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There has always been an underdog in any story and the fight for the freedom of their rights of the unjustly, incarcerated Japanese Americans are no different. However, from the excerpts, it is easy to infer that while a cliff-hanger was given to the rest of the story, the moral push for the freedom of the Japanese Americans is still visible throughout their diction. During World War II, Japanese Americans were forcefully incarcerated, imprisoned without due process, and forced to join the military. Notable people such as Mika Masaoka, executive secretary with the Japanese American Citizens League and liaison to the War Relocation Authority, and the Fair Play committee formed by Nisei, second-generation Japanese Americans born in the United States from immigrant parents were key in voicing the Japanese protests to the American government.

The Japanese American Citizens league or JACL, was more prominently known political organization “drawing the support of Japanese Americans along the West Coast and growing to thirty-eight chapters in six years” (Lee 142). Its main purpose was to improve conditions for Japanese Americans workers, born in the US and strengthen relationships with local politicians and non-Japanese businessmen. In fact, their promotion was to use “their bicultural abilities to overcome misunderstanding and foster friendship in both domestic race relations and international affairs” (Lee 142). This would come very handy when the time came to adopt a rigid pro-America stance when World War II erupted and the Japanese empire wanted to

continue to expand. Their focus was not to help the community prosper anymore but to raise money for the Red Cross and encourage “Nisei to enlist in the army” (Lee 155). The JACL pledged its obedience to the US government, clearly a sign for the federal government to see it as an ally rather than an enemy. For this reason, when the House Select Committee Investigating Defense Migration called Mike Masaoka to explain “our stand regarding the proposed evacuation of all Japanese from the West coast” (Mike Masaoka Excerpt), a turning point was occurring. However, a lot had to be repaired. He explained that the community welcomed the President’s executive order, which the president signed on February 19, 1942, “conferring upon the Secretary of War the authority to designate military zones “from which any or all persons may be excluded” and for which the right of any person to “enter, remain in, or leave” was left to the discretion of military authorities” (Lee 159). Essentially, it allowed the secretary of war to set as a military zone any place he wanted and to remove those persons that lived there. Although the language mostly neutral, “the order’s intent was to clear the way for Japanese mass removal” (Lee 159). Masaoka asks the committee that while it does their continued investigation, “we hope and trust that you will recommend to the proper authorities that no undue discrimination be shown to American citizens of Japanese descent” (Masaoka Excerpt). This was the least that could be done for the population after how they were paralyzed with fear from “arrests and detentions of community leaders, freezing of Issei assets, imposition of curfews, and other restrictions” (Lee 160). Today’s world would protest for weeks if something like this would occur. Unfortunately, court cases around the same era as Masaoka’s speech later turned futile an sometimes important evidence was concealed (Lee 160). The diction contained in Masaoka’s speech reflected calmness and tranquility, composure even during the times that were being lived, and in no way could his words be used against him or said that they were a flying arrow. In

fact, his composure also reflected how Japanese Americans were coping with the situation, as they did “their best to carry on and create a sense of normalcy amid these circumstances” (Lee 161). Very little food and medical services were inadequate (Lee 161) and in dozens in ways they were remembered the undesired they were to the federal government. Masaoka’s final words showed the determination the JACL and the Japanese American population in general expressed if their current treatment continued for too much longer as he finished saying that “we feel that we have every right to protest and to demand equitable judgment on our merits as American citizens…” (Masaoka excerpt).

The second excerpt from the Fair Play Committee or FPC also sheds light to the subject on unfair conviction of violating federal law and imprisonment. However, the tone in the bulletin sent from the FPC to their members was starker and stricter. This is more easily seen as the FPC originated in a camp in the Heart Mountain Relocation Center in Wyoming. They continuously spent their day suffering under unjust conditions. In fact, the bulletin was sent out in mid-March 1944, more than 2 years after FDR has signed EO 9066 in February 1942. The FPC notes that they are “not afraid to go war -- we are not afraid to risk our lives for our country” (FPC excerpt) and founded their decision based on the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. However, the recognize themselves that the writing in these important documents have not been upheld. The first removal “actually took place five days prior to EO 9066, when the 160 approximately five hundred families that made up the Japanese fishing community in Terminal Island were told to leave” (Lee 160). Even before executive order, prejudices and unconstitutional acts were in full swing. What was worse in 1943 is that camp officials distributed a loyalty questionnaire to “weed out the loyal from the disloyal in order to start the process of inducting Nisei into the army (discussed below), and to help the WRA determine whom it should grant early leave

permits" (Lee 162). The FPC mentions that they were ordered to join the army thru discriminatory procedures, which Lee describes when Issei, first-generation Japanese Americans, typically, the Japanese immigrants, responded no to a question of allegiance to the United States, and in turn in "October 1943 they were taken to Tule Lake in northern California, where the most "troublesome" internees were segregated" (Lee 162). At the time the bulletin was posted, the members of the FPC were given a draft "Japanese Americans after voluntary enlistment yielded disappointing numbers" (Lee 162). They were convicted shortly thereafter and sentenced to prison for draft evasion by a federal grand jury. Although the FPC also called for a congressional act or something that could change their fate, it didn't come. They reaffirmed their loyalty to America but not with the current state. What was most notable which was surely used in court hearings is how they portrayed President Abraham Lincoln as guilty for voicing what was wrong (FPC excerpt). They also note that there were some Nisei men and girls that were not "directly affected by the present Selective Service program" (FPC excerpt) and these were mostly students who had also been taken. In the west coast, there were a push from professors at universities trying to get the students back into education. Both Masaoka and the FPC were trying to get the discrimination to stop but in different ways; Masaoka peacefully and asking federal committees to investigate the issue further and the FPC taking a stand and denying military enlistment in the form of protest which yielded their imprisonment.