

Speech: Remarks of Dillon S. Myer, Director, War Relocation Authority, March of Time, June 24, 1943. Papers of Dillon S. Myer.

REMARKS OF DILLON S. MYER
DIRECTOR, WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY
MARCH OF TIME, JUNE 24, 1943.



Address

The War Relocation Authority has two major jobs: One is to provide temporary homes in ten relocation centers for more than 100,000 evacuees of Japanese ancestry from the Pacific Coast; the other is to assist eligible evacuees to relocate in normal communities where they can contribute to the war effort like other citizens and law-abiding aliens.

These evacuees are not prisoners of war. They are not internees. Two-thirds are American citizens by right of birth. Seventy-two per cent of this citizen group have never seen Japan. They are products of American schools and know no other country. No immigrant of Japanese ancestry has been allowed to enter this country since 1924, and so all aliens of this group have lived here at least nineteen years -- many of them more than forty years.

Not everyone of Japanese ancestry has been evacuated. More than twenty thousand on the United States mainland and a hundred and sixty thousand in Hawaii have continued to live in their homes as normal civilians. Over nine thousand Americans of Japanese descent are members of our armed forces.

To be sure, some evacuees are not fully Americanized. Some American citizens have had all or most of their education in Japan. Those who are pro-Japanese or who for any reason are considered dangerous to the internal security of the United States are not allowed to leave the relocation centers. These are in the minority. It's possible from available records to distinguish between the loyal and the disloyal. More than fourteen thousand evacuees have left the relocation centers. Contrary to charges and insinuations which have been made, I can tell you tonight that not one case of sabotage or other disloyal activity has been reported, either by those who have made the charges or by anyone else.

Remember that a basic principle of the Axis philosophy which we are fighting is oppression of racial minorities. The United States is fighting for principles of democracy which include rights of citizenship regardless of racial ancestry. The future of these 100,000 people of Japanese ancestry, two-thirds of them American citizens, is of concern not to the War Relocation Authority alone, but to the nation as a whole.

Let's not deal with the problem as Hitler would handle it under his Nazi regime, or as Tojo would deal with it in Japan. Let's do it in the American way.