastal area and dispersed in the interior, where the danger of action in concert during any attempted enemy raids along the coast, or in advance thereof as preparation for a full scale attack, would be eliminated."

Secretary of War Stimson wrote General DeWitt on February 20, the day after Executive Order 9066 had been issued, indicating that "removal of individuals from areas in which they are domiciled should be accomplished gradually so as to avoid, so far as is consistent with national safety and the performance of your mission, unnecessary hardship and dislocation of business and industry."

And, perhaps most important in the context of this addendum, the Secretary called upon the General to take "fullest advantage...of the voluntary exodus of individuals and of the facilities afforded by other government and private agencies in assisting evacuees to resettle."

This comment, we now understand, was in anticipation that the President would create an independent agency, the War Relocation Authority, to "take over" the administration of the evacuee program after the military had completed the initial phase, movement from the West Coast. On March 12, the WRA was so established.

Paranetically, it may be stated that because the evacuees had "constructively cooperated" in their own evacuation, civilian authority would now "take over". Had there been protests, violence, or other damaging or dangerous actions against the Army, it is likely that the military would have retained complete control, with all that implies. This is another positive result of JACL leadership. At least, so some in the WRA have informed us.

On March 2, General DeWitt issued Public Proclamation No. 1, designating the Pacific Coast exclusion area. In an official statement to the press, DeWitt admitted that "Immediate compulsory mass evacuation of all Japanese is impractical. Eventually, orders will be issued requiring all Japanese, including those who are American-born, to vacate all of Military Area No. 1. Those

- B37 -

Japanese...who move into the interior out of this area now will gain considerable advantage and in all probability will not again be disturbed."

WRA in its final report, entitled "WRA: A Story of Human Conservation", comments on these DeWitt statements:

For reasons, which have never been made clear to WRA, General DeWitt did not see fit to prepare the interior States for the voluntary migration which he had thus encouraged or to explain adequately that the people of Japanese descent were regarded as a hazard only in the coastal zone. Fortunately for the welfare and stability of the western United States, only a comparatively small number of Issei, Nisei, and Kibei --about 9,000 altogether--responded to the General's urging; and approximately half of these...merely moved into the eastern or noncoastal half of California from which they were later evacuated directly into WRA centers. Those who attempted to cross over into the interior States (on their own) ran into all kinds of trouble. Some were turned back by armed posses at the Nevada border; others were clapped into jail and held overnight by panicky local peace officers; nearly all had trouble buying gasoline; many were greeted by "No Japs Wanted" signs on the main streets of the interior communities; and a few were threatened, or felt that they were threatened, with possibilities of mob violence...

From the JACL viewpoint, this was another presumed promise that DeWitt failed to keep, i.e., to provide adequate military escort protection for all evacuees as they voluntarily left for eastern population centers and farming areas in search of new homes, new work, and new opportunities. It also puts to doubt the arguments advanced by the General subsequently that "protective custody" was a primary factor in his decision to evacuate the West Coast Japanese.

At the same time, we can wonder what "military necessity" existed when, on June 2, 1942, he "froze" those evacuees who had taken his advice and had voluntarily moved from the coast to that inland area from which he pledged they "probably would not have to be evacuated again" only two months earlier.

These evacuees had taken the General for his word; then they had to be victimized a second time and evicted from their newly purchased homes and furnishings, from new enterprises they may have started, etc. These people were dubbed "double evacuees", two-time losers.

This second resort to "military necessity", although he gave no public pronouncement as to his reason, smacks of a kind of totalitarian military racism at its worst, which the United States condemns in other nations.

- B38 -

By March 27, the critical "voluntary migration" program was going so badly that the Western Defense Command issued the so-called "freeze order", effective two midnights later, which prohibited all of Japanese origin in Military Area 1 from leaving that zone until ordered to do so by military officials. In the meantime, the President signed Public Law 503, making it a federal offense to violate any Army order issued under authority of Executive Order 9066, with authorized penalties being fine or imprisonment, or both. Its purpose, Director Eisenhower explained, was to put the program on a "planned and orderly" basis.

Since "voluntary migration"--voluntary in the same sense as Army "volunteers" are arm-twisted and intimidated into accepting certain chores or duties --was a quick and dismal failure, with Colonel Bendetsen in charge, the WCCA took over fair grounds, race tracks, livestock pavilions, and other such facilities and crudely but speedily converted them into temporary Reception Areas termed Assembly Centers.

These 15 Assembly Centers, so-called, were never intended for human habitation, especially for women, children, infants, sick, handicapped, and the elderly. Indeed, we have heard that most of them were condemned for the use of Army men recruits by public health officers.

In the meantime, the Army began to build the ten semi-permanent prison camps for the evacuees--two in California, two in Arizona, two in Arkansas, and one each in Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, and Colorado.

These were more like the training camp facilities constructed for male Army recruits and were not very well suited to family units, for the elderly, for the sick and the handicapped. There was practically no privacy and communal eating and showering were not conducive to the maintenance of the strong family ties that had been developed in the Japanese communities.

Discipline broke down and the established wage scales of \$12, \$16, and \$19 a month often allowed children to "earn" more than did their parents. And, WRA personnel, often less skilled and experienced than those whom they supervised, such as doctors, dentists, nurses, and even teachers, were paid the going wages and salaries.

The public hearings of the CWRIC revealed horror and terror stories that surprised and shocked me, as witness after witness who had remained silent over the past several decades finally opened up and told of their many experiences, with some of the alleged actions rivalling the atrocities and barbarities attributed to German and Japanese troops and their camps. None, however, approached the inhuman, genocide ovens and pits of the Holocaust.

Some idea of the witnesses' testimonies to the CWRIC may be had in reading John Tateishi's revealing book, "And Justice For All: An Oral History of the Japanese American Detention Camps", which is just being released by Random House. Tateishi was sent to the Manzanar Camp with his family when he

- B39 -

was only three years old. An Army veteran and professional teacher, he has taped oral histories of some of the more "interesting" witnesses.

Since I never spent more than a few days in any one WRA camp, I had to rely on others to report on camp conditions. Had I heard of such cruel and degrading body inspections, or knew of the lack of medicines in hospitals, not to mention qualified doctors, physicians, surgeons, etc., I would have made them known to Dillon Myer, the Director of WRA for most of its duration, a man I respected for his humanitarianism, compassion, and personal concern for the evacuees in his care. I am confident that he too was unaware of many, if not most, of the more tragic and humiliating stories that were related to the Commission. I am confident too that most of the WRA staff and personnel were also conscientious and sensitive to their special obligations as American citizens administering to fellow Americans who were less fortunate than they and were the innocent victims of war and racism.

But the crucial fact remains that the WRA had to operate what amounted to prison compounds, to American-style concentration camps, under the extra burdens and shortage of supplies and almost every other need that marked the war at home and abroad.

As bad as the WRA camps may have been--and I do not dispute the testimonies presented to the CWRIC--imagine how much worse they could have been had the military retained control of this wartime operation, with officers such as DeWitt and Bendetsen in charge, with perhaps trigger-happy veterans of the death march at Bataan, for example, as MPs and perimeter guards.

Several times in 1942 and early 1943, I participated in the lobbying to keep civilian control over the evacuee prisons, since many members of the Congress at that time thought that the WRA "was soft on the Japanese" and coddled them at the expense of a general public at war. I remember how magnificent Dillon Myer was, as were his top staffers, in answering the accusations of these politicians and racists, in defending the loyalty and the conduct of the evacuee population, and in advocating better understanding and treatment of Japanese American after the end of hostilities. I recall particularly WRA's "victories" over the military appropriations subcommittees of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees which tried to drastically reduce operating expenses, over the Military Affairs Committees of the Congress that tried to transfer the WRA administrative responsibilities back to the Army, and over the House Un-American Activities Committee which charged waste and coddling of the evacuees and alleged "Communist-like" administration of the camps.

That they were able to successfully retain administration of these WRA camps and to administer them as they did, is a tribute to the American tradition of civilian dominance over the military, even though in this instance both the evacuees and the politicians and bigots severely criticized the WRA.

- B40 -

From time to time, one hears that it was their understanding that the WCCA and WRA centers were supposed to be "havens of safety" for the evacuees, from which they could leave or reenter at will. The Government would provide food, shelter, clothing, and even some employment, such as weaving camouflage nets, which would aid the war effort in these refugees.

If they wanted to go out and help harvest crops, they would be assured decent housing and the prevailing wage. If they wanted to further their education, the WRA would help find appropriate colleges and universities and help provide scholarship money, etc. In other words, these would be like "vacation camps", which a grateful government would provide for having evacuated them.

These were but dreams that were "sold" to some of us, but which quickly disappeared when the "voluntary evacuation" program broke down so quickly and the WCCA and the WRA had to build the camps that they did. Even the United States, with all its riches, could not afford such luxury in wartime.

9. Didn't DeWitt's Racism Contribute To Evacuation?

Some years ago I participated in a CBS Special having to do with the 1942 Evacuation and Its Continuing Implications for the American People. I remember that Walter Cronkite, the commentator, asked me, "Who in (my) judgment was most responsible for causing the evacuation?"

I recall saying that in my judgment, in this order, those most responsible were (1) Earl Warren, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States who, in testimony to the Tolan Committee and in discussions with General DeWitt persuaded him of the dangers to West Coast security of the Japanese in California, with the citizen Japanese American being potentially more dangerous than the alien Japanese, (2) respected newspapermen like Walter Lippman who, in nationally syndicated dailies, stressed that the real danger in the American Japanese problem on the Pacific Coast was in the fact that no espionage or sabotage had taken place, suggesting that, as in Norway and the Nazi "Fifth Column", those of Japanese origin were well organized and waiting to help the invaders when the Japanese attacked the coastal areas, and (3) the ambitious young Colonel Karl Bendetsen who, first as liaison between Assistant Secretary of War John McCloy and Western Defense Command Commanding General John DeWitt and, later, as the General's designated chief of Japanese American Affairs, helped develop the "military necessity" myth to insure evacuation.

As the years passed by, and more and more information, much of it classified secret and/or otherwise generally unknown, came to my attention, the more I suspected that it was General DeWitt's personal prejudices. Every time I reread parts of his "Final Report" on the 1942 evacuation, the more I began to realize how influential the General's views were, especially with the Department of War.

Report 1 of the CWRIC last year verified my impressions, documenting what I considered to be a "solid case" against the "military necessity" claim

- B41 -

put forward by DeWitt. That Report makes it clear that the General based his charge on two basic theses.

One was that "ethnicity ultimately determines loyalty", and the other that there were at least two acts that proved some clandestine connection between the American Japanese and the enemy Japanese.

The first were incidents of shore to submarine signalling and the second was the arms and contraband found by the FBI in raids on Japanese homes and businesses.

The first evaluation, as the Commission so correctly points out, is not a military proposition but one for sociologists and historians. As its members noted, in World War I, German Americans demonstrated that race did not determine loyalty. In World War II, therefore, no negative assumptions were made concerning the German and Italian Americans.

As for the second, the Federal Communications Commission, whose job it was to monitor all communications from American shores to enemy ships and submarines in the Pacific Ocean, reported that it had no indications of any such signalling. (Later, I was told that these on-shore supposed signals were simply farmers carrying lamps visiting outhouses in the dark of night.)

And, the FBI commented that the confiscated arms and ammunition were items normally in possession of law-abiding citizens, notably sportsmen. (Again, I was informed that some of the so-called contraband were ceremonial swords, bows and arrows, and martial arts equipment, such as for kendo, judo, and jujitsu.)

Like so many others who had their own conclusions as to the actual conditions which permitted the evacuation decision to be made, I was most anxious to learn of the Commission's.

This is the way the official Commission decided, with my own comments added in parentheses:

First, General DeWitt apparently believed what he told Secretary Stimson: ethnicity determined loyalty. Moreover, he believed that the ethnic Japanese were so alien to the thought processes of white Americans that it was impossible to distinguish the loyal from the disloyal. On this basis, he believed them to be potential enemies among whom loyalty could not be determined. (Frankly, in my personal opinion, many of the Issei had some sentimental attachment and sympathy for the Japanese, for--after all--they could not become naturalized Americans and could only remain nationals of their homeland, Japan. Nevertheless, few--if any--would

- B42 -

commit any overt act against the United States. On the other hand, few--if any--Nisei, including Kibei-Nisei would even consider committing any acts of espionage and sabotage. Navy Intelligence and the FBI confirmed this belief on my part.)

Second, the FBI and Navy Intelligence who had relevant intelligence responsibility were ignored when they stated that nothing more than careful watching of suspicious individuals or individual reviews of loyalty were called for by existing circumstances. In addition, the opinions of the Army General Staff that no sustained attack on the West Coast was possible was ignored. (In other words, that evacuation was not militarily necessary was the unanimous judgment of the professional intelligence services. But the War Department and the President passed over those evaluations and accepted that of only one Command, and that was of DeWitt's Western Defense Command. Why? In spite of any breakdown that may have occurred at Pearl Harbor on the part of the professionals, one would still believe that the designated intelligence agencies would be preferred to a personal judgment. Also, what went wrong with the breaking of the Japanese Code that was supposed to answer all of the needed intelligence questions?)

Third, General DeWitt relied heavily on civilian politicians rather than informed military judgments in reaching his conclusions as to what actions were necessary, and civilian politicians repeated the prejudiced, unfounded themes of anti-Japanese factions and interest groups on the West Coast. (Chief among these were the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West, the American Legion, the American Federation of Labor, and the National Grange. As a respected moderate Attorney General, Earl Warren was most influential and his prepared statement to the Tolan Committee comprises a major part of DeWitt's Final Report, thereby affirming the influence that Warren had on the General's thinking and planning.)

Fourth, no effective measures were taken by President Roosevelt to calm the West Coast public and refute the rumors of sabotage and fifth column activity at Pearl Harbor. (The Tolan Committee claimed to have pictures of Nisei aiding the Japanese enemy attack on December 7, 1941. The statements made by Navy Secretary Frank Knox on his return from Pearl Harbor and the rumors spread by returning Army and Navy wives were most harmful, as was the Report of the Roberts Commission. JACL had hopes to persuade many public officials in Washington and elsewhere to speak out in favor of constitutional treatment and decency toward those of Japanese background in the United States, including those at state and city levels who just a few weeks earlier were praising our citizenry as among the most exemplary in America. As a last resort, JACL

- B43 -

paid commentators in Los Angeles and San Francisco to speak out in defense of fair play and justice for American Japanese.)

Fifth, General DeWitt was temperamentally disposed to exaggerate the measure necessary to maintain security and place security ahead of any concern for the liberty of citizens. (This seems to be a common weakness of the military not only in the United States but elsewhere, including up to this very day. This is why wars are too important to be trusted to the military.)

Sixth, Secretary Stimson and John J. McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War, both of whose views on race differed from those of General DeWitt, failed to insist on a clear military justification for the measures General DeWitt wished to undertake. (Had they done so, the evacuation could hardly be justified even on the claim of "military necessity". Apparently they felt that the American Japanese problem was not sufficiently important enough for them to get as involved as they should have in the total war picture.)

Seventh, Attorney General Francis Biddle, while contending that exclusion was unnecessary, did not argue to the President that failure to make out a case of "military necessity" on the facts would render the exclusion constitutionally impermissible or that the Constitution prohibited exclusion on the basis of ethnicity, given the facts on the West Coast. (Years later, at a cocktail party, when Dr. Scotty Miyakawa of Boston University and I spoke to him about the "sadness" of evacuation, the "liberal" Attorney General unsmilingly replied softly, "Maybe I should have just held out a little longer." He seemed genuinely regretful of his stance at that time.)

Eighth, those representing the interests of civil rights and civil liberties in Congress, the press and other public forums, were silent or indeed supported exclusion. Thus, there was no effective opposition to the measures vociferously sought by numerous West Coast interest groups, politicians, and journalists. (As so many have said, "Liberty dies when men remain silent". JACL tried to arouse such public outcries, but was unsuccessful. Some now say that "liberals and the liberal press did not want to embarrass their idol, President Roosevelt", especially with congressional elections coming up that fall of 1942 and the presidential election two years later.)

Finally, President Roosevelt, without raising the question to the level of Cabinet discussion or requiring any careful or thorough review of the situation, and despite the Attorney General's arguments and other information before him, agreed with Stimson that the exclusion should be carried out.

- B44 -

(Again, like Stimson and McCloy, Roosevelt may not have considered this western problem to be sufficiently important for a full Cabinet discussion. His rather indifferent interest is reflected in his request to DeWitt, "Be as easy and reasonable as you can.")

What continues to bother me more than almost any other action or word is DeWitt's remarkable conclusion that, after speaking of the "112,000 potential enemies of Japanese extraction that are at large today" along the vital West Coast, "There are indications that these are organized and ready for concerted action at a favorable opportunity. The very fact that no sabotage has taken place to date is disturbing and confirming indication that such action will be taken."

How can a responsible commander in the field plan his strategy on such a strange and unreasonable military assumption?

And, I suppose the fact that we Japanese Americans who were presumably dangerous to the national security voluntarily left the declared military zone of war operations so "willingly and cooperatively" is another indication to DeWitt of how dangerous we were and why there had to be "military necessity" to compel our departure.

The experience of Hawaii has always intrigued me, not only because so many of those in the 100th and the 442nd, and especially in the MIS, were from the then Territory but because their treatment of those of Japanese ancestry was so different from that on the continental mainland, and particularly the Pacific Coast.

In wartime, I know that commanders in the field are given much discretion. In Hawaii, some 3,000 miles closer to the Japanese main islands than we on the West Coast, was attacked by the naval and air forces of Imperial Japan. Hawaii was an actual war zone theater of operations. Martial law was declared, it is true enough, but there was no "military necessity" requiring that those of Japanese origin be evacuated and excluded from the Islands. General Delos Emmons commanded Hawaii's defenses, as it prepared to launch the counter offensives that were to cause Japan to surrender unconditionally.

Here on the West Coast, which was never under attack by Japanese troops, and where "business as usual" was the order of the day except for an increase in defense industries and symbolic guards at railway crossings, bridges, and other military installations, it was not thought necessary even for the "especially cautious" DeWitt to impose martial law. Yet, he felt the need to declare a state of "military necessity" dangerous enough to force the removal and exclusion of some 120,000 individuals of Japanese descent from their lifetime homes and associations. All the while, all of the civil courts from the lowest state and federal district ones to the appellate and higher courts were in daily sessions. Yet, there was not enough time, in the estimation of

- B45 -

the Commanding General, to provide hearing or screening boards to Americans, as a gesture to the due process guaranteed in the Constitution.

DeWitt, in California with its then fearmongering anti-Japanism, declared that the "military necessity" demanding the evacuation of all alien and nonalien Japanese included such "racist facts" as that Japanese Americans attended language schools, as well as Buddhist and Shinto churches and shrines; sent their children to Japan for educational purposes; belonged to many Japanese clubs and organizations whose names when translated literally into English sounded ominous, such as the "Butoku Kai" which translated to "military virtue society", but in reality was a club for training kendo (fencing), jujitsu (wrestling), and sumo (another form of wrestling); involved too many "dual citizens", etc.

this "dual citizenship" matter should be more carefully examined, since it suggests divided loyalties. To me, the War of 1812 with Britain, resolved this issue as far as the United States is concerned. Regardless of British law (jus sanguinis), the United States would consider all native-born Americans as having only United States citizenship and nationality. Even today, most European and other countries on earth follow the jus sanguinis code that citizenship is a matter of "blood", and not of "place of birth", jus soli (right of soil).

Japan is one of the few nations to revise its citizenship statutes in this regard: Any child born to Japanese parents (father) after December 1925 in the United States does not automatically gain Japanese nationality; the parents must register the child with the Japanese Consulate to assert that status. Children born before that December 1925 deadline may renounce Japanese citizenship that was conferred automatically on their birth by notifying their nearest Consulate of their renunciation of Japanese nationality.

At the time of World War II, more than a third of the Nisei held only American citizenship; they were not dual nationals, as were all Italian Americans and German Americans at that time. Most of the remaining Nisei born prior to December 1925 refused to formally acknowledge that Japan ever could have claimed citizenship over them and so failed to take the designated procedures to renounce a status **they never** had or claimed. Coincidentally, technically I am still a "dual citizen" since I have never renounced a citizenship I never acknowledged or served, though I have demonstrated my official election by seeking and using in all my travels a United States passport. My impression is that most Nisei are in my category as far as their alleged Japanese citizenship is concerned.

In every case, in Hawaii these DeWitt identified activities were in large numbers and in more "oriental" form, for over there in the Islands those of Japanese background composed some 38% of the total population, while the total scattered numbers for all three of the Pacific Coast States aggregated

- B46 -

less than one-half of one percent of the entire coastal population. Yet the situation in Hawaii did not add up to a "military necessity", while it did in California. Morton Grodzins, an anthropologist and political scientist, made the same analysis of DeWitt's "cultural charges" and came to the conclusion that, using the same analogies, Italian and German Americans in the (San Francisco) Bay Region "should have been more of a menace than the paltry few Japanese Americans".

On March 1943, Colonel Kendall J. Fielder, Chief of Intelligence for Hawaii, addressed a University of Hawaii audience, and contrasted what the Army had done in the Territory and what the same Army had done on the Pacific Coast.

...I would now like to point proudly to another way in which our national administration and our government here--civil and military--have treated the race problem in Hawaii. In brief, we have removed and shall continue to remove --for the national and local security--that minority of aliens and citizens here who are considered dangerous or potentially dangerous in time of war. We did not impugn, because of race, the good name of the rest of them, alien or citizen...

How differently a Himmler or a Heinrich would have handled this delicate situation. Does anyone believe for a moment that any of the Axis crowd would give one of enemy race a fair chance to prove himself? Yet that's what was done in Hawaii--and so far it has proved militarily sound...it would take much too long to tell you of the many concrete ways in which many of these people who were "on the spot" have proved their love for America and have solved an otherwise ticklish military problem here. For the information of all who might be misled, there is none among us who has been led into this policy by mawkish sentimentality or gullibility...Her (Japan's) army and navy must definitely be crushed. The question of Americans of Japanese blood is far different. They are Americans--and until they prove (or show themselves dangerously capable of proving) traitorous, they should be treated as Americans.

This must not be construed as sentimentality, or hands-off for business reasons or anything else of a negative nature, but rather as a sane, reasonable, democratic, and safe judgment. It is simply that the Japanese element of the population, if accepted and united in purpose and action, is an asset to the community."

For obvious reasons, the Colonel had to mention German's Nazi leaders as examples of men who would have used a different approach. I have reason to believe that he actually must have been thinking, "How differently a DeWitt has handled this same delicate situation."