

**[FOOTPRINTS_ Passage of JACL Res.3_context_KO]
August 18, 2019**

**JACL National Council to Apologize to Tule Lake Resisters
(877 words)**

On August 3, 2019, the National Council of the JACL passed Resolution 3 at their national convention by a vote of 60 to 6. Sponsored by the Pacific Northwest District Council and the Northern California/Western Nevada District Council, the passage authorizes an apology from the JACL to Tule Lake Resisters for “JACL’s attitudes and treatment towards individuals unfairly labeled ‘disloyal’ “

To better appreciate the significance of this vote, it’s important to understand the decades-long divisions and animosities within the Japanese American community that still exist today. These divisions, based on one’s perceived loyalty or disloyalty to the United States during World War II, and also based on the actions of the JACL toward those considered disloyal, have been an unfortunate legacy of the war.

While blame and finger-pointing is a frequent and regrettable reaction to conflict, the primary blame needs to be placed squarely on the U.S. government, specifically, by President Franklin Roosevelt’s signing of Executive Order 9066 in February, 1942, and the government’s subsequent actions taken that caused harm to Japanese Americans and our community.

EO9066 authorized the military to remove all Japanese, citizens and non-citizens alike, from the west coast and incarcerate them away from military zones- under the guise of “military necessity” with no due process of law. This unconstitutional, unwarranted action by the government reflected the nativist racism and wartime hysteria that led to the strategic plan to create America’s concentration camps. The government’s actions were fraught with problems that led to more conflicts within our community.

After incarcerating almost 120,000 people, those imprisoned were required to answer the government’s Loyalty Questionnaire that included the infamous Questions 27 and 28. Question 27 asked if you were willing to serve in the military. Question 28 asked if you would swear unqualified

allegiance to the United States and foreswear allegiance to the Japanese Emperor. If you answered “yes-yes”, the government and the JACL labeled you as loyal. If you answered “no-no” (or “no” to either question or refused to answer) you were designated “disloyal” and - with the support of the JACL- sent to Tule Lake Segregation Center.

Given the harsh treatment of JA’s, their loss of property and freedom, some answered “no-no” as a protest to the government’s actions, and some answered “no-no” so as not to be sent out of camp to resettle amongst the hostile, wartime American public. Some answered with the sole purpose of keeping their family together. Issei, the first generation, and Kibei-Nisei, American citizens raised in Japan, felt very conflicted. Having grown up in Japan and with family members still living there, their anger towards the government led many to answer “no-no” and ask for repatriation or expatriation to Japan.

But the government’s use of only two choices of response—yes or no—created a strict binary construct with no regard for individual rights or circumstances. You were either loyal or disloyal, no explanations accepted. Once again there were no hearings, no due process of law. The “no” responses by most were a form of resistance, and resisters were considered disloyal to the government and to the JACL.

Tule Lake became known as the “bad camp” with trouble makers- all deemed disloyal without consideration for each person’s circumstances. This segregation center reached 18,422 incarcerated - with 7,222 renunciants (those who requested repatriation or expatriation) sent from all of the other camps to Tule Lake; 4,785 who answered “no-no” to the loyalty questionnaire (or refused to answer at all); and 6,000 JA’s who were original Tule Lake occupants and refused to be transferred to yet another camp. Most in this group were considered loyal.

Tule Lake was the most turbulent of the camps. All who were imprisoned there suffered from harsh conditions including several months of martial law, armored cars and tanks flanking the perimeter, a stockade to imprison those deemed threats to security, and intense hostility between the administration and incarcerated.

For those whose resistance took the form of renunciation of citizenship, Wayne M. Collins was the heroic attorney who worked for over 14 years to challenge the government and have citizenship returned to almost 5,000 Nisei.

As the camps closed, the JACL in 1946 formally condemned all those who resisted the government's actions. The stigma of having been incarcerated at Tule Lake as a resister, renunciant or a "no-no" was further concretized by the JACL .

The passage of the JACL's Resolution 3 signals an important shift within the national JACL and bodes well for the entire Japanese American community. The language of the resolution is here, in part:

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the National Council of the Japanese American Citizens League that in the spirit of reconciliation, forgiveness, and community unity, a sincere apology is offered to those imprisoned in the Tule Lake Segregation Center for non-violent acts of resistance and dissent, who suffered shame and stigma during and after the war due to the JACL's attitudes and treatment towards individuals unfairly labeled "disloyal"; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the National Council commits itself to encouraging all chapters to gain a greater understanding of the issues surrounding the imprisonment, mistreatment, and resistance of Japanese Americans sent to Tule Lake Segregation Center; "

The entire resolution as amended and passed can be found on JACL's website,

<convention2019.jacl.org>