# Community Government in War Relocation Centers

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

# Community Government in War Relocation Centers

United States Department of the Interior

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War Relocation Authority

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TABLE OF CONTENTS


INTRODUCTION..... 1

CHAPTER—

I. THE EARLY HISTORY OF POLICY FOR COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT..... 6
A. Legal Limitations and the First Policy Statement..... 6
B. Washington and San Francisco Proposals..... 8
C. The Policy Evolved at San Francisco..... 11

II. PROBLEMS OF COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT..... 14
A. The Social Setting..... 14
B. Disorganization and the Beginning of Organization..... 18
C. Block Organization..... 19
D. The Early History of Community Government.... 21
E. Temporary Community Councils..... 22
F. The Organization Commission..... 24

III. UNCERTAINTIES AND CONFUSIONS..... 26
A. Evacuee Reaction to Community Government Policy..... 26
B. The First Crises..... 29
1. The Poston Strike..... 30
2. The Manzanar Riot..... 31
C. Administration Attitudes toward Community Government Policy..... 32

IV. THE TROUBLED PERIOD..... 37
A. Registration..... 37
B. Misgivings in Washington..... 41
C. The Proponents..... 44
D. Attitudes of Project Staffs..... 47
E. Extending Representation to the Issei..... 49

V. THE WAY AHEAD..... 52
A. Segregation..... 52
B. The Policy of Relocation..... 55
C. The Abortive Evacuee Conference..... 61
D. Selective Service and the Councils..... 64

VI. COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION... 68
A. The "Administration"..... 68
B. The "Council"..... 77
C. The "Official Functions"..... 81
D. The Techniques of Action..... 83
E. Community Participation through Community Government..... 86

VII. COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT AND THE FUTURE OF THE JAPANESE IN AMERICA..... 88
A. The "All-Center Conference"..... 88
B. Post-Conference Activity..... 97

APPENDIX--
ORGANIZATION OF THE SECTION OF COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT..... 101

# INTRODUCTION*

The attack on Pearl Harbor by Japanese forces on December 7, 1941 drew the United States of America into a war which had previously been confined to continents of the eastern hemisphere, and in so doing converted a limited war into a global war. Following the course of that global war, it is easy to forget or overlook the effect of this world catastrophe upon specific areas of our own country or upon segments of our own population.

The treatment of the 127,000 persons of Japanese ancestry in the United States has posed particularly difficult problems for us. War did not create these problems; it merely threw them into bold relief. War did not change for most of us our beliefs, attitudes and prejudices toward these and other peoples; it merely crystallized or intensified them. We have, in the course of this war, been brought face to face with the paradox of the ideals of American democracy in conflict with their practice.

At the same time that war brings to a crisis our relations with our cultural and ethnic minorities it creates equally great stresses within the minority group itself. Individuals become intensely sensitive to the attitudes and treatment to which they are subjected. They are impelled to examine more closely their sentiments and loyalties and to resolve their indecisions and conflicts. With the condition of war between the United States and Japan, these conflicts within the Japanese American minority became doubly deep because they involved ties of homeland, culture and race.

The Japanese Americans, since Pearl Harbor, have been subject to external and internal pressures and demands for affirmations of their loyalty or disloyalty, more intense and inclusive than have ever been exerted on any other minority. The kind, magnitude, and effect of these pressures form a chapter in the history of minority peoples that is unparalleled.

The authorities decided that military necessity demanded the removal of all persons of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast. On February 19, 1942, Executive Order No. 9066 was issued by President Roosevelt which authorized the evacuation and exclusion of persons from military areas designated by the Secretary of War and the military commanders. On March 2, General DeWitt of the Western Defense Command established Military Areas Nos. 1 and 2. Between February 19 and March 27, the Japanese were free to leave the exclusion area and 10,231 left Military Area No. 1. Of this number 4,825 moved into Area No. 2 which at that time had not been scheduled for evacuation. Those who thus voluntarily evacuated met with some unpleasantness, and it soon became apparent that an uncontrolled movement would create confusion, hardship, and possibly trouble. The decision was reached that the evacuation must be regulated. It was

*Prepared by Solon T. Kimball, Head, Section of Community Government.

decided that centers should be constructed to receive the evacuees, and that the administration of the centers should be the responsibility of a civilian agency.

On March 18, the President issued Executive Order No. 9102 which created the War Relocation Authority. This was to be the civilian agency which received the responsibility for care and administration of the evacuees received from the Army. "By terms of the Order, the Authority is responsible for: (1) aiding the Army in carrying out the evacuation of military areas, (2) developing and supervising a planned, orderly program of relocation for evacuees, (3) providing evacuees with work opportunities so that they may contribute to their own maintenance and to the national production program, and (4) protecting evacuees from harm in the areas where they are relocated. The first specific task of the Authority is to resettle some 100,000 alien and American-born Japanese evacuated from military areas of the far western states."[1]

Location and construction of these centers began immediately with two each placed in the States of Arkansas, California, and Arizona, and one each in the States of Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, and Colorado. On March 27 an order was issued which prohibited all persons of Japanese ancestry from leaving the designated military areas voluntarily. This was followed by a series of 108 separate orders issued by General DeWitt which ordered the removal of all Japanese from Military Areas No. 1 and No. 2. The exclusion area included all of California, the western half of Washington and Oregon, and southern Arizona. Most of the persons of Japanese ancestry were originally transferred to assembly centers, and from there were gradually funneled to relocation centers as the latter were constructed. By June 5, the removal had been accomplished for Area No. 1, and by August 7, for Area No. 2.

Movement to the relocation centers began in May 1942, and by November 1 of that year, the last of the 110,000 persons of Japanese ancestry had been placed in the centers. The evacuation included everyone except the handful who were in corrective or other institutions.

Evacuation was an orderly process. Many public and private civilian agencies cooperated with the Army and with the evacuees in an attempt to safeguard the interests of these wartime exiles. The evacuees themselves gave full cooperation which prompted the statement from Secretary of War Stimson that "great credit is due our Japanese population for the manner in which they responded to and complied with the orders for exclusion." The speed with which evacuation was decided upon and carried out, made it necessary for the evacuees to make hurried arrangements for the sale or lease of their property, and some liquidated all their possessions, selling

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[1]Eisenhower policy statement of May 29.

houses, businesses, farms, and furniture. Where such haste was required it is obvious that not all these transactions were advantageous, and the memory of property losses stings deeply.

The relocation centers to which the Japanese were sent were similar in construction and plan. The buildings were frame covered with black tar paper, arranged in blocks designed to house from 250 to 300 persons. Each block contained fourteen single story barracks, divided into four or six apartments, a mess hall, a recreation hall, men's and women's latrines, and a laundry room. The number of blocks in a camp depended on its size. Manzanar in California, with a peak population of over 10,000 had 36 blocks. Additional construction included a frame hospital and auxiliary buildings, offices, living quarters for the administrative staff, and utility buildings for warehouses, garages, construction, industry and agriculture. The school buildings which were built later usually included a combination gymnasium-auditorium and classrooms for the high school. In several projects the elementary schools were housed in blocks vacated by residents.

The administrative responsibility for each center was given to a non-Japanese civilian staff. These included a project director and his three assistants in operations, administrative management, and community management, a reports officer and an attorney. The community management division included education, health, recreation, internal security, family welfare, community analysis, and community government. The operations division was responsible for construction, maintenance, roads, utilities, agriculture, transport and industry. Administrative management provided the services of procurement, accounting and budgeting, employment, mess operations and personnel.

The early policy of the War Relocation Authority was based on the assumption that the relocation centers would be war duration homes for most of the evacuees, or until military necessity no longer excluded them from the West Coast. It was the hope that through agriculture and industry these communities would become nearly self-supporting, and that there would be a measurable degree of local government.

Based on this assumption, the early policy was directed toward the creation of self-contained economic and social units. The economic development would include the production of agricultural products not only for internal consumption, but also for distribution through regular market channels, and the establishment of factories that would engage entirely in war production. The necessary social services would be provided largely through recruitment from the evacuees. The hospitals, schools, police, fire, maintenance, and other activities would be largely evacuee staffed and directed.

Recognition of the need for community government was demonstrated as early as April 2 in a memorandum which stated: "It is proposed to develop immediately a system of internal government which will place upon the

evacuees responsibility for the civic management of the colony and to organize health, education, recreation and other community service using Japanese personnel as far as possible."[2]

These general objectives and policies were expressed in several documents. The May 29 policy statement read: "The objective of the program is to provide, for the duration of the war and as nearly as wartime exigencies permit, an equitable substitute for the life, work, and homes given up, and to facilitate participation in the productive life of America both during and after the war." Further illumination is provided by an additional statement which read: "In the last analysis, each relocation community will be approximately what the evacuees choose to make it. The standards of living and the quality of community life will depend on their initiative, resourcefulness, and skill. Initially, the Government will provide the minimum essentials of living--shelter, medical care, and mess and sanitary facilities--together with work opportunities for self-support." Administrative responsibility would extend to work projects, economical use of labor, employment outside the project on a voluntary basis, a health and education program and maintenance of law and order.

This policy also envisaged the establishment of a permanent form of community government preceded by an advisory temporary organization. The functions of self-government, in this early thinking, included the assumption by the evacuee government of responsibility for internal security and --as soon as the project should have reached a reasonably self-supporting basis of operation--the care of dependent children and adults.

In its subsequent history the War Relocation Authority diverged from the basic philosophical scheme which was tentatively developed in the earlier thinking and in the first policy statements. The objective of self-supporting, self-governing communities operating on a sound economic base was realized in only a limited sense and within a different policy and philosophy. A number of factors militated against the successful execution of the first plans for center operation--and indeed compelled the divergence. The major factor was the early decision to institute an active relocation program which would return the evacuated people to life and work in normal communities. The possibility of operating self-supporting communities was eliminated by two factors: first, vested economic groups were violently opposed to the idea of center-production of food for outside markets and to the establishment of competing industries within the centers; second, labor-hungry employers from agricultural areas saw the relocation centers as labor pools to be tapped when needed, and, in view of the manpower shortage, it was necessary to utilize evacuee labor to conserve crops outside of the relocation projects rather than to utilize it for broad-scale operations within the projects. The limited industrial program finally decided upon included agricultural production for evacuee

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[2]Fryer and Adams

use only, and a short-lived camouflage net project at three centers.

This shift in the direction of the program had an adverse effect on the extension of responsibility in other areas of community life to the evacuees. The only activity in which nearly complete community responsibility was achieved was in the purchasing and distribution of consumer goods and services through cooperatively organized and managed business enterprises. Community government became in actuality an adjunct of administration. Recreation and cultural activities were partly financed and almost entirely supervised and regulated by a non-evacuee staff. The other community services became an adjunct of a managerial hierarchy, with policy and supervision arising from outside the relocation center community. It is true that many of the workers were drawn from the community, but the control rested in what came to be known as the "appointed staff." This managerial-administrative combination was established in practice and policy early in the history of actual center management and was never relaxed during the history of the Authority.

There was almost complete dependence upon the managerial control system for food, transportation, employment, housing, clothing, education, health, law enforcement, fire protection and maintenance. Policy decisions were made by the top administrators, implemented by procedures developed by a staff, and carried into effect by paid employees working as an administrative organization at the centers. These policy decisions were made on the basis of the larger objectives of the top administrative group and modified from time to time in response to Congressional or other governmental pressures or to evacuee pressures. Although many decisions were related to perceived needs, no provision was made on the level of policy determination for the participation and advice of the evacuees in formulating decisions. The structure which was created to provide for obtaining evacuee advice and assistance in the execution of policies operated principally at the project level and there only in a limited and circumscribed manner. Managerial administration thus provided the prevailing environment within which the economic, cultural and political activity of the evacuees had to grow. The result, of course, was a rather thorough and efficient institutionalization of the population.

It has not been the purpose here to examine the whole of the War Relocation Authority's history and growth, but it has been necessary to sketch the developmental beginnings in order to place the function and policy of community government within a meaningful framework.

## CHAPTER I

## THE EARLY HISTORY OF POLICY FOR COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT

Concepts of community government for relocation centers were broad and liberal in the period when they were related to a theory of self-supporting and self-administered communities and when the centers had not yet materialized. It has been pointed out that certain practical considerations stood in the way of carrying out the plans first devised for the operation of the centers. It was perhaps inevitable that the concept of evacuee-administered communities should give way to the fact of communities administered by civil-service personnel.

Dictating the rather narrow framework in which community government was actually set up were such factors as the need for establishing effective controls over the expenditure of Government funds, the importance of maintaining satisfactory relations with Congress, and the general confusion and disorganization of the evacuee population in the period when the centers were being occupied.

It has been said repeatedly that there was no pattern, no guidance, for the War Relocation Authority to follow. Certainly there was no precedent for establishing center government. There were two American communities operating under Federal jurisdiction—the TVA town of Norris and Boulder City in Nevada—but these communities offered no parallel to wartime relocation centers nor did they have comprehensive legal or political statements of policy to provide guidance to the WRA.

### A. Legal Limitations and the First Policy Statement

Legal considerations were dominating factors, not only to community government policy, but in the whole area of action possible to the Authority itself. The following paraphrase of a statement made by the Solicitor of the Authority in San Francisco on April 27, 1942, sets forth the legal basis upon which policy would be formulated.

#### "The Legal Framework of Project Self-Government

> "It is obviously impracticable to use existing state laws for the creation of local governmental units in the relocation centers, primarily because if cities were organized under state laws, the elected officers would have complete control over city government and would have powers inconsistent with the administration of the project by the Federal Government. It is nevertheless possible to set up a procedure under which a 'mayor,' a 'city council,' and 'courts' can be established within the relocation centers with much the same functions as they would have under the regular city

> form of government. In legal theory the project manager would merely delegate certain of his administrative functions to persons designated by election or otherwise by the Japanese. He would retain in that manner such degree of control or veto power as might be necessary for him to discharge his responsibility."

During May the Solicitor's office was busy on a document entitled "Regulations Concerning Organization of Self-Government within Assembly Centers and Relocation Centers." This was in essence a plan for the organization of a municipal council, the election of a mayor, and a statement of their functions together with plans for the procedures of governments, the establishment of a municipal court, the operation of the court and a list of punishable offenses. It provided for the appointment of an evacuee chief of police by the mayor and for the organization of a police department under the supervision of the chief of police. Although this document was prepared for the signature of the Director, after its review by a number of persons in and out of the Authority, it was pronounced over-elaborate, prejudging the problem and precluding evacuee self-determination as to the form their "government" should take. It was never issued.

The earliest official statement on community government was made in the Director's policy statement of May 29. This statement was elaborated in the memorandum of June 5, providing for the election of a temporary council to advise the project director. It also provided for the selection of a chairman and other officers and the appointment of an executive and a judicial committee. Voting was extended to everyone 18 years of age or older, but only citizens of the United States 21 years of age or over were eligible to hold office.

The decision limiting elective office to citizens provoked much discussion among both the officials of the Authority and the evacuees. Since the limitation clause was retained in the later policy statement of Autust 24, it is useful to examine the official thinking behind this limitation. The position taken by the Solicitor's office and several other staff members in Washington, was that since the objective of WRA was to create a community as nearly American in its outlook and organization as possible, policy should conform with American practice, and only citizens should vote and hold office. Those concerned with the problem of public relations and possible criticism of the program maintained that it would be unwise to establish communities in which there was a likelihood that the governing council would be controlled by aliens. They pointed out that control might pass to those who were not in sympathy with the objectives of the Authority or with the war effort.

It was further pointed out that the evacuation of citizens from the West Coast was of doubtful constitutionality and had certainly created grave doubts in the minds of many Nisei as to their rights under the

Constitution of the United States. Those taking this position argued that it was desirable to give some added recognition to the citizens beyond that extended to aliens to indicate to them that the Federal Government was cognizant of their status. It was thought that a policy which provided that only citizens were eligible for voting and holding office would accomplish this. This point of view was advanced by the representatives of the Japanese American Citizens League who were at that time in consultation with officials of the War Relocation Authority.

There were, however, some who maintained that there should be no distinction made between citizens and aliens in participation in self-government. The proponents of this view stated that it would be practically impossible and certainly undesirable to make any distinction in the residents of the community if we were to achieve an organized and integrated society with full participation of its adult members. It was also pointed out that the wisdom and experience of the older evacuees, almost all of whom were aliens, would be denied not only to the project manager but also to the community itself. The precedent cited was of local elections for school board members and other minor officials where it was the practice to permit persons who were aliens to participate as electors. From these opposing viewpoints came the compromise which provided that all adults would be eligible to vote, but that only citizens could hold office.

The period between June 5 and August 24, when a final statement of policy on community government was signed by the Director, provided an opportunity for further consideration of the role of community government and an examination of the functioning of the recently established temporary councils at three centers. It was a period in which interest in self-government was overshadowed by concern with policies of immediate concern in the fields of operation, maintenance, and supply.

### B. Washington and San Francisco Proposals

In July 1942, there was added to the Washington staff, Dr. Charles M. Kneier, a recognized consultant on municipal organization. His approach included the definition of legal limitations, the relation to other policy consideration, and the application of his extensive knowledge of the mechanics of the organization and functioning of municipal government to the problem at hand. The extent to which the Authority could or would confer power upon an evacuee self-government was basic as he expressed it in a memorandum of July 22.

> "The degree of power to be conferred upon the evacuees living in relocation centers is at the heart of the self-government problem and presents many difficulties. The advantages of self-government in the centers must, it is assumed, be balanced with the responsibility of the Authority in their efficient and effective administration. Some

limits must be placed upon the power of the centers to determine policies. In the actual administration of the centers, it would appear to be desirable and necessary to limit the degree of self-government. Illustrative of this field where self-government would not be feasible would be control over the non-evacuee administrative personnel, purchasing of materials, and type of streets and methods of construction."

Dr. Kneier offered two alternative proposals defining the scope of authority conferred upon a self-governing body. The first provided for the enactment of regulations and penalties, the settling of disputes, passing resolutions, and for assessments on residents, "but only for the purpose of raising revenue for the support of education, recreation, health, and such purposes as will directly promote the welfare of the residents of the centers." Veto authority for regulations was retained by the Director and all assessments required the approval of the project director. The second proposal included all of the powers enumerated in the first, but was stated in more general terms.

Consideration was recommended for a plan to provide for participation of the evacuees in selecting personnel who would be employed to administer the policies established by the governing body. Excepting that WRA would make the decision for certain positions filled by evacuees, participation by the Council was suggested in selection of candidates for the remainder of the positions. This recommendation was to be accomplished by the creation of a Civil Service Commission made up of representatives of both staff and evacuees. The commission would classify positions or recommend their classification to the council together with an examination to determine qualifications of applicants. The commission would also certify eligibility lists to fill vacant positions, with the proviso that final plwer remain with the Authority. Dr. Kneier also recognized the need for a court system, to apply penalties for violation of Council regulations and to provide machinery for the adjudication of civil cases not falling under the jurisdiction of state laws.

A final point, carefully indicated to be used as a basis for discussion and not as a recommendation, was to provide machinery by which the community council would work with the project director on the preparation of an operating budget. Under such provision, if adopted, the council would hold public hearings and submit written suggestions to the project director, with the understanding that council action was to be advisory only and that final decision rested with the Authority.

Another expression of thinking on community government policy was found in a "Supplemental Policy Statement on Project Government" prepared in the San Francisco office and transmitted to the Washington office on July 20. This statement defined the broad objectives and general principles which were absent from the June 5 policy. It was prepared in response to the need for immediate clarification of policy at the centers.

This need was expressed by project directors who were striving to bring some order into the confused conditions existing at the centers. Two paragraphs of this statement are indicative of the continuing movement for a broad definition of the functions and responsibilities of self-government, including the measurement of the success of project administration as a corollary of delegation of responsibility.

> "A community government shall have as its objectives the training of residents of the community in the democratic principles of civic participation and responsibility; it shall assume the responsibility for the regulation of community life; it shall assume much of the responsibility for the formulation of policy and administrative direction of services and supply.
>
> "During the initial stages of settlement and community organization, it is recognized that the inexperience of the colonists and the exigencies of the administrative situation prohibit any broad delegation of authority. However, the success of project administration should be considered a direct expression of the delegation by the project director and the assumption by the community of the responsibilities of self-government."

Action by the Washington office on this recommendation was deferred because of the decision to hold a general policy meeting in San Francisco in early August, at which time policy on community government would be considered. It was also decided that interested members of the Washington staff would visit the centers to gain first-hand knowledge to aid in policy determination.

Previous to the August policy conferences in San Francisco a tentative policy statement offers further illumination of early thinking. It recognized the complete authority of the project director for problems of project management and operation, which included authority to delegate responsibilities to an evacuee governing body. It set as its objective the delegation of power to a center government commensurate with that exercised by an American municipality of approximately the same size. The objective of community government would be to secure, under democratic methods, civic participation and responsibility in community life. It would have an advisory responsibility for the formulation of policy and administrative direction of services and supplies. A permanent group would be preceded by a temporary council and the preparation of a "constitution" describing the organization and function of community government.

"The constitution shall contain the procedures for the organization of a permanent council, the powers and duties of the council, the procedures for the establishment of associated administrative and planning groups; and the powers, duties, and relationships of these associated groups." The only limitations were that it should be democratic in form,

should not place restrictions on civil liberties with the exception of the prohibition of the publication or distribution of materials in the Japanese language and of the use of the Japanese language at the discretion of the project director.

These functions delegated to the council would include the enactment of ordinances together with punishments, assessment of consumer enterprises, the expending of monies, the regulation of property and buildings constructed from community funds, regulation of activities of religious groups, the appointment of a permanent staff for the council and administrative responsibility upon delegation by the project director for block administration, police department, fire department, maintenance and repair, streets and parks, courts, legal aid council, public welfare, libraries and housing. The council would also act in an advisory capacity in the preparation of the annual budget and in the development of policy and administration in the programs of education, health, employment, community enterprises, and in other ways as the project director might indicate. Other portions of this policy statement included plans for the establishment of commissions, boards, and committees and an over-all civic planning commission with details governing the establishing of a temporary community council.

### C. The Policy Evolved at San Francisco

Policy problems to be considered at the San Francisco conference included education, procurement, welfare, furloughs, health, employment, compensation, consumer enterprises, religion, segregation, food, fiscal, personnel, internal security, public relations, housing, and others in addition to community government. Staff members from Washington, San Francisco and the centers faced knotty questions affecting organization and procedures. Preliminary discussions revealed widely divergent attitudes toward basic policy. As issues were clarified and decisions made, the earlier objectives of self-contained and self-supporting communities became subordinated to the point of view that the relocation centers were to be primarily temporary havens until it was possible for their residents to establish themselves in new communities or to return to their West Coast homes. There were to be created no incentives or symbols that would deter the outward movement.

It was perhaps inevitable that any hopes that community government could be a significant and important segment of total policy become an impossibility in this newly defined direction of Authority policy. It is not, therefore, surprising to find that the final policy on community government was cast in a mould of limitations much greater than had been anticipated in policy or public statements made earlier. A Solicitor's opinion issued some two months later summarized official thinking in the statement: ". . . the basic legal concept underlying the contemplated government of relocation centers is that of administrative authority exercised by responsible officials of the War Relocation Authority aided and assisted by the evacuees themselves." Later, in the same document,

it was stated:

> "Community self-government among the evacuees is not being institued as an end in itself, even though it is rich in intrinsic values, but is rather a means to the larger end of effective administration of the whole program of the War Relocation Authority. The best way to achieve discipline and order in relocation centers—an admittedly unique and possibly difficult task—what is being sought, and the program offered by Administrative Instruction No. 34 constitutes no Utopian's dream of an ideal government, but rather a practical administrator's attempt to preserve order in a somewhat special type of community. The acts which the Director, by the Instruction, empowers the Community Council to do, are all acts which the Director, under the controlling Executive Order, is himself empowered to do."

The policy on community government was issued August 24 as Administrative Instruction No. 34. It provided that the essential points of the June 5 memorandum for the establishment of temporary community councils should continue in operation. It also provided for the establishment of a permanent community council. This permanent organization would become effective after the preparation of a plan of government by the evacuees which was then to be approved by a majority of the evacuees. It stipulated that the plan of government should include provisions for the election of a community council and the organization of a judicial commission. The council would have authority to prescribe regulations and penalties for offenses of a minor nature. It could pass resolutions, receive and administer funds and property, license business enterprises to an amount not to exceed $1,000 for any one year, and to exercise such other duties and responsibilities as might be delegated to it.

The judicial commission was empowered to hear cases and apply penalties for violation of the regulations of the community council. Felonies and civil cases except those subject to arbitration were to be handled by the State or Federal courts. The Project director was given the right to set aside any regulation of the council which he found to be in excess of its functions and to remand to the judicial commission for reconsideration any decision which he felt to be inappropriate. The project director was also given authority to establish such organization and to promulgate such regulations as he found necessary pending the organization of a formal community council under an approved plan of government. The last paragraph of this policy clearly stated that the functions delegated were in addition to and not in substitution for the functions and responsibilities of the project director.

Conspicuously absent was the delegation of administrative resonsibilities. Earlier tentative considerations to assign responsibility to community government for internal security, fire protection, maintenance,

and other services and operations were dropped as possible functions. It is a matter of history that the Authority never relinquished any of its managerial responsibilities in these phases of project life.

The controversial provision that council membership be limited to citizens remained unchanged although non-citizens were eligible for membership on appointed committees, commissions, boards, and for other administrative positions. The project directors of Poston and Tule Lake had expressed satisfaction with the working of the temporary citizen councils. Furthermore, they held no strong beliefs that the exclusion of aliens would seriously hamper the work of community government. At Manzanar, there had been a number of minor disturbances in which Nisei, Kibei and Issei had been involved. The decision by the WCCA to limit membership on assembly center councils to citizens was another influence. The WCCA liaison officer attending the policy meetings on community government favored limiting voting privileges as well as office holding to include only citizens.

The policy on community government had one unique distinction. It was the only major policy issued by the Authority which was permissive in character. If, for example, the residents of any particular center should decide either by the rejection of a submitted plan of government or in any other way that they were not desirous of establishing formal community government, there was no direct or implied coercion to force acceptance. Conversely, it was the only policy which required the assent of a majority of the residents before it became operative.

## CHAPTER II

## PROBLEMS OF COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT

### A. The Social Setting

The problem of community government was the problem of the divergent geographic, economic, social, political, educational, and age groups that have plagued all attempts of the people of Japanese ancestry in America to achieve a true community of interest. It was the problem of a racial cultural minority suddenly catapulted from its former adjustment by reason of a world situation. It was a problem of the need for creation of new values and social structure to meet the conditions of a new social and physical environment.

Another difficulty equally insurmountable to the creation of any sort of truly representative self-government was the explicit responsibility of the War Relocation Authority for the administrative direction and policy making function. As long as policy, and as long as administrative direction originated largely outside the community, without consultation with it, or without regard to its wishes, then self-government (no matter how enlightened or liberal) must remain a truly limited and misnamed activity. Actually, complete autonomy in center management was neither feasible nor contemplated.

The new environment into which the evacuees moved was one of uniformity in housing, food, employment and available services. Not so the people. Their only common meeting ground was that they were all of Japanese ancestry, they had all experienced evacuation, and they were all subject to the same rules and regulations in their present situation. The social and cultural differences within the population were of more significance than were the similarities. The most easily observable difference was that between the older alien generation of parents, most of whom continued to speak their native language with fluency and observed the customs of Japanese culture, and the younger generation of American citizens, almost all of whom used English as their native tongue, and most of whom were American in thought, manners, and action.

There were, however, many differences within each of these two groups, and these were so fundamental that they sometimes led to conflict, and often to misunderstanding. Among the Issei were rich and poor, farmer and city folk, shopkeepers, professional men, and laborers. Some had been highly educated in this country or in Japan, some had little schooling. There were some who spoke good English, many who spoke only Japanese. There were even a few who spoke a non-Japanese native dialect. There were those who openly condemned the military machine of Japan, those who lamented that these two countries should be at war, and those who were sympathetic to Japan.

The American born were divided into two major groups. Those who had been educated in this country, with the exception of a few who came from isolated rural areas, were predominantly American in outlook and behavior. These were the Nisei. The Kibei were those who although born in this country had received a considerable portion of their education in Japan, and had subsequently returned to this country to rejoin their families or to secure additional education, for employment, to evade military service in Japan, or for a combination of these reasons.

The Kibei were of especial interest because by and large they were predominantly Japanese in culture and outlook. Careful examination revealed, however, that this group also exhibited significant divergencies. There was no hard and fast correlation between political loyalty, cultural identification, or economic attainment. Politically, they ranged from the few who had assimilated the jingoism of Japanese militarism, to those who were equally vehement in their opposition. The great majority fell somewhere between.

The Kibei created a particularly difficult problem in the centers. Many of them had no parents in this country. Because they frequently spoke fluent Japanese and little English, and observed Japanese customs they had little in common with their age-mates, the Nisei. Conflict and mutual avoidance between these two groups were widespread before evacuation. The Kibei were neither wholly Japanese nor wholly American in culture. This cultural ambivalence was an advantage among some of the older and wiser Kibei who were able to bridge the gap between Issei and Nisei, and to resolve and reconcile some of the conflicts.

The Nisei were also divided, and their immaturity militated against their possessing the confidence of their elders or of others. Although there were 71,900 American-born evacuated, only 22,400 were over 21 years of age, and these constituted only one-third of the adult Japanese population. The Japanese American Citizens League claimed as members many of the Nisei, although there was a group of young intellectuals which was not sympathetic with its program.

In addition to the problems which stemmed directly from evacuation, there were also those problems for which the Japanese in America had themselves been unable to find answers. It would have been difficult to administer a relocation center even without the questions of constitutionality of evacuation, citizenship rights, public antagonism and many other complicated factors. Many of these questions could not be answered. Nevertheless, they constantly influenced the behavior of the evacuees and the administration.

A report was made in late 1942 on the situation existing at one of the centers portrayed some of the crucial problems of this early period.[1]

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[1]Memorandum to E. R. Fryer from S. T. Kimball

"An immediate problem is that of the conflict between alien Japanese and those who have American citizenship. Relocation (evacuation) has emphasized the conflicting values held by these two groups and the policy which gives control of community government to the citizens is a cause for dissatisfaction and non-participation on the part of some aliens.

"The uncertainties concerning the future expressed by frequent rumors ranging all the way from removal to other relocation centers to repatriation to Japan hinders the creation of a feeling of security and stability and frustrates the incentives for creating a productive and satisfactory community. Many of the more intelligent citizens react to this condition by a desire to leave relocation centers. There are some, especially among the Issei who are willing to wait quietly until the outcome of the war has been decided. If Japan wins they are certain that the future is bright; if Japan loses they will passively accept what fate holds in store for them.

"An additional uncertainty is found in the relationship between the project administrative staff and the evacuees. There has been misinterpretation on the part of some that self-government would eventually mean the complete control of administration by the evacuees. Others believe self-government to be meaningless.

"The failure or inability of formerly responsible persons to assume an active leadership further complicates administration. The attempts of the J. A. C. L. to claim leadership of the evacuees has been almost universally repudiated. This repudiation is based on the belief that the J. A. C. L. leaders were in large measure responsible for the decision to evacuate and that they sacrificed members of their national group for their own selfish interest. This distrust of the J. A. C. L. is held not only by the alien group but also by a large contingent of citizens although for a different reason. The citizens' group feels that it has received ineffective leadership with the failure of this body to take a strong position previous to the war against the Fascist countries.

"The alien leaders have failed to take an active part because of the policy of the F. B. I. in detaining the many Issei leaders. They feel that to assume a position of leadership within the project would result in scrutiny and probable arrest and removal by Federal agencies. In some instances they have failed to take a position of

leadership because of the reliance of administrative personnel on the younger and more aggressive evacuees. By and large the informal Issei leadership that has developed at Tule Lake has come from persons who are not respected by other members of the community either previous to their evacuation or since. Issei and Nisei who have expressed themselves are in agreement that the so-called agitators and those responsible for administrative difficulties have come from this group.

"An additional problem facing the administration is that of the difficulty of creating a normal community when many external aspects resemble a concentration camp. The presence of troops, guard towers, restrictions on free movement and the imposition of rules and regulations without consultation are all evidences of the fact that evacuees are not free persons.

"A further problem is the need for the occupation of time and interest of all evacuees. Primarily, there is the need for the development of an employment policy which will absorb large groups of persons and give purposeful and productive work relationships. This is necessary if satisfactory community life is to be achieved. If achieved, the result may conflict with the desire to relocate.

"The problem of communication is a serious one. It is complicated by the fact that many evacuees do not speak or understand English. It is hampered by the inability of the channels of communication which have been established to either fully inform the residents of policy and the reasons or for the evacuees to communicate to the administration their wishes and desires.

"Specifically, there is as yet no real understanding of the complicated process by which the administration is able to secure foodstuffs, clothing, building materials and so forth which are needed for the health and comfort of the residents. Lacking such understanding, it is also impossible to appreciate the difficulties which the administration faces in securing these things or to understand why it is impossible to secure many things which are essential. Whether we like it or not the procedures which we follow to secure food, clothing and other essentials are institutional procedures and verge toward paternalism. The inability of people to have any say in what they do or do not receive and thus in the final analysis to be helpless to control whether they do or do not get what they need must inevitably create insecurity."

## B. Disorganization and the Beginning of Organization

Broadly defined, community government was inclusive of more than the community council and its associated bodies. It also included block councils and block managers. The block managers as an organized group and with systematic communication with the administration and the residents was a significant administrative and political factor in community life. It was much later in center history that a more definite separation of managerial and representative functions was achieved.

The first organized evacuee group, the block managers, was administratively sponsored and supervised. The block manager system included an appointed evacuee for each residential block, a coordinator and his staff, all under the supervision of a non-evacuee civil-service appointee. It was the block manager's responsibility to distribute supplies and materials, to maintain records, to conduct censuses, and to perform a myriad of other tasks which had direct relation to the welfare and comfort of the residents of his block. He filled an administrative need for an immediate channel of communication with the residents and for the control of distribution of supplies to the residents of the block. An equally important function was his ability to report to the administration the needs, problems, and attitudes of the residents of his block and to interpret and make suggestions for meeting problems of a block or community nature. Thus it was that the block manager, as an individual and as a member of a group, was in a strategic position in administration-evacuee relations, and filled an immediate and important function in the total plan of project management.

Too much credit cannot be given to the conscientious efforts of the block manager to work for the welfare of the residents. Especially in the early period of confusion, his was a twenty-four hour job. If a resident became ill in the middle of the night, it was the block manager who was most frequently called to get help. He was often called in as arbitrator for disputes. Organized cooperative efforts to improve block or community conditions often came from his initiative.

If the managerial and liaison functions of the block managers were invaluable to the residents as an administrative device they were basic to administration. The advice and assistance of this group was frequently sought and in the early period constituted the only major contact between the administration and the residents. The fact that the block managers frequently found themselves considering problems which were political in nature was not disturbing to the administration unless those problems were controversial and of a kind the administration wished to avoid at the moment. On the other hand, the administration frequently introduced problems of a community or administrative nature at block manager meetings for the purpose of securing advice.

The block manager system was significant not only as an administrative device, but also in relation to the development of community government. It was of great importance in quickly developing block cohesion. It also contributed to the early development of block loyalties as opposed to community loyalties and to a response to problems based on block needs as distinct from community needs. As an example, the block managers at Poston were concerned, as they were at several other centers, with the inadequate health facilities which the earliest evacuees found. This concern was transmitted to the administration, but it was not until the temporary community council was organized that there was a concerted effort to investigate conditions and to make specific recommendations to the administration.

At most projects, by the time that efforts were directed toward establishing either a temporary or permanent community government, the block managers were well organized with clearly defined responsibilities and functions, and stood in high favor with both evacuees and administration. It is not surprising that when discussion on establishing a political body to be known as the community council was initiated, many people favored the status quo. It is also not surprising that the block managers, in some instances, expressed opposition to the formation of a group which conceivably threatened the prestige and status which the block managers enjoyed. Many of the administrative personnel expressed similar opinions and were quite willing to continue with an organization which was responsive to their needs and at the same time not unduly critical of existing conditions.

## C. Block Organization

A second development of considerable importance affecting the future of community government were block organizations frequently called block councils. These existed at all centers in one form or another. The basis of organization, the function, and the history has varied widely from block to block and from center to center. Gila River was the only project where the formation of the block council was encouraged by the administration as the first and most important step in community organization. There, the project director or his representative appeared at a mass meeting of each newly occupied block, and, in addition to discussing general policies and problems, outlined a plan for block organization. The plan as conceived at Gila River included a block council to be composed of one representative elected by the residents of each barrack, the block manager and the head chef. This group, to be known as the block council, was to elect its own officers and work for the welfare and happiness of the residents. This included, "improvement of the grounds of the block, recreation for the residents of the block, health, and sanitation for the block, the need of preventing fire hazards, the adjustment of problems that arise among the residents of the block."

The minutes of a meeting held in Canal Camp at Gila River in August 1942 indicate that 15 blocks had organized their block councils and that the unanimous response of the block managers to a question concerning the usefulness of block councils was that they were helpful. The block councils at Gila River continued to function in Canal community throughout the life of the project. Their relative importance lessened at all centers as problems of an individual or community-wide character entered the picture. Nevertheless, there always remained in most blocks a nuclear organization which met to discuss and decide upon a course of action whenever a crisis threatened the equilibrium or stability of the block. This organization was much utilized by the councils to determine or influence community opinion.

The block council was another of the significant and important groups which contributed to the stability of project life and brought individuals into meaningful relations with each other, thus helping to achieve a group approach to the solution of community problems. Block councils were never fully utilized by the project administrations. In fact, one center officially discouraged any type of organization within the blocks. This failure to understand and to utilize the block council as a significant group to which problems and policies might be presented was to some extent compensated for by the administrative plan of block managers and by a system of political representation based on the block group. Policies and procedures adequately communicated either to the block managers or to the community council would in a properly organized system be readily transmitted to all block residents. This terminal transmission was not a particular concern of the administration and was well or badly organized depending upon the leadership qualifications of either the block manager or block representative.

In community-wide crises, such as developed in connection with registration, segregation, selective service and labor difficulties, the block unit was frequently the source of original decision. During the registration crisis many of the decisions reached in block meetings represented agreement for a common course of action. There appeared the obvious contradiction between a registration form designed to record each individual's declaration of intentions and loyalty and answers which actually reflected group decisions. There is the case of the old man who appealed a negative answer to the "law-abiding alien" question on the grounds that his block manager had inaccurately recorded his affirmative answer. His argument, in brief, was that he had been a member of the group in the block which decided that all should answer "yes," and obviously he would not have gone against the group decision in the registration. The attempt of the Issei Planning Board at Tule Lake to overcome widespread resistance to registering failed because it was counter to the more powerful force of block group pressure. This organization prepared a statement (which was rejected by the project director) advising against group decision and emphasizing that

registration was a matter of individual judgment.

This general outline of the organization and function of the block managers and of block councils and the function of the block as a group of original decision, will help us to understand the organization and function of community councils through their period of establishment and growth.

## D. The Early History of Community Government

Community government began its center history in mid-May 1942 at the Colorado River Relocation Center. Representatives of the first four blocks occupied by incoming evacuees met in a messhall to discuss organization plans for preparing a permanent form of community government. The original meeting was conducted in an atmosphere of pioneers who were looking forward to creating a governing body for a peaceful and productive community. The nuclear group under the chairmanship of the Reverend Mitani, a Christian minister, established a civic planning commission. Subsequently, a legal bureau staffed by evacuee lawyers provided technical assistance. As new blocks were occupied, members of the planning commission met with residents explaining the objectives and purposes of the group and securing the election of additional representatives.

This initial attempt at community government was abortive, although the plan that was developed was to be utilized during the November strike. The receipt of the June 5 memorandum in the middle of that month brought to a halt the efforts of this group. Subsequently, a temporary community council, elected and inducted into office in July became the first representative body for Poston.

In the confusion of continuing construction and the reception of additional hundreds of evacuees, project directors encouraged the beginnings of the political institution of community government as best they could. The project director at Tule Lake met with each new incoming group to explain the policies of the project including the election of representatives to a community council. By July an organized group was meeting regularly. The history at Gila River was similar. There, the project director met with the new residents, block by block. He encouraged the formation of block councils. When the first unit was completely occupied in July, plans were made for the election of representatives to a community council. One of the first petitions prepared by an evacuee group was presented to the project director at Gila River in August 1942. These resolutions requested among other things, street lighting, completion of the water system so that the grounds could be watered, tables and chairs for apartments and the screening of windows and laundry rooms. They requested the establishment of a canteen which would be owned and financed by the evacuees and operated on a non-profit

basis. They requested clothing and wearing apparel and laundry soap for those in dire need. They also requested that there be established a recreation program, that there be opportunity for the education of their children, and that provision be made for religious observances and gatherings. They requested completion of hospital facilities and that non-citizens be given the privilege to hold elective positions in the community government.

It is incorrect to assume that the residents were either entirely in favor of or vitally interested in the establishment of local government. The exclusion of Issei from office engendered some opposition. The vast majority of residents, however, remained disinterested spectators. The group most actively interested was composed of a number of the more mature and politically-minded Nisei including many JACL members and some of the better educated and more Americanized Issei. Opposition, as it developed, came largely from the Kibei, plus some others who because of resentment, bitterness or loyalties to Japan were opposed to any action which might be construed as cooperation with the Government of the United States.

There was a third group which took the position that, since the delegation of authority was so limited, self-government was an impossibility, and therefore it would be wiser to let the Government assume the full burden of center operation and management. These differences all found expression in the attempts to formulate a permanent plan of community government.

## E. Temporary Community Councils

The early problems of center management were largely beyond the effective responsibility of a politically organized evacuee group. The responsibility for providing food, preserving law and order, establishing fire protection, purchasing equipment, construction, maintenance of public facilities, recruitment of staff, employment and manifold other major and minor details of providing goods and services to a newly established community were assumed by the project director and his staff. Decisions were made without consultation with the evacuees. The problems were many, and there was no organized evacuee group except the block managers which could be of any assistance. Even the block managers were able to do no more than to call attention to dire need and to explain inadequacies to the residents.

The problem was not one of assuming joint responsibility with the evacuees in project management, but one of communication of the difficulties facing the administrative staff on the one hand and of meeting the more pressing needs of the residents on the other. This function was generally assumed by the block managers. The frequently recurring inability of the administration to secure fuel, lumber, machinery,

sometimes even food, produced many complaints and contributed to the feeling of insecurity. Pressures placed on the block managers and subsequently on the administration all too often could not be relieved. There did develop among many evacuees an appreciation of the sincere efforts of the administration. There were, however, several areas of project life where incompetent personnel, inefficient management, and bad organization were obvious to the evacuees. If for example, babies died in the hospital, not only the families affected, but also the entire community became disturbed and demanded a remedy for the conditions which permitted the situation. When people were cold from lack of fuel or equipment for heating, there was a tendency to reject explanations of delayed shipment and to accuse the administration of inefficiency or in some instances of deliberate intent to contribute to the discomfort of the evacuees.

It was in this atmosphere of confusion and uncertainty that temporary councils were created. To their credit there was no difficulty so great that they were unwilling to tackle it. Council officers and committees conferred with project directors and staff members. They made investigations which included interrogation of administrative staff members. Resolutions were passed calling attention to the conditions, solutions were offered, but in most instances correction of the situation was beyond the immediate control of any one person and the efforts of the temporary councils were often regarded by the residents as unproductive and by the administrative staff as meddling.

This activity, including criticism of the administration on the part of temporary councils was in part an attempt to determine the responsibilities, the authority, and the limitations under which councils could operate. Their investigations inevitably led to questioning of either the administrative or technical ability of the members of the appointed staff with the result that some of the latter became irritated and resistant not only to investigations, but also to proposed solutions.

The administrative staff, including the project director, was equally uncertain of the separation of council and administrative responsibilities. The tendency was to look to administrative action rather than community participation to bring solutions. A few project directors did attempt to explain conditions and secure understanding of the handicaps under which the administration was operating. Most did not.

That there were numerous labor difficulties is not surprising. These sometimes came to the attention of the council, but more often were negotiated directly by the project director or one of his staff. The inability of the council to secure acceptance of its views frequently led to the conclusion that the councils were either ineffective or obstructionist or both. There were examples, such as the attempt of

an OWI unit to secure broadcast material at Tule Lake where the council although first giving its approval was later forced to retract its stand because of community pressure. Another instance in the same center involved the use of community funds to construct a building for showing motion pictures. The proposal favored by the council was rejected by a referendum of the residents. Council action was not always attended by failure. There were instances in which its recommendations were followed with benefit to both the residents and the administration. These successes, however, were usually not so well publicized as were the failures.

At some centers, there were groups of both evacuees and administrative staff who were disappointed at the failure of the councils to take an aggressive stand on some of the larger issues. Instead, councils concerned themselves with the immediate problems and pressures and in so doing were politically realistic. They were well aware that many issues were extremely controversial and that action on the part of the council would have led to internal strife and factionalism. When the council cooperated with the administration, it was suspected by the residents; when it opposed the administration, it was attacked as being obstructionist—and in some instances individual members were accused of being subversive and disloyal.

It was not surprising that the majority of the residents who were interested—and that number was not great—considered the council less effective than the block managers, lacked confidence in its judgment—or in its ability to negotiate with the administration—and resented control by the Nisei and exclusion of the Issei. Neither was it surprising that many administrators felt that the council was at best a useless and innocuous group, and at worst a trouble-making and critical group. It was surprising that councils were able to survive at all. Their survival was due to the confidence and efforts of a few members of the appointed staff and of those members of the evacuee community who saw in community government potentialities that could compensate for its early weakness of performance.

## F. The Organization Commission

The procedures for establishing an organization commission were left to the discretion of the project director. Several methods were followed. At most centers the temporary community council appointed a commission. At Manzanar and Gila River the project director selected the members. Minidoka followed the plan of electing two delegates from each block to a nominating convention which in turn elected a seven-man group.

Tule Lake was the first center to establish a commission—it was appointed by the community council—and the first to complete and secure

ratification of a permanent plan of community organization by the residents. Central Utah, in December of the same year, completed its plan and secured ratification. During the first six months of 1943, charters were approved by Granada and Poston and rejected at Minidoka. During the last half of 1943, Gila River, Heart Mountain, Rohwer and Jerome joined the others, and the Minidoka°charter was resubmitted and accepted. Manzanar remained the only center with no organized form of representative community government which was based on WRA administrative suggestion; instead, at this center, a town hall of block delegates served in an advisory capacity to the project director.

The essentials of both organization and function of community government were provided for in the policy statement. Each charter made provision for the election of a community council with the authority to enact regulations and to provide penalties. Provision was also made for the establishment of a judicial commission, the organization of the council, the election of officers and the appointment of committees and commissions. The arbitration commission was universally functionless.

There were some variations to meet local conditions. For example, at Poston, which was composed of three distinct communities, the charter provided for the election of local councils for each of the three units of that center. Each local council then elected representatives to an over-all community council. The over-all council was responsible for enactment of regulations for the entire center and for general policies and problems affecting all the residents. Variation in council organization appeared also at Minidoka and Gila River. At the latter project, each of the two separate camps approved almost identical plans of government, but no provision was made for the coordination of the two. This lack was overcome by the creation of an executive board composed of members drawn from each council. The Minidoka council was unique in that it provided for the election at large of seven members from a list of candidates nominated by delegates elected from the separate blocks. It also provided for the election of a block commissioner from each block. Council organization included an executive committee of 7 members and a consulting and advisory group of 35. Several of the projects attempted to overcome the unwieldiness of a large council composed of one representative from each block by the election of an executive committee from within the council group. This plan worked with indifferent success.

CHAPTER III

## UNCERTAINTIES AND CONFUSIONS

### A. Evacuee Reaction to Community Government Policy

The reaction of the evacuees to the announcement of policy for the establishment of a permanent plan of self-government was varied. Expressions of disappointment at the negligible delegation of responsibility followed realization that they were to be given only a minor role in managing their own affairs. Some took the position that the evacuees should force the WRA to assume full responsibility and to offer no cooperation. Others believed that the policy was better than nothing, but the vast majority indicated little interest either one way or the other.

The most controversial point and one which provoked most discussion was the exclusion of Issei from elective office. This policy was protested and requests for revision were made at several centers. A group at Gila River submitted a resolution on September 18, 1942. The resolution stressed the right of non-citizens to hold elective office. It supported this view with statements to the effect that no better evidence of the sincere desire of the non-citizens to cooperate with the War Relocation Authority could be found than their desire to be treated equally in the matter of community government. The resolution pointed out that there was a "strong unity of purpose between the citizens and non-citizens in all matters which are of vital concern to the people of this community . . . In view of this situation, to permit the citizens alone to hold elective positions would undermine seriously the harmony which so happily exists between the citizens and non-citizens."

It was contended further that there should be an equal sharing of responsibility by both groups, and that this could be achieved only by equal representation. They argued that the present arrangement placed an undue burden upon the citizens alone. The petitioners declared that many of the non-citizens were that in name only because of legal prohibitions to their assuming citizenship. They pointed out that "they have also assimilated many of the finer American ideals; they worked continuously in America ever since coming to this country; they brought up their children to be loyal American citizens, many of whom now serve in the Armed Forces of the Nation; they also bought property and invested heavily in United States War Bonds with the intention of permanently making this country their home." The last point was that the non-citizens were the economic leaders with long years of experience in the operation of extensive areas in the State of California; that these skilled and experienced agricultural leaders should be given a voice in the administration of self-government and through such participation contribute to the well-being of the people of the center and the war effort of the United States.

The Director answered this resolution October 6, 1942 with an explanation of the reasons for the policy and stated that reconsideration was impossible. The letter pointed out that:

> "In the first place, we believe that the citizenship status and privilege of the evacuees who were born in the United States needs to be given special recognition. The fact that, as a matter of military necessity, all persons of Japanese ancestry were evacuated from the West Coast, both aliens and citizens alike, has caused some of the citizen evacuees to wonder what value their citizenship has. We regret that fact very much. We understand, also, that a few among the alien evacuees have been taunting the young Niseis with this fact, and have stated that the citizenship of the Niseis was valueless.
>
> "It is our intention, therefore, to help make up for this fact, as much as possible, by giving special recognition to the citizenship status of the Niseis.
>
> "In addition to making elective offices open only to evacuees who are citizens of the United States, it is our intention to give them preference in considering application for leave from relocation centers, in assignment of work opportunities, and in other respects.
>
> "A second consideration had a great deal to do with our decision. In general, the Niseis are much more Americanized than are the Isseis . . . We are of the opinion that if the Niseis alone are eligible for membership in the community council, the general character of the action taken by the community council will be more in keeping with American institutions and practices."

The reply also pointed out that Issei were not barred from participation in community government but were eligible to hold appointive positions, thus the wisdom and experience of the alien evacuees would be utilized. It concluded by affirming that the original decision was a sound one and should be adhered to.

Copies of the resolution and reply were sent to all centers. No more petitions came to Washington, but project staffs remained aware of the difficulties which faced organization commissions in their efforts to give suitable status to the Issei and sufficient opportunity for Issei participation in community affairs. Policy or no policy, the evacuees were determined to include the Issei in a representative system. The first such effort was at Poston where soon after the election of a citizen temporary council, arrangements were made for the election of an Issei

advisory board. There thus arose a dual system of representation with one Issei and one Nisei from each block, organized in groups meeting separately, but in close communication with each other.

Tule Lake moved toward a solution of this problem in a different manner. There, the temporary community council authorized the establishment of an Issei planning board. Although the planning board had no legislative function, it worked in close cooperation with the community council and the two bodies presented community problems to the project director jointly.

The organization commissions at Heart Mountain and Granada attempted to establish a two-house representative system, the upper house to be composed of Issei, who should serve as advisers to the lower house, which would be composed of Nisei. This plan as developed by the evacuees in consultation with project officials was disapproved by word from Washington that such a plan would be contrary to the intent of the community government policy.

Granada then solved the problem by a mass resignation of Nisei block managers on the understanding that the administration would appoint Issei to these positions. The community council became known as the Nisei council, a distinction which stuck with it for a long period. Even after the removal of the bar to Issei membership, several elections passed before an appreciable number of Issei were willing to stand for election.

Gila River attempted to meet the same problem by formalizing a group composed of chairmen of the block councils, all of whom were Issei. Rohwer and Jerome solved the problem through an advisory Issei group and by establishing close working relations with the block managers, who were almost entirely non-citizens. Central Utah had a somewhat similar arrangement.

Although the exclusion of Issei from elective office aroused the greatest controversy, there were other and more fundamental questions which those engaged in drafting plans of government had to face. These included legal, political, and ethical considerations affecting the purpose and functioning of an evacuee self-government. From the charter commission of Heart Mountain came a statement objectifying and discussing some of these problems.

The commission considered four fundamental questions. The first was, "Is this real self-government, or is it only so-called self-government?" The opinion expressed was "If it is going to be real self-government, then it is O. K. If it is going to be a self-government in name only, then, we do not want it."

This attitude was held most strongly. The commission then asked the question, "Why is it that the members agreed to support a document which they know is not really self-government?" The answer given was: "Firstly, within a relocation center where freedom of the residents is restricted, is it possible to ask for complete self-government? Secondly, perchance that such complete self-government is granted, is it advisable for the evacuees to fully exercise such right? Thirdly, the consideration that the Heart Mountain community consists of both the American citizen of Japanese ancestry and the alien Japanese had to be taken into account."

The statement continued, "After thorough discussion, the commission came to the conclusion that it is not only impossible to ask for complete self-government, but it is better not to ask for it. In other words, we concluded that it is far better for the evacuees to leave the final responsibility of the center management to the WRA staff, while specifying in written documents evacuees' right to have limited voice in the management. If this plan is adopted, neither the citizen nor the non-citizen residents need to fear about jeopardizing their rights."

The next question asked was, "Why not stick to status quo?" The Issei members who were objecting to the discrimination favored the status quo—by which they meant a simple system of block managers. This objection was resolved, however, with the issuance of an amendment to the instruction permitting Issei equal rights.

The final question asked was, "What are the advantages of adopting a charter?" The advantages were seen as a formalization of experiences gained during the preceding several months, which upon being reduced to a formal code gave greater assurance of the continuation of the status quo. An additional advantage was that provision was made for an orderly election of representatives and enactment of regulations and the guarantee of a voice in the management of a center—even though that voice was muted. The preamble of the charter expressed these basic considerations.

## B. The First Crises

In the latter part of 1942, major disturbances occurred at two centers. In late November, a general strike was called in Unit I of the Colorado River Relocation Center. Two weeks later, a series of incidents at Manzanar culminated in a riot and forced the project director to call in the military police. The great difference in the fianl results of these two disturbances, however, was that at Manzanar the administration emerged as the dominating and controlling factor in community life, while at Poston, there emerged a stong and responsible community organization.



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1. The Poston Strike

Although the Poston strike was precipitated by the arrest and confinement of two evacuees in the project jail, it has been well established that the causes were rooted in evacuation, assembly center experience, and conditions at the center. The combination of heat, dust, primitive facilities, alleged broken promises, misunderstandings, and factional conflict were all contributing factors to a general condition of unrest. News of the arrest of the two men created wide excitement. Rumors spread rapidly and demands grew that the two men should be released. The community council held several meetings with project officials and presented the community view with the proposal for release of the individuals in question and their trial within the project. They were supported in this position by the Issei advisory board. The project director was absent; the acting director found it impossible to accede to these demands, and the council and advisory board resigned.

The situation developed rapidly with an almost complete breakdown of communication between the administration and the residents. There was quickly established in the center a committee of 72, composed of one Issei and one Nisei representative from each block. This group aided by the revived city planning board decided on a general strike to secure recognition of community demands. Most workers willingly complied with the strike decision, and pressure was applied to the recalcitrants.

The full details of the Poston strike and its many ramifications have been adequately documented and reported elsewhere.[1] Our interest arises from the unbelievably rapid strides in community organization achieved by a well-organized, adequately led evacuee organization which remained in control during the course of community government. There emerged from the strike a central executive committee selected by the executive council of the city planning board and composed of four Issei and four Nisei. There emerged also an agreement on the method of electing block managers--previously a controversial point. It was agreed to establish an honor court--though the court never materialized--and a labor relations board which was to be an adjunct of the central executive committee. The attempt to make the city planning board the responsible representative group was not acceptable to the administration, which took the position that the community council was the only official body that would be recognized by the administration. This pronouncement was accepted by the residents, and in December a new temporary community council and a new Issei advisory board were elected.

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[1]See A. Leighton - The Governing of Men

In the meantime, the attempt made by some of the more radical and disgruntled leaders to overthrow the central executive committee was thwarted, and the pattern of organization which persisted to the end of the project with only minor modification was firmly established.

The Poston strike produced a system of community representation and organization acceptable to residents and administration. It also served to crystallize and resolve many of the previous conflicts and to give a cohesion which permitted the application of concerted effort to community problems. It forced the administration to review not only its own policies, but its relations with the evacuees and produced a unity of purpose within the administrative staff which had previously been lacking. It is of some interest that the plans which were developed in late May and early June by the evacuee civic planning board and shelved because of the June 5 memorandum, were the basis of the strike organization and of the pattern of community government subsequently adopted.

## 2. The Manzanar Riot

The resolution of the diverging interests between Issei, Nisei, and Kibei was never achieved at Manzanar, where conflict focused on the policy of community government. This center, which had at first been under the administration of the WCCA, had established a system of semi-appointed, semi-elected block leaders with no distinction based on nationality. After the assumption of WRA administrative responsibility in June, no attempt was made to observe the provisions of the June 5 memorandum. The block leaders continued as a representative administrative group. The administration believed that no distinction should be made between citizens and non-citizens and wished to continue the cooperative relations which existed between the administration and the block leaders. The announcement of the new policy of community government as made by the project director in late August was to the effect that the block leaders would be disbanded and in its place there would be established a Nisei community council. This threat to the vested position of the block leaders was not readily accepted and even later, when it was explained that their activities would continue much as in the past, the harm of the original announcement was never completely dispelled either among the block leaders or among the community from which the block leaders drew support.

It was also at Manzanar that the conflict between openly loyal Japanese Americans on the one hand and Kibei and aliens with pro-Japanese leanings on the other broke into the open in dramatic fashion. This split in the community, which became organized into two opposing groups, was led by equally aggressive leaders. The issue of community government policy was one point of disagreement. Not only was there opposition to a Nisei elected community council, but there was also opposition to the establishment of any kind of representative system

which would cooperate with the War Relocation Authority in administration of the centers. The pro-American group, largely Nisei and JACL, was equally vociferous in its support of self-government. The project director, with the assistance and advice of members of his staff and evacuee leaders, appointed a commission to prepare a plan of government. The commission was so constituted that it included both Issei and Nisei, but did not include radical leadership from the two opposing factions. It was hoped that through this device acceptance could be secured for the establishment of a community council.

After several weeks of deliberation, this commission finally produced a document which was approved by the project director and ready for submission to the people of Manzanar. An educational program was started for the purpose of informing the people of its provisions and to secure pre-election approval. It soon became apparent, however, that with opposition so widespread, any charter would be rejected by the voters. This opposition was based on the belief held by a number of Issei that the provision limiting membership to Nisei was the responsibility of certain Manzanar individuals and was not a policy established by the WRA. There was fear that this Nisei group would gain control of the cooperative enterprises which at that time were Issei dominated. It was also believed that the council would supplant the block managers who were largely Issei and in whom the residents had a considerable amount of confidence.

As a result of this opposition, it was decided to postpone the election and to call for the election of a new group of block delegates, who would take the plan of government prepared by the organization commission and make such amendments and changes as were possible. An election was held. The new delegates were unanimously opposed not only to the plan of government prepared by the organization commission, but also to any form of local government which might be proposed. The administrative attempts to salvage community government for Manzanar were abruptly halted by the riot of December 6, and subsequently no serious attempts were ever made to revive it.

Thus it was that a combination of passive opposition from the block leaders, organized and violent conflict between segments of the population, and misunderstanding and misinterpretation of specific points of policy, were responsible for the failure to establish community government at Manzanar. Many of the same factors and conflicts appeared at other centers, but through more skillful handling and a better opportunity for opposing groups to resolve their differences, it was possible to achieve an acceptable plan of government.

C. Administration Attitudes toward Community Government Policy

The disturbances at Manzanar and Poston prompted administrative

concern in Washington about policies on community government and the whole field of administration-evacuee relationships. In December, a confidential memorandum was addressed to all project directors requesting their judgment and recommendations on the local government program.

The point was made that WRA was under no obligation to establish, or permit establishment of evacuee government, which policy was a liberal interpretation of the directive from the President and was intended to foster self-expression and participation in community affairs on the part of evacuees and to mobilize for administrative support the sanctions of a deliberative and representative body of citizens. The question was raised whether this policy should now be changed to WRA regulatory administration supplemented by a purely advisory committee of evacuees.

Comments were requested on Issei-Nisei participation on the community council and participation of aliens short of election to the council. Other items included an evaluation of the extent to which community government had proved or disproved itself; a statement of who among the evacuees was either opposing or favoring community government; and a request for suggested changes if a revision were thought to be desirable. It was also stated that "no action to accelerate charter commissions or other committees engaged in organizational work should be taken."

The replies from the several project directors reveal both the attitudes of project administration and the administrative interpretation of evacuee attitudes as of that time. Without exception, all project directors stated that the most crucial issue in community government policy was the provision prohibiting aliens from holding elective office. Illustrative of project opinion are such statements as:

> "The Issei refuse to accept the administration's opinion that citizens alone can hold office. They feel that citizenship status is irrelevant in a relocation center and since all Japanese were relocated and treated in a similar manner, all should be entitled to hold office. Had Issei been permitted to hold office, much of the present unrest would have been obviated, the Issei stated. Issei participation would have enabled them to direct their energies into productive, loyal channels.
>
> "Nisei felt that the present organization tends to intensify the growing cleavage between the two groups. This cleavage is so significant that at times all issues are decided within the community solely on that basis without reference to substance. While some Nisei are

> of the opinion that the intensification of the cleavage is an inevitable aspect . . . the majority feel that the problems facing the community can best be worked out through joint effort."

The project director at Heart Mountain, who favored equal elective participation for the two groups, pointed out that the Nisei were fearful lest the Issei, deprived of direct participation, would be uncooperative in order to discredit the Nisei administration and convince the community that any Nisei governing body would be ineffective. Many project directors referred to the willingness of the Issei to cooperate and the general disapproval of the distinction made between them and the citizens.

Project administration by December had, in general, come to the conclusion that any policy which emphasized already existing cleavages within the evacuee population would make administration just that much more difficult. From a purely practical administrative viewpoint, there was the desire to lessen existing frictions and tensions within the centers. It had been learned that many of the older Issei were stable individuals who were cooperative and could be trusted. It had also been learned that with the exception of a small group represented largely by those who were members of the JACL, the Nisei did not wholeheartedly support the policy discrimination. Project directors wrote of difficulties which arose in assembly centers where Nisei councils, largely JACL-dominated, had ridden roughshod over the remainder of the population and had shown favoritism and created resentment and bitterness.

Response to the proposal that WRA might withdraw, or seriously modify its policy of self-government brought forth objections. The replies varied from the one project director who recommended that each center be permitted to work out its own plan, to the view expressed by the Central Utah director who wrote, "We believe that this policy of permitting a government within the center should not be changed but rather a more liberal interpretation be instigated." Most project directors, however, were of the opinion that the WRA had committed itself to the evacuees on the establishment of self-government and that its elimination would be considered as a breach of faith. These opinions were accompanied by requests that they be allowed to continue with their plans.

Two project directors did question the wisdom of the policy in terms of evacuee acceptance of a device which in actuality conferred no authority and was practically meaningless. The project director at Minidoka wrote:

> "We have an impression that the presently recommended form of government is not a completely genuine delegation of authority to the colony to establish its own controls. The pseudo-government existing, subject to the pressure and cooperation of administration, has such limitations that we believe it will be difficult to secure a real participation or genuine authority in the face of the realization by the colonists of its lack of complete transmission of responsibility."

The project director at Manzanar, approaching the same question from a slightly different point of view, observed:

> "Viewing the plan for creation of evacuee self-government, as an analyst and not as a critic, it now seems clear that the position of the majority of the evacuees towards self-government deserves serious open-minded consideration by the Authority. Evacuees who approach the plan of self-government without emotion and with the desire to be constructive, divide themselves roughly into two classes: those who question the sincerity of a plan of self-government which prohibits a large percentage (and particularly the more mature people) from the holding of office and the exercise of administrative authority, and those who question the sincerity of any plan of self-government prepared and limited by the authorities above, whose authority includes the maintenance of a barbed wire fence as visual evidence of the actual complete lack of the fundamentals of self-government. Their view boils down to the conclusion that it is silly for mature men to spend time playing with dolls."

The almost unanimous desire of center administrators to retain the policy of community government essentially unchanged, except in regard to Issei eligibility to elective office, allayed concern in the Washington office that community councils might be contributory to the disturbances which had occurred or might likely occur in the future. Although the project directors found themselves defending the policy, their attitudes toward council groups were frequently those of disinterest or suspicion. Many of the administrative personnel felt that community government was a meaningless gesture which could only cause trouble and that a policy of laying down rules and regulations and enforcing them by authority was most desirable. These attitudes were described in a report by Ted Haas, project attorney at Poston, in which he said:

> "Some officials at Poston have said to the staff and residents that it would have been easier to have run the

> center dictatorily with all rules and policies established by the administration and without consultation with the residents, and that the administration of community government, democratic practices and evacuee participation increased the difficulties of administering the center."

Caught between the pressures of divided and disorganized communities and a critical or disinterested administration, the advocates of community government faced heavy odds in their efforts to bring political organization to the centers. That they succeeded is testimony to their perseverance and to the fact that there was basic need for an instrument of this type as a coordinate of community life. It was inevitable that some kind of systematic relations would develop between the evacuees and the administration. It was not inevitable that the organization or functions should conform to the policy determined by the WRA, but the fact that this policy provided certain guideposts and carried the sanctions of the administrators gave it a decided advantage in the evolving system of relations. The alternative was anarchy and a coercive and possibly terroristic underground.

The vast majority of residents were desirous of peace and stability and were willing to make compromises to avoid trouble. Many accepted community government as a device, imperfect at best, which could allow for an orderly presentation of problems and resolution of crises. Administrators found no such need to compromise. They held the full weight and authority of the Federal Government backed by police power and the Army. They too could accept community government because it held promise of proving a useful administrative tool, and might contribute to law and order.

# CHAPTER IV

## THE TROUBLED PERIOD

The early months of center life were uncomfortable and disorganized at all centers, but not uniformly so. The centers which were opened later in the year profited by the experiences of those which opened earlier, so that the hardships of the occupation period were not so severe for the last comers as for the first. However, the occupation and adjustment period at every project was one of worry, inconvenience, shortages in essential supplies and services and general physical discomfort. Under these conditions grievances were plentiful, crises common.

It was at Poston and Manzanar, the first centers to open, that crises developed to the stage of mass demonstrations involving the majority of the residents and resulting in temporary suspension of normal activities. At each of these centers a variety of issues, or minor crises, arose simultaneously and merged into a major crisis. At other centers this synchronization was lacking; in most instances a grievance that might be very real to one group within the community might not exist for another group--or for any other group. Under these conditions there was less likelihood of separate dissatisfactions melting into mass emotion, and at the same time there was a much better opportunity for the administration to reach an understanding with disaffected groups: in other words, it was simpler for the administration to solve a problem involving the people of one block, and then to adjust matters of another nature with another block, than to be obliged to face a community which had been solidly welded together in a common cause.

Once the early period of occupation and adjustment had been weathered, such crises as developed were generally occasioned by the initiation of some policy which had been administratively determined and imposed upon the entire community. Not all policy determinations led to violent community response, by any means, but there were a few vital ones which stirred up considerable resistance in some, if not all, of the centers. The skill with which the local administration introduced these major policy determinations to the residents influenced the nature of the community reaction.

### A. Registration

Registration was the first of the administratively determined policies affecting all residents which produced a violent reaction. On January 28, 1943, Secretary of War Stimson announced that the War Department would soon create an all-Nisei combat team, to be composed of Japanese American volunteers from Hawaii and the mainland, including the Nisei in the relocation centers. This decision was the result of much discussion and planning on the part of both the WRA and the War Department.

In connection with the call for volunteers, it was decided to conduct a special registration of all male Nisei who were above 17 years of age. The Army had prepared for this purpose a four-page questionnaire which inquired in great detail into the individual's past history and which included a loyalty question.

WRA, up to this time, had detailed information about such evacuees as had applied for leave clearance in order to re-establish themselves in normal life outside the centers, but only a small percent of the evacuees had made application. In order to speed up leave clearance and relocation to private life, WRA decided to conduct a registration program at the same time that the Army was registering the Nisei men who were of fighting age. The joint registration program would serve the purpose of providing needed information about every evacuee who was 17 years of age or older, and once the questionnaires were processed there would be no delay in granting leave when a job offer came to an evacuee while investigation was made of the candidate's life-long record. Accordingly, a form entitled "Application for Leave Clearance" was devised; it followed closely the questionnaire which the Army was presenting to the Nisei men.

The plan for conducting this center-wide registration included an Army team that would be responsible for registering citizen males and a project staff that would be responsible for registering the remainder of the population. The procedural details were left to the discretion of the Army team captain and the project director. The teams were scheduled to arrive at the projects soon after February 6; on February 10 the registration was to begin. Each Army team captain went to his center armed with a carefully prepared speech which was to be delivered verbatim to the young Nisei males, and with a long list of questions and answers which was presumed to settle any doubts or perplexities that the Nisei males might entertain. Apparently the Army assumed that this partial restoration of citizenship rights to the Nisei men would receive easy acceptance. The WRA, having by this time gathered a modest backlog of experience in the matter of evacuee responses to administrative determinations, hoped for the best. Actually, registration precipitated a period of confusion and turmoil in the lives of these dislocated people: at some centers there was organized resistance to the registration; at others there were threats of violence and some assaults.

The participation of community government organizations in the registration program varied from center to center. The original plan for the conduct of the program ignored the existence of the councils, thus overlooking the possibility of utilizing the councils' influence and means of disseminating information among the residents. The plan agreed upon by WRA and the War Department provided that the initial announcement of the visit of the Army team should be made by the project director through the project newspaper. Upon the arrival of the team, the Army's prepared speech was delivered before mass gatherings of the citizen males. It was not until considerable resistance to the registration had developed

and the program was underway that appeal was made to the councils. By that time confusion was widespread. The response of the councils differed sharply from project to project.

At Heart Mountain resistance developed first among the Nisei, some of whom protested both the segregated nature of the proposed combat team and the propriety of inducting Japanese Americans into the Army as long as their rights as citizens remained in doubt. The opposition was strong enough to make the administration question its ability to conduct any registration. An ultimatum issued by the project director was politely ignored. Resistance spread to the non-citizens, and meetings were organized among the residents to promote a united front. At this point the block chairmen, a group composed of Issei representatives, stepped into the picture and saved the day. A prominent member of this group influenced his own block to accept the registration program. With the resistance broken at this one point, other blocks fell into line and the registration was completed without further difficulty.

At Granada center, largely because of skillful handling by the project administration, the registration proceeded with comparative smoothness. However, even at Granada there was a point at which 100 citizens were answering "No" to the loyalty question and only 30 had volunteered. At this critical time the administration called in the newly elected community council and explained to its members the implications of the situation and the need for drastic action. The chairman of the council was placed in telephone communication with the War Department in Washington. Following this conversation, he organized a series of mass meetings at which the volunteering program was explained more adequately to the residents. Within a short time the number of volunteers increased to 152 and the number of negative answers declined to 27.

At Central Utah a tense situation developed when a considerable number of citizens protested the registration on a civil rights basis and demanded a clarification of these rights and of the status of the proposed segregated unit. This faction drew up a petition stating its grievances and objections and sent it on to Washington, whereupon the council stepped forward, asserted its leadership and forwarded to Washington a second petition, declaring loyalty to the United States and the desire of a substantial number of residents to serve in the armed forces.

In all of the foregoing instances organized units of community government, Issei, Nisei, or both, were able to contribute materially to the solution of knotty problems. Tule Lake, in its registration period, presented an unhappy contrast to that pattern. At Tule Lake, as at other centers, original announcement of the impending registration

was made in the project newspaper. On Tuesday morning, February 9, the program was explained by the administration before a joint session of the community council and the planning board. That evening the War Department message was read at meetings held in seven mess halls, and it was announced that registration would begin the next day. During the days that followed, many meetings, large and small, were held by the evacuees to discuss the implications and significance of registration. Because of inadequate information, misinterpretation, and numerous rumors and conjectures which swept through the center, only a few registrants responded during the first week. The community council, in an attempt to clarify the situation, submitted a list of 150 questions to the project director on February 13. Two days later the council and the planning board held another joint meeting, at which they received answers to 58 of the 150 questions, listened to the captain of the Army team as he read once again the War Department message, and were told by the project director that he placed full responsibility upon them for securing compliance with the registration requirements.

In the days that followed the situation went from bad to worse, with large numbers of evacuees applying for repatriation or expatriation to Japan. On February 18 registration headquarters were moved to the administrative area, and an order was issued listing the sequence in which blocks would be registered. On the 18th and 19th the great majority of eligible young men failed to appear, whereupon the project director and the Army officer in charge of registration visited the blocks scheduled for registration and called out the names of the recalcitrants. On the afternoon of the 19th a large delegation from three blocks went to headquarters to present a letter requesting expatriation; it was signed by the young men who had refused to register. On the 21st of February the young men whose names had appeared on the letter were arrested. Day by day more young men were arrested; day by day opposition to the registration became more highly organized and bold. Those who had already registered were threatened by the opposition and were, in some instances, beaten.

The council and planning board, in an attempt to counteract the growing opposition prepared a memorandum which they submitted to the project director for his approval. This memorandum was a plea to the Nisei to make their own decisions about registration on an individual basis and not to accept group decisions. The stencil was cut so that mimeographed copies could be run off quickly as soon as the project director approved the memo for distribution. On February 23 the project director returned the memorandum, withholding his approval of the plan to distribute it. The council and planning board were unwilling to accept further responsibility for the registration unless certain conditions were met, principally that the young men who had been arrested should be released to the center. To this condition the project director was unable to agree; he took the position that the young men

were violaters of the Selective Service Act. Having failed in their attempt to secure agreement of the project administration to their plan, the community council and the planning board resigned. They stated that this was the only course open to them because of the project director's expressed lack of confidence in their good intentions and abilities.

The sequel to these events is well known. The community council was never reestablished. Thousands of residents failed to register and many hundreds requested repatriation or expatriation. Tule Lake was eventually selected as the center to house segregants drawn from other camps, and the "loyals" who braved community censure to register were transferred elsewhere.

Many lessons learned from registration influenced the initiation of future policy and procedure. The experience brought keen awareness of the necessity for adequate planning and communication. There was also a realization of the need to understand the evacuee point of view, awareness that the objectives and moral principles activating administration were not always comprehensible to the evacuees. Although recognition of the need for thorough understanding of any policy became a fundamental consideration in future actions, the idea that evacuees might participate in policy formulation was never accepted. Instead, additional reliance was placed upon reports of project administrators and the newly established community analysts as sources of information about evacuee attitudes and probable reactions to policy.

## B. Misgivings in Washington

The incidents at Poston and Manzanar focused the attention of the National Director and his key staff members upon the issue of community Government. Existing policy was held up for sharp scrutiny and reexamination. On the basis of events at Poston and Manzanar, it was natural to question the ability of the community government to maintain law and order, to prevent mass demonstrations or riots. Such legislative and judicial functions as had been granted the councils, it was thought, might better be transferred to the project director; in that event, however, the councils became rather meaningless, and the question arose as to whether it might not be better to eliminate the entire system of community government and operate simply on a basis of evacuee advisory committees. The questions submitted to the project directors on December 15, 1942, and referred to previously were indicative of this change in thinking. In that communication the Director pointed out that the existing policy on community government represented a liberal interpretation of the executive order and that WRA was under no obligation to allow or to encourage self-government in the centers.

It was unfortunate, if understandable, that the WRA administration took the stand at this time that legislative and judicial functions were

beyond the abilities of the councils. In January steps were taken to remove from community government its sole responsibility for maintaing law and order. The Director issued administrative instructions governing organization of police forces, establishing procedures for making arrests and for the trial and punishment of offenders; a confidential instruction outlined the procedure by which a project director could remove trouble-makers from the center.

In substance these instructions made the project director responsible for law and order; they did not remove the legislative or judicial functions from the community council, but they provided that, until the council should become competent to exercise such functions, the responsibility for them would remain with the administration. The confidential instruction placed complete responsibility for handling cases of individuals contributing to lawlessness and disorder with the project director.

These instructions, signed by the Director and released during the latter part of February 1943, relieved the anxiety of a considerable portion of the WRA administrative staff, but at the same time they created questions about what functions were left for the councils to perform. The position of the councils was not enviable at best during this period, and the events of the spring did little to strengthen that position.

The administration's confidence in the ability of the community government organizations to resolve crises had been badly shaken by the Poston and Manzanar incidents. Conditions which developed during the spring were not favorable to bolstering such confidence as remained. WRA, throughout the year of 1943 was under constant and increasingly virulent attack from Congressional committees, legislative committees in some of the Western States, the Hearst papers, the McClatchy papers, the Denver Post, super-patriotic groups and many individuals. The uproar caused by registration continued through February and well into March. The resignation of the council at Tule Lake and the milder disturbances at other centers reduced still further the administration's faith in community government.

The councils at most centers, although cooperative and willing to assist the administration in the crises, were too weak to direct the conflicting factions along constructive lines. The situation was further complicated by the continuing departure of the more cooperative and mature Nisei, who were in some measure a counterbalance to the disruptive and disloyal elements, from the centers to resume private life. Except at one or two centers, no positive and cooperative leadership had developed among the aliens, who, as a group, continued to be an unknown factor. This anonymity of the Issei was to a large degree the consequence of their exclusion from active participation in community government.

At any event, during this turbulent period groups of obstructionists were pretty well beyond the control of both evacuee leaders and administration. All these considerations favored WRA's acceptance of the need to extend administrative control.

Many of the administrative staff, both in Washington and at the projects, were extremely apprehensive of the danger of future mass uprisings. Some staff members were skeptical, disillusioned, or simply disinterested in their attitude toward community government as a device to bring stability and order to the center population. The extreme element favored rigid, dictatorial regulation and expressed its sentiments in such language as "It is our job to tell the Japs what to do and shoot the bastards if they won't." This extreme position, however, was not held by the top administrators either at the projects or in Washington. However, the trend toward stricter administrative controls was pronounced enough to cause the National Director to consider seriously radical change in the policy on community government, a change which would have reduced the councils in status to the role of advisory boards.

This point of view was presented at a meeting held in Washington in early April. In the course of the discussion that followed, it was pointed out that such a change of policy would be regarded by the evacuees as a broken promise on WRA's part. A number of the staff members expressed their conviction that community government could, given a little more time, become a responsible and effective instrument. On the other side it was argued that the steadily increasing relocation movement made it impossible to create stable groups and that the evacuees themselves were no longer concerned with community government. It was agreed that the council had two major functions: one was to determine what acts were injurious to the welfare of the community and to prescribe penalties for the commission of such acts; the other was to channel information between the evacuees and the administration. It was recognized that the councils had thus far failed to enact legislation or to establish judicial commissions, but at the same time it was admitted that the recent issuance of the administrative instructions on offenses removed the necessity for the councils to take immediate action in that field. In regard to the second function, it was agreed that neither the project director nor the evacuees had been encouraged or given opportunity to make adequate use of this highly important representative function. As early as January, decision had been reached to revise the policy which denied elective office to the Issei. Further discussion of the matter at this April meeting resulted in the issuance of a definite policy statement which granted eligibility to elective office to the Issei.

## C. The Proponents

During the first three months of 1943 a number of statements and concrete proposals were offered for consideration. Their acceptance would have liberalized policy in the direction of increased responsibility for the community governments to assume. A memorandum prepared in the Solicitor's office in January, in which attention was called to the need for administrative instructions on trial and punishment of offenders, organization of police services, organization of intelligence, rules to govern the making of arrests, and a program for segregating aggravated trouble-makers ended with the comment that although the suggested measures were repressive in character, the successful solution of law and order problems rested primarily with the administration. A memorandum to Mr. John Provinse from Mr. Solon T. Kimball on January 8, 1942, which discussed these proposals, said in part:

> "My observation has been that our administration has been too 'good,' too perfect. We have over-planned and over-directed. We have not allowed sufficient outlet for aggressiveness through actual participation in the business of running a project, so that the aggressiveness when expressed is against the 'loyal' group and I suspect in the future may be directed against us. I think we need to loosen up our administrative organization to permit more of the planning (and mistakes) to come from the bottom. Certainly we need much better channels of communication to allow the steam to blow off than we now have.
>
> "I see in community government a goodly portion of the answer to these two problems--but we must have understanding from the key administrative people of what is being done, and why, and how. In that connection, I believe the creation of evacuee committees to study special problems and to recommend solutions and policy would be helpful. Specifically, we need one immediately to study the functions and operation of community government."

Additional memoranda were submitted on January 15, covering community government policy, summarization of replies to the Director's memorandum of December 15, 1942, Issei participation in the community council, problems of community government, and recommendations on community government. The portion of the memorandum on problems confronting community government pointed out the lack of unity in the evacuee population and problems created by evacuation. It also recognized the conflict of measurable self-government with administrative responsibility of the Authority. This memorandum said in part:

"Perhaps we should recognize the situation (the complete administrative responsibility of the WRA) for what it is and say that it will be impossible to ever have a fully responsible government with opportunity for implementing decisions by administrative action. On the other hand, perhaps it is possible over a period of time to extend to the evacuees a greater measure of self-regulation and planning. If so, policy becomes the formal recognition of an already existing achievement. In other words, if the development of governmental forms and responsibilities are not limited by hard and fast boundaries, but permitted to meet new needs, we may achieve the type of dynamic living government which expresses a real need and has a real meaning.

> "Significant government, after all, should not consist of an enumerated list of specified powers, but should be the opportunity for people to concern themselves with the problems which are of major concern in their lives. Let us examine some of these problems and see which of them might possibly become a function of government."

Some of the suggestions made included the establishment of an evacuee police force under the supervision of the community council, controls over food, the planning of productive efforts, the use of manpower, adjustment of differences between Nisei, Issei, and Kibei, housing, health, education, relocation, and recreation.

This was followed in February by the preparation of an administrative instruction on police services which visualized a dual system of responsibility and organization. Under this plan, there would be established an evacuee police force with its chief of police appointed by a board of police commissioners. The evacuee policemen would have as their responsibility the maintenance of law and order within the center proper. There would also be a Caucasian police force to protect Government property and enforce WRA regulations. This proposal was justified on the grounds that the community council should have enforcing authority for its legislative acts and its judicial system, and that the attempt by WRA to impose responsibility for protection of Government property or enforcement of regulations contrary to community interests upon the evacuees, was inconsistent. This plan was rejected in favor of an internal security force composed of both evacuees and Caucasians with official responsibility resting on the Caucasian officers.

A recommendation to establish a position of administrative assistant to the project director, whose responsibility would include the general field of administrative community relationships with specific



698233 O - 46 - 4

responsibility for community government, labor relations, and promotion of understanding and participation of evacuees in the general problems of relocation centers, was made the same month. This recommendation was rejected by the Administrative Management Division on the grounds that need for such a position did not exist and that these functions belonged to the project director or his assistant.

Another proposal would have given responsibility for community libraries to the community council. The plan included the establishment of a library board by the council with complete administrative control. This proposal also was turned down, but it was carried out in effect by the committees at some centers.

It became apparent that self-government which would include the assumption of administrative and supervisory responsibility for those portions of relocation center life which were directly related to the welfare of the residents, had become impossible of attainment. It also became apparent that, if community government was to have a significant function, it would have to come from a slow growth accompanied by demonstration of responsibility and increased confidence by the policy-makers, the administrators, and the people themselves.

The big task was to interpret the significant contribution which community government could perform and to secure its implementation. To this end, emphasis was placed upon the utilization of the council as a channel of communication for securing understanding of WRA policies and the reflection of evacuee attitudes to these policies. This view was expressed in a statement prepared for a proposed handbook of policy to be issued by the Reports Division in April 1943. The statement, in addition to listing the formal aspects of community government, called attention to this point as follows:

> "The increased confidence in the council will be concurrent with the exercise of the legislative authority and the perfection of channels of communication between residents and administration.
>
> "In the performance of this latter function lies the opportunity for community government to weld together and express the varying points of view within the community. Where this has been achieved the council has established direct relations with block organizations, work groups and other interested groups within the community. Through these relations the council is able to encourage the expression of the needs and ideas and to transmit these to the administration. This in turn has facilitated understanding and solution of common problems of community life."

It was not until April that the first letter to the project directors suggesting a direct contact with the community council was sent from Washington. Previous to this time, communications which involved evacuees usually included a phrase, suggesting that the project director "consult evacuee leaders." This in itself was a failure to recognize the community council as the primary point of contact with the evacuee community.

The letter in question suggested consultation with councils on relocation and the appointment of a committee to consider problems related to this program. It is perhaps significant that project directors were the ones who appointed the relocation committees and that they were often inactive.

## D. Attitudes of Project Staffs

During the same period that a reorientation was taking place in the thinking in Washington, the project administrators, with a few exceptions, remained dubious as to the value of community government. Minidoka, which had no temporary council, replied to an inquiry from Washington urging action, by letters from most of the top administrative officials. These letters disclosed that the administrative staff was nearly unanimous in favoring a system of advisors to the project director in lieu of community government and expressing the opinion that difficulties at other centers might be due to the presence of community councils. These administrators felt that there had been a considerable measure of evacuee participation and that it was unwise to change the present system. Included in these letters were four written by evacuees, all of which were in favor of community government, and no one of which referred to any past participation in the affairs of the project.

At centers where councils were organized there was a pattern of bypassing or ignoring the council group. At Gila River, the attitude was expressed by the project attorney that community government was a plaything and meaningless. The project director there consulted with members of the temporary council, the block managers, or any other group which he designated. At Granada, the project director had appointed an advisory committee of five, the functions of which paralleled those of the community council. At Rohwer and Jerome, the Block Managers were as frequently as, or more often consulted on center problems than was the community council. Central Utah provided an exception to this general situation. There the project director followed a consistent policy of consultation and kept the council informed of administrative and community problems. A functioning system of communication had evolved at Colorado River as a result of the November incident.

Part of the explanation for this confused situation was the failure of project administrators to recognize the functions of the

community council as separate and complementary to those of the administration. The residents were similarly uninformed and had little confidence in the council to secure amelioration of existing conditions. With each new crisis, rump groups were organized to negotiate with the project director. The administration, by consulting with such rump groups, further contributed to the ineffectiveness of the representative function of the council.

There were, however, some bright spots in this generally discouraging picture. From Central Utah came a letter from the chairman of the community council, prepared in response to a letter from the chairman of the council at Colorado River, and containing some proposals which had considerable influence on subsequent policy. Some of the more interesting and significant suggestions and requests made by the chairman in March of 1943 are quoted below:

> "(1) To be given the opportunity to have representative in Washington to form the over-all WRA policy particularly with emphasis on the budget which will be soon passed by the Congress.
>
> "(2) To make a request to obtain transportation expenses to job destinations and also a machinery to secure temporary loan after arriving. This, because of the fact that most evacuees are without sufficient funds.
>
> "(3) Request to the War Department, WRA and other governmental agencies not to penalize 'teen-age' youths without giving them the opportunity to correct themselves. This is in connection with the recent registration because of the fact that they had difficulty in making their decisions and also on account of their youth and immaturity.
>
> "(4) Concern over the possible and probable chaos in the sense of manpower shortage within the center as a result of the operation of the policy to relocate. Would it not be possible to conduct a survey to determine the possible future labor condition in order to forestall that possibility prior to its actual happening?"[1]

Although it was not considered feasible to grant the first request, careful attention was given to the remaining recommendations.

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[1]Extract from letter of Tsune Baba, Chairman Topaz Community Council to Project Director Charles F. Ernst, Central Utah Relocation Center, March 13, 1943.

Shortly thereafter WRA began paying transportation expenses and making leave assistance grants to relocating evacuees. Hearings were given those evacuees who wished to revise the answers to the controversial questions put to them in the confused period of registration, and adjustments were made in the project employment program to offset the drain on center manpower caused by the increasingly vigorous relocation program.

## E. Extending Representation to the Issei

The exclusion of the Issei from elective office had proved a constant stumbling block to the evacuees in their attempts to establish permanent government. In the course of time, and with the tacit approval of project officials, a semi-satisfactory solution to the problem was being achieved at various centers.

Poston, Granada, Rohwer, and Jerome had established Issei advisory boards, which were complementary to the temporary community councils. At Heart Mountain and Granada, the attempts to secure approval of an upper advisory elected group of Issei had been disapproved by Washington. The discrimination was overcome at Granada, however, by an agreement that the block managers would be a completely Issei group and the resignation of the Nisei then serving in that capacity. Heart Mountain had met the situation by preparing a charter which gave to the community council powers far greater than those provided in the policy statement. The rejection of this charter by the administration led to a period of non-activity and status quo with Issei block chairmen as representative of the residents. Manzanar had given up all intentions of attempting to establish community government and the project administration was using block managers as the channel of communication with the evacuees. Central Utah had appointed a number of Issei to various committees and many were block managers. At Minidoka, an advisory group, almost entirely Issei in composition, was consulted by the administration.

The solution of Issei representation at Tule Lake was solved by the establishment of a planning board. This board was formally established with a charter setting forth its membership, organization, and responsibilities. The preamble of this charter was a clear statement of the intention of the residents to meet the problem of lack of Issei representation. It read:

> "Because of the WRA ruling that no Issei shall serve on the community council, there has been a feeling that the former has not been adequately represented. In the face of such facts, it has become necessary that some kind of an Issei organization be formulated to assist the council in the community affairs."

The planning board was originally initiated by a resolution of the temporary community council and its charter closely paralleled the charter of the council. Its membership was entirely Issei. Each block elected one representative, and the representatives from the seven wards selected from their number one member to serve on the planning board. The election was by popular vote, and all residents were eligible as electors. The planning board was advisory with direct channels of communication with the project director, the community council, and the residents. Provision was also made for appointment of a staff to be composed of one Issei, one Nisei, and one Kibei. The purpose of the staff was to gather the necessary information to permit the planning board to take constructive action. It also provided that the executive secretary and one other member of the council would maintain permanent contact with the board. A memorandum prepared in Washington in January 1943 said in part:

> "The organization of the board and the procedures for influencing and determining public opinion are as truly democratic as could be wished for. The positive character of the board to investigate and plan for the betterment of the community is commendable. Lastly, the utilization of Issei participation in a complementary and not competitive manner may be the solution to our problem of community government. The Issei may be and probably are the real power in the community, but [here] they operate in organized and systematic manner for the betterment of the community and provide advice to the younger and more American Nisei group."

These attempts on the part of the evacuees to meet the realistic need for Issei representation, together with the recommendations from project personnel and a clearer appreciation of the problem in Washington, were contributing factors to the decision to change the policy of Issei representation. Among those in Washington were some who originally favored the inclusion of the Issei and had gone along hesitantly with the original policy. They, too, pressed for a change in this direction.

The amendment to Administrative Instruction 34 opening the way for Issei participation was signed by the Director on April 19, 1943. The change in policy was justified in a prefatory statement which pointed out that continued departure of the more mature leaders among the citizen evacuees who had taken an active part in community affairs, left the younger and immature citizens, who were not as well qualified, to assume the responsibilities of community government. It also pointed out that as this process continued, the alien evacuees would constitute an increasingly great majority of the mature population. For that reason, it was advisable to modify the policy previously followed by

extending to the Issei eligibility for elective office.

An air mail letter announcing the change in policy was sent to all project directors on April 23. This letter pointed out that the change should receive favorable reception. The change was conceived as a liberalization of policy in response to the desires and wishes of the community and the recommendations of the staff. Reference was made to some of the fears expressed by various administrative people. These included the election of a preponderance of Issei members, a loss of prestige by the citizens, extensive use of the Japanese language, and emphasis on Japanese social characteristics. The benefits seen were "bringing Issei leadership, that might have been driven underground, into the open; the more experienced Issei will cooperate better in solving problems; the loss through relocation of the best Nisei and probable decline of quality of council membership and work will be offset; the broadening of the base of representation is in line with democratic principles and aims placing responsibility for a stable community on all."

The announcement was made at the centers on May 5 and had an immediate desirable effect. Within the following three months, charters were submitted and voted upon by the residents of six centers--Rohwer, Jerome, Colorado River, Gila River, and Heart Mountain. All gave approval to the plan of government which included Issei eligibility to hold office. Minidoka, too, voted on a charter but through a combination of factors it was defeated. At a subsequent election it was approved.

## CHAPTER V

## THE WAY AHEAD

By the summer of 1943, community government had improved its status with both evacuees and administrators. The administration was turning more frequently and extensively to the councils as a medium of communication with the residents. Project staffs had learned that the councils and council groups were as eager as themselves to have a well-ordered community and that the councils could lend real assistance in meeting some problems.

Community understanding and acceptance of the representative system had similarly increased as the channels through the council to the administration became better known and more frequently used. The residents began to look to their representatives to bring problems of the community to the attention of the administration.

The projects had become better organized. The flow of goods and services had become sufficiently routinized so that the inefficiencies and unmet needs could be placed in a perspective of relative importance. Many of the residents had settled down to an existence that was generally endurable and from which there grew certain satisfactions and benefits. They had learned the limitations of expectancy although many anxieties were still reflected from time to time. These anxieties concerned food, health, employment, education and recreation. They were the normal concerns of a group that had little control over the events which shaped their lives, and that feared what little they had might be taken away or greatly curtailed.

The increasing success with which the council was able to secure remedial measures in some areas and to provide an understanding of limitations in others contributed to a growing sense of security.

### A. Segregation

There were, however, anxieties which rose and fell in intensity with each new move or change in policy by the WRA. One such anxiety was the fear that the Government would decide upon a policy of segregation and forced relocation. Rumors were current in many projects, during registration, that the Government would separate the "disloyals" from the "loyals," and then would disperse the "loyals" throughout the country. This rumor was a contributing factor to the large number of people who sought refuge by staying at Tule Lake during segregation and to the large number of repatriation requests made at other centers by families who, to avoid enforced relocation, sought a haven with the "disloyals."

Following registration and the disclosure that large numbers had requested repatriation and others had answered the loyalty question in the negative, agitation for segregation increased from many directions. Pressure was placed on the WRA by the Army, Congressional committees, the JACL, administrative personnel, and by the evacuees themselves. The decision to segregate was announced in early July. Previous to this time, however, the Washington staff had been engaged in discussing the plans and policies for segregation and the administration of a segregation center. The decision was welcomed by most project personnel as a solution to the difficult problem of administering a center composed of groups which appeared to be diametrically opposed in their ultimate objective. One segment of the evacuees had declared for Japan or against the United States, and the other for America.

Segregation was in reality a step in the direction of securing the voluntary relocation of all evacuees. It was the hope of the WRA officials that upon completion of segregation, it would be possible to gain widespread official and public acceptance for the loyal evacuees, to remove many of the security restrictions at relocation centers, and thus reduce center population materially by relocation and dispersal of the residents throughout the country.

The entire program was carefully prepared and contingencies were provided for. Both Washington and the centers had learned many useful lessons from the confused period of registration, and strenuous efforts were made to insure complete understanding of the objectives and plans necessary to accomplish the regrouping of people according to their national sympathies. A meeting of project directors was held in Denver the latter part of July. Policies and procedures were carefully studied to insure complete understanding. Preparations under way at the centers even before the project directors' meeting were given impetus by the return of the project directors from the Denver conference. Two of the project directors, acting upon a suggestion made at the Denver meeting, called upon their community councils for major assistance. At other centers, the movement was under the direct supervision of the administrative staff with the assistance of the block managers and in some instances an advisory group drawn from the council, and often from the segregants themselves.

The organization of the movement at Central Utah, where the community council was given a major share of responsibility, is of interest as an example of the operation of the principles of joint participation and responsibility. There, the project director, following receipt of information on segregation, established a staff group called the Administrative Transfer Committee. His next step was to inform the representatives of the community council of the new policy. The community council immediately called block meetings, at which this information was passed on and the segregants elected one of their

members to be a representative. Thirty-four blocks sent representatives to a Transferee Committee. This group elected a chairman who in turn appointed five members from the committee to serve as the executive group. The community council delegated to a Community Cooperative Committee of five members the responsibility for representing the remainder of the residents.

Since the movement involved both the transfer of people from Central Utah and the reception and induction of people from Tule Lake, there was a division of community functions. The Transferee Committee was primarily concerned with facilitating the smooth movement of their group from the center, while the council committee was concerned with the reception of the incoming Tule Lakers. During the several weeks of preparation and movement, the General Transfer Committee, composed of the Administrative Transfer Committee, the Transferee Committee, and the Community Cooperative Committee were in almost continuous consultation on problems connected with the total segregation movement.

The merit of this plan of organization was the adequate channeling of communication through the community council and the Transferee Committee direct to each individual segregant. The organization achieved not only communication but also effective planning and action. Through this organization, the segregants selected from among their own members the train monitor, car captains, and others having responsibilities during the trip. As a result of carefully developed plans with full participation of the community, the movement of Tule Lake-bound segregants was accomplished without difficulty.

The Community Cooperative Committee kept the council and through it the residents informed of plans and developments and secured their cooperation. Through the Special Events Committee of the council, plans were made for welcoming the newcomers. Two or three days after the arrival of each train, a special program under the sponsorship of the council was arranged for the benefit of the new people. This committee also cooperated in the reception and induction procedures. The incoming people were met at the gate by the Boy Scouts' drum and bugle corps, escorted to the induction center where light refreshments were served, and then directed to their permanent or temporary quarters.

The organization of the movement at the Rohwer center was similar to that at Central Utah. There a committee of the community council and a committee of segregants worked in close collaboration with the project administration in effecting all plans, thus winning favorable comment from the project director.

Segregation was an important event in the development of community government. Its chief importance rested in the removal from the centers of a number of people who were actively opposed to any form of

cooperation with the project administration. This removal made possible the hastening of the development of a common basis of action for all center residents by themselves and the WRA. Project administration, with the removal of many who were suspected by the administration of being actual or potential trouble-makers, was more disposed to have confidence that a community council could handle internal problems. The active cooperation of the councils at two centers, and to a lesser extent elsewhere, provided a sound basis for future cooperative action.

## B. The Policy of Relocation

Even before the completion of segregation, preliminary discussions and plans were being developed in Washington for the initiation of an all-out program of relocation. These plans included staff reorganization, the expansion of the field service, and a concentrated program of information directed at the American public and the evacuees. The reorganization included the separation of the relocation function from the Employment Division and the establishment of the Relocation Division. Field offices were expanded and increased in number. Citizens' committees were organized and understandings reached with local, state, and national agencies and organizations.

The Authority recognized that, so long as the West Coast continued to be closed to evacuees, it was impossible to achieve a complete depopulation of the centers. However, it was expected that many thousands would leave quickly under new relocation procedures. When this expectation did not materialize, it was a considerable shock to many WRA officials to learn that, in spite of desirable economic opportunities, good public acceptance, and continued relaxation of security measures by the Army, many, if not most of the evacuees, preferred the familiar institutional life of a relocation center to the unexperienced condition of life in an unfamiliar American community. The enigma of people choosing the security behind barbed wire and armed guards rather than the freedom of normal society was not easily understood. It was felt by many that a combination of pressure, salesmanship, and incentives would do the job.

The real deterrents to relocation were little understood at that time. One of the most important of these factors was the belief held by many evacuees that there would be a negotiated peace. Many, expecially among the Issei, thought that they would receive special consideration under the peace treaty terms which would reimburse them for their loss and reestablish them in as favorable, if not more desirable, status than had been theirs before evacuation. An additional and important factor was an intense fear of personal and economic insecurity on the outside. These fears included those of physical violence, destruction of property, and economic discrimination. There was also a fair-sized group which had found in the centers greater security and more comforts

than it had known before and was not eager to relinquish these advantages. The Authority approached the problem on the basis of the need to create interest, to point to the desirability of relocating, to acquaint the evacuees with the advantages of particular localities or occupations, and to provide services for those who decided to leave.

Beginning in September and continuing for several months, many of the Washington staff were almost continuously engaged in discussing the pros and cons of relocation, resistance to relocation, organization, procedures, policies, and the like. As agreement evolved, reorganization was seen as the initial step. There was also recognized, however, the need to set objectives for the relocation program and to secure their acceptance by both the project staff and the evacuees; to provide channels of communication to the evacuees and to secure their participation in a relocation program; and to implement the program with policies and procedures. It was believed that through organization, to provide services, an educational program to stimulate thinking about the future, and the removal of psychic blocks through counseling, many more would leave the centers.

From these discussions there emerged three memoranda which contained the philosophy, organization, and plans for relocation. A considerable portion of these memoranda recognized the need for evacuee participation and understanding of the relocation program if it were to succeed. The memorandum of October 28 recognized this need in a sentence which read: "A progressive relocation program can be achieved only through the full and complete participation and cooperation of the evacuee population; and there should be increased delegation of responsibility to the community council and other evacuee groups to make their participation possible."

This idea was elaborated by an additional comment quoted below:

> "The future of the evacuees is of greater concern to them than to anyone else, and they should fully share in planning their relocation. This should be borne in mind in carrying out the relocation program, and evacuee cooperation should be secured through delegation of responsibilities. Since the council is elected to represent the community, it is essential that it be involved in the relocation planning, and other representative evacuee groups may have additional contributions to make. The first step in evacuee participation might well be the determination by the council of the answers to certain basic problems that will affect future participation, such as:

"(1) Kind of organization that should be established by the community council to deal with relocation problems for the evacuee community, with full consideration given existing evacuee relocation committees.

"(2) The relationship of the community council and evacuee relocation committees to project staff functions in connection with relocation.

"(3) The nature and extent of the responsibility that may be effectively delegated to the community council (and the evacuee community) in connection with the relocation program.

"It is recognized that plans for greater evacuee participation are well under way at some projects, and suggestions and comments of project directors and community councils growing out of their experience will be welcomed. Extra copies of this letter are being sent to you under separate cover so that you can make them available to the council."

The suggestion was also made that a national conference of evacuee representative--those at the centers, those who had relocated, and Japanese Americans who had never been in relocation centers--should be held, the purpose of which conference "would be to draw the attention of the Japanese Americans to the larger problems of relocation, to stimulate them to plan for the eventual absorption into American life of all persons of Japanese descent and to form the basis for a comprehensive assimilation program."

A memorandum of November 8 elaborated on the earlier statements and provided a detailed plan for achieving the objective of joint planning between the staff and the evacuees. Full recognition was given to the community council as representatives of the evacuees and as the group which should assume a major responsibility in the planning efforts.

The plan provided for the establishment of a Relocation Planning Commission to be appointed by the community council and to be composed of representatives of various resident groups. This commission would then select an executive secretary. The project director was to appoint a Relocation Committee composed of staff members with the relocation program officer as its executive secretary. Three representatives of each of these groups were to constitute the Relocation Executive Board with the relocation officer as the executive secretary and with the executive secretary of the Relocation Planning Commission as an

ex-officio member.

The function of the evacuee commission was "to coordinate the efforts of the various committees (of the council), to prepare regular reports of progress, to receive suggestions for improvement of the program, and to transmit these suggestions and reports to the Relocation Executive Board."

The Relocation Committee had as its responsibility "planning and coordinating the contribution of the various divisions and the sections to relocation. It will develop procedures and provide general guidance for all coordinated operations. It will prepare and submit recommendations to the project director on changes in organization or program emphasis which lead to better working relations between the divisions and sections. It will be responsible for planning active participation of all staff members and utilizing interests and capabilities of all persons in whatever capacity."

The responsibilities of the Relocation Executive Board were planning, coordination, and guidance. In this capacity, it would make recommendations to the project director for transmission to Washington for changes in policy or program, and to secure approval of policies and plans as they operated in the center. It would define responsibility of the staff and evacuee groups, develop cooperative relationships, determine the sequence of phases of the program, and work out details implementing agreements or resolving disagreements.

Further implementation of this more aggressive relocation policy was spelled out in a memorandum on welfare counseling issued November 9, 1943. This memorandum called attention to the individual and family problems of a social nature which were basic in relocation resistance. It also developed a plan for individual and family counseling and put the responsibility on the welfare section. Its objectives were to assist evacuees in developing plans for relocation, to furnish information on the resources of communities to which evacuee might go, to gather basic family data which could be transmitted to the appropriate relocation office when a family relocated, and to provide WRA with information for an over-all program. It was not intended that the family counseling program should be used as a pressure technique to force people to relocate. Its major objective was the transmittal of reliable information to the people counseled and, through the interviewing technique, to relieve them of many psychological blocks.

A detailed approach to secure community acceptance for family counseling and to facilitate interviewing was included as a part of this document. It provided that the head counselor of the welfare section should discuss the program with the community council and, having secured its understanding and acceptance, ask for the appointment

of a counseling committee to work with the welfare section. This committee would also be thoroughly informed of the objectives and techniques of counseling, and would assume responsibility for advising the welfare section on its approach and also for familiarizing the residents with the objectives and the basis of scheduling interviews. It was proposed that interviewing be conducted on a block basis and that previous to scheduling interviews a thorough understanding and acceptance on the part of the residents should be achieved. The block manager would then schedule each family in his block for the welfare section. This procedure would be repeated block by block until the interviewing program had been completed.

These plans represented the most comprehensive and detailed attempt ever made by the WRA to bring joint efforts to bear on the solution of a common problem. Their description will help us to understand the subsequent events and to evaluate the kind of relationships existing between the administrative staff, the community council, and the evacuees.

The failure of this plan to work as it was outlined rests upon a history of past relationships, inability to develop organization, and a lack of understanding between some staff members and the evacuees. The plan was partially successful. However, a year and one-half later, the welfare section was still engaged in conducting interviews or re-interviewing families where an inadequate first interview had been held. A year later one of the centers established its first evacuee relocation commission. Another center which had made a number of unsuccessful attempts to secure evacuee participation finally concluded that its attempts were useless. Counseling was divided between the welfare section and the relocation division and in actual operation assumed a character far different from what was originally intended.

Generally speaking, the response to the plan for the organization of staff-evacuee relocation groups indicated better understanding than that accorded other portions of these documents. Project directors did appoint staff committees to discuss problems of relocation even though, with a few exceptions, these committees were inactive within a short period. The failure came largely from an inability to convince participating staff members that they could make a significant contribution to the total relocation program by going beyond their regular duties. At these meetings, the relocation officer made a report of relocation progress, and new policies and procedures. This was not the function envisaged for them in the original statement.

Several of the community councils established relocation planning commissions. Again, however, there was considerable misunderstanding and misinterpretation on the part of both the administrative people and the evacuees of the function of this group. At some centers, the

relocation officer attempted to utilize the group as a channel for pressuring people to relocate. When the commission resisted his efforts to convert them to his propaganda program, he either lost interest or decided that the commission was useless.

Evacuee participation in relocation planning was a half-hearted gesture at several centers. An active relocation commission was already functioning at Rohwer and Gila River. At both these centers, these groups were directly related to or were creations of the community council rather than of the administration. Commissions were eventually started at all other centers except Manzanar. The one at Central Utah was never very active and defined its activities narrowly. The Granada commission was originally a creation of the administration, and only after several months did it become identified with the council. It was not until the fall of 1944 that an evacuee relocation group was established at Poston.

In one respect, these evacuee groups achieved a much larger measure of success than might under the circumstances have been anticipated. For one thing, relocation was not a popular subject among the evacuees, and it was with some difficulty that evacuees were persuaded to serve with these groups. There was the ever present fear, which was frequently justified, that these evacuee groups would become subject to administrative pressure of a kind that was unpopular within the center. The attempt on the part of some relocation supervisors to place responsibility for drumming up trade for the relocation office with the evacuee groups was resisted and was a perversion of the original intent. The fact that these commissions survived the staff relocation committee and were generally more active indicates that they did meet a need in the community. At those projects where the relocation officer met frequently with the commissions and kept them informed of policy and problems, there was a much better response. The failure of administrative leadership was in large measure responsible for these groups failing to assume the role intended for them.

A third factor contributing to the lack of widespread participation was the inability of the welfare section to initiate its program of family counseling within a reasonable period of time. Several months passed before personnel had been recruited and decisions made as to the data to be gathered in the family interviews. When the centers were finally informed of what was desired, it appeared to many people, including the evacuees, that the counseling program was in effect another registration. As such it encountered considerable opposition. Furthermore, there is no record that any welfare section ever attempted to enlist the support of the community in the systematic manner outlined in the memorandum of November 9. By the time the interviewing unit did get under way, its original purpose had been greatly modified and a large portion of the operational job and personnel had been allocated to

the relocation division.

The inability to achieve the objectives of evacuee participation in a relocation program was due to many factors inherent in the total situation. These factors included a set pattern of managerial direction and supervision by an administrative staff and the failure to appreciate or understand the useful potentialities of consultation with evacuees through organization in the achievement of a goal. There was also the difficulty of definition of objectives. The administrative staff was primarily interested in moving increasingly large numbers of people out of the centers. Many of the evacuees were not interested in leaving the centers under the conditons then existing, and others were unwilling to leave under any conditions.

Although this situation was fully recognized in the three memoranda discussed above and although procedures were developed to break down opposition, a common interpretation at the projects was that this new program really meant increased pressures to get more people to move. Many of the actions of the national office of WRA began to be interpreted by project administrations and evacuees alike as evidence that people were going to be forced out of the centers. This attitude, justified or not, did much to intensify feelings of insecurity and to prevent such discussion as might lead to a commitment to leave the center. There was also the failure on the part of the Washington office to provide adequate implementation with personnel and procedures to initiate the counseling program in such a way that its objectives could be understood by the community.

There was, however, one immediate response from the evacuees. There developed a demand for a conference of center delegates to discuss problems of relocation and relocation centers.

### C. The Abortive Evacuee Conference

The first serious attempt to secure evacuee participation on a major policy problem, that of relocation, evoked wide interest at several centers. The suggestion in the Director's letter of October 28, 1943, that a national conference of evacuee and WRA officials might be desirable was followed up by a resolution of the community council at Heart Mountain favoring such a proposal. This resolution was adopted by the council November 30, transmitted to the National Director, and copies sent to all other centers requesting their support. A similar resolution from Rohwer and concurrence from councils at other centers caused officials in Washington to give serious consideration to such a meeting.

Agreement was reached with the Director that the WRA would sponsor a national evacuee conference on relocation the latter part of January 1944 in Chicago. It was arranged that each center should send



698233 O - 46 - 5

two representatives and that relocated people in each of the eight areas should also send representatives. It was decided, because of possible public criticism, that it would be unwise for the WRA to pay the expenses of these delegates and that the individuals or communities must defray traveling and living expenses. Announcement of this decision was made by teletype to each of the centers and relocation offices on January 1. The teletype requested a reply by January 10, listing important questions to be discussed and decision as to representation. It said "prior to the conference, you will also want to agree on and have ready a list of the major problems facing center residents in terms of their future as well as specific plans or proposals for creating better understanding and working relationships between the evacuees and the Authority for discussion at the conference."

The response from all centers, except Manzanar, was an agreement on the need for such a conference and willingness to attend, with strong representations that WRA bear the expense of the delegates. The WRA again reiterated its stand on delegate expense.

During the next few days, there was much discussion in Washington as to the organization and purpose of such a conference; these discussions revealed serious differences of opinion among the key staff members. The relocation division maintained that the conference was primarily for discussion of ways and means to increase relocation. Others took the position that the conference objectives should be framed in terms of the larger problem of the future of Japanese in America, and that there was need to develop a working basis for creating understanding between the evacuees on problems besides those of relocation.

The combination of disagreement in the Washington office, the attempt of the evacuees to secure expenses for their delegates, various evacuee disagreements and the need for additional time to develop understanding and agreement on an agenda, led to the decision to postpone the conference indefinitely, and the centers were so notified on January 14. Detailed explanation of the position of the WRA in terms of its inability to cover expenses of such a conference and of the objectives to be sought from such a meeting were contained in a letter of January 29 addressed to all the councils. This letter said in part:

> "When we asked ourselves what purpose such a meeting should serve, we came to the conclusion that it should be phrased in the broadest possible language. The many anxieties and uncertainties which the evacuees feel individually and in the group could be encompassed under the general heading of the future of all persons of Japanese ancestry in the United States. There is no delusion that one or many meetings could dispel all those anxieties, but it was hoped that through the

opportunity to discuss fully the manifold problems which the evacuees are facing, some mutual agreement could be reached on the nature of the problems and of action that could alleviate or help remedy the situation.

"Delegates would undoubtedly wish to present from their point of view the many and complex problems facing the evacuees. Family adjustment, economic security, social acceptance, and the post-war world would all come in for their share of discussion. There should also be constructive discussion where plans and programs could be proposed that would work to remove as many as possible of the hindrances which the evacuees saw facing them.

"Since these problems are also of primary concern to the Authority, there would be an opportunity for mutual exchange of constructive ideas. An opportunity would also be afforded for a statement of our relations with Congress and the American people, the expenditure of money and the legal controls and responsibilities which we must carry. A review of the legal standing of the evacuees as presently interpreted by the courts could be given. The limitations which surround any Federal program and their specific application to the program of the War Relocation Authority could be presented."

This communication stated also that the WRA would assume the responsibility of acting as a clearing house for statements prepared by various councils. It was assumed that by circulation of these various documents from center to center it would be possible to reach agreement on the fundamental issues to be placed on the agenda of such a meeting.

A counter-proposal came from the Heart Mountain council--which had taken the initiative in a letter of February 9. It suggested that the conference should be held at the Granada Relocation Center from March 6 to 17, 1944, and that the first half of this period should be limited in attendance to the evacuee delegates. It pointed out that the expense of holding a meeting in Chicago was so great that it would work a real hardship. The letter concluded with the assurance that Heart Mountain would send its delegates to a conference "where and when the conference is called and regardless of expense. The main thing is to call the conference and call it as soon as possible." In a letter of February 22, the Heart Mountain council reiterated the need for a national conference and proposed the establishment of small family-type hostels in key cities to house from 50 to 100 families. It recommended financial assistance which might be secured by pooling the resources of the center cooperatives.

In the meantime, however, the Washington office of WRA had decided that the conference should be postponed indefinitely. The decision was based upon two facts: (1) the current unrest in the centers over the operation of Selective Service; and, (2) the recent transfer of WRA to the Department of the Interior: the administration was not yet sure of the degree to which the transfer would affect the Authority's policy-making powers.

The question of a national conference was finally disposed of by an administrative notice issued April 15, which, in addition to pointing out the undesirability of any such meeting within the near future, vetoed the proposal to conduct an all-center conference at any relocation center. It was stated, however, that, if the evacuees wished to have a meeting outside a relocation center, WRA would raise no objection. The evacuees were cautioned against taking any action which might affect the group adversely.

Interest in a conference had in the meantime been submerged in a more pressing issue: the announcement of the restoration of Selective Service to the Nisei had revived and intensified evacuee interest in some of the old problems of civil rights and citizenship status. It is not clear that any large segment of the population had ever been vitally interested in holding the all-center conference, and those who were eager to have it were discouraged because of what they called WRA's lack of good intentions as evidenced (according to evacuee interpretation) by the Authority's refusal to pay the expenses of the delegates.

## D. Selective Service and the Councils

The reinstitution of Selective Service for the Nisei in January of 1944 precipitated another major crisis at the relocation centers. The old wounds of evacuation were reopened. Bitterness and resentment which had lain dormant for several months were expressed in violent emotional outbursts. Much of the discussion represented an honest effort to secure answers to legitimate questions. Some people used the incident, however, to stir up opposition, while others used the opportunity to recount past injustices and seek a redress of grievances.

Petitions addressed to the President, Vice President, Secretary of War, Secretary of the Interior, the Director of WRA, and other public agencies and officials were prepared and transmitted through the community councils. These petitions represented the reaction of the more responsible residents following the initial outbursts of emotion, and were close approximations of majority thinking. These petitions were also a reflection of the fears of continuing discrimination and ill treatment. Many Nisei felt that the plan of the War Department was in effect an affirmation of their fears of a second-class citizenship status; others, particularly parents, were fearful that Nisei troops

would be used for suicide missions and that their treatment as casualties and in training would be inadequate and inferior to that provided other American soldiers. These uncertainties were a normal reaction of people who had been subjected to a forced evacuation and who had for many months been removed from the main stream of American life. The anxieties were to be expected of an isolated group which lived in an environment of uncertainty. Each petition contained an affirmation of loyalty and the desire to accept the obligations of citizenship, but included a list of grievances and objectives which were regarded as an essential restoration of rights and privileges.

If we examine the events at several centers, we can better understand some of the factors at work. The community council at Granada became the focal point for the conflict which developed at that center. The issue, as first defined, was one of resistance to Selective Service unless a full restoration of civil rights and recompense for losses engendered by evacuation were guaranteed. The more moderate group favored cooperation with Selective Service but asked for favorable attention to evacuee grievances. When a vote was taken only four blocks dissented from the more moderate course. The alien members of the council who had originally disavowed any direct interest in the problem aligned themselves with the non-ultimatum group.

Following an expression of loyalty, the petition stated, "we believe, however, that the rights and privileges of citizenship, in all justice, be combined with the duties and obligations of citizenship." It then proceeded to list point by point the conditions which the signers felt would need to be met before the rights and privileges were fully restored.

The petition asked that citizens be eligible for all branches of the armed services without regard to racial ancestry. Request was made that all citizens should be allowed to travel wherever they wished in the United States including the West Coast states, from which they were still excluded. It asked for the restoration of full civil rights guaranteed under the Constitution. The request was made for a guarantee of physical safety and provision of adequate economic means for those who resettled. The need for clarification of voting rights was mentioned and the desirability for extension of eligibility to citizenship to the aliens. It requested fair treatment for those who remained in the relocation centers and an adequate wage for work performed, based on U. S. Army standards. Request was made that the Government would assume the responsibility for enlightening the American public as to the difference between the enemy Japanese and the law-abiding and loyal Japanese in the United States. It requested the removal of restrictions preventing attendance at certain institutions of higher education. Finally the petition urged that the Government should take precautionary measures to protect any and all minorities from the

possibility of future mass exclusion and evacuation.

Feelings against certain aspects of the Selective Service program ran high at Central Utah. There a citizens' committee composed of two representatives from each block was established. The community council established a Selective Service committee which included a representative of the citizens' committee as one of its members. The citizens' committee prepared a petition which in its drafting revealed the divergent attitudes found elsewhere.

The petition was transmitted through the community council and raised a number of questions. It posed the question of the legality of induction since the citizens affected were in effect incarcerated and under supervision of military guards. It asked questions regarding the basis for the determination to extend Selective Service to the Nisei, the status of returned veterans, the limitation of service in the armed services and the reason for a segregated unit. A request was made for the extension of citizenship rights to aliens, the reopening of the West Coast, and dependency allotments. It asked for the elimination of the special procedure for war plant clearance as applied to persons of Japanese ancestry and for measures to counteract discrimination and to restore full civil rights.

The petition from Minidoka was prepared by a citizens' committee and covered many of the points already mentioned, but included a request for special military training in colleges and universities, equal opportunity for advancement, and equality in employment in industry. This petition asked also for favorable consideration of the parents of soldiers in the Army and their reclassification to a friendly alien status, financial restitution for loss, and action against anti-Japanese discrimination and propaganda.

The situation which developed at Heart Mountain was more dramatic and heated than at other centers, and the results were more serious. There, a small group under the name of the Fair Play Committee not only agitated for restoration of civil rights and protested certain aspects of the program, but also used the occasion to attack the WRA and the local community council. As a result of temporary but widespread support, the Fair Play Committee was able to develop considerable resistance to Selective Service with the consequence that a fairly large group of young men refused to report for induction.

The community council, composed at this time entirely of Issei, had at first maintained a "hands off" attitude toward the whole issue. As the feeling became more intense and the position of the council came under criticism of the Fair Play Committee leaders, the council took the lead in preparing a petition which in its contents was similar to that of other centers. This petition reaffirmed the loyalty of the signers, called attention to the hardships of evacuation, asked for

universal application of the draft without segregation, induction into all branches of the armed services, return to the West Coast, full civil rights, and the same treatment for Nisei soldiers as for other American soldiers. There was also a petition signed by Issei which simply commended the Nisei petition to the consideration of the President. During the ensuing period of conflict, council members were forced to define their position and contributed much to maintain sanity and balanced judgment on the issues involved.

Although the petitions produced little immediate amelioration for the mass of the evacuees, they did clarify the situation and gave an emotional release. As the process of calling young men to the Army continued, many of the earlier problems were satisfactorily solved. Nisei were made eligible for the special Army training program at universities and colleges. The long delay between physical examination and induction of the Nisei was gradually shortened. Letters from boys actually in the Army must also have had their effect.

Perhaps as important a factor as any was the fundamental cooperativeness of the Japanese. The desire to give some expression of Godspeed and good wishes to the departing young men gave an opportunity for organized center groups to participate. At several centers, the community council, USO, and parent-soldier groups joined together in sponsoring farewells.

The most significant change came with the announcement of casualties from the ranks of those already fighting. At Minidoka, a chairman of the community council requested the project director for permission to hold a center-wide memorial service for several young men who had been killed. Other centers organized memorial services with evacuees and staff honoring the parents of deceased soldiers. The war had changed from "<u>the</u> war" to "<u>our</u> war."

# CHAPTER VI

## COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

The emergence of community organization within the framework of administrative controls was a slow and difficult process. The direct supervisory controls extended to housing, food, employment, public relief, law and order, maintenance, fire protection, transportation, industrial and agricultural production, budgeting and finance, property, health services, education, and others. In only three areas of community life was any measurable degree of responsibility extended to the evacuees. Through a community-owned cooperative the distribution of those goods and services not furnished directly by the Government was placed in evacuee hands. Through recreational associations, at several centers, athletic and cultural activities were organized, directed, and partly financed by the residents. Through community government opportunity was given for political organization and expression. In tracing the emergence and growth of the latter, some discussion must be devoted to the civil-service staff to whom was assigned the administrative and technical responsibility of center management.

### A. The "Administration"

References to the "administration" have appeared many times in this record of community government. Of the three major systems of relationships at each center, that one between the administrators and the administered was the most dynamic and explosive of all. The history of community government is the history of the attempt to adjust and systematize the relations between these two segments.

The "appointed personnel" was the term used to describe the civil-service employees of the War Relocation Authority and their families. This small group of three to four hundred persons at each center provided a sharp contrast to the several thousand persons of Japanese descent. This group gradually came to possess many advantages of a superior variety. It lived in "staff housing," an area of better constructed and larger quarters than the "barracks" of the Japanese. Families lived in apartments with facilities for housekeeping while single staff members housed in barracks rooms or dormitories ate at a staff dining hall. Its civil-service remuneration--even though that remuneration did not include housing, food and other perquisites--was many times greater than the $16 or $19 per month paid the evacuees. There were separate recreational facilities and most centers had an "A.P." club. There was a freedom of movement and absence of restriction not accorded the evacuees. In summation, in every way it was the dominant controlling group occupying a real and symbolic position of superiority and separated from the evacuee community by many barriers.

Occupying the top position of this group was the project director. In him was vested the responsibility for all phases of center life and operation. His authority was not always final and his decisions were subject to policies and programs formulated by the national staff. Except in details, he had little discretion to amend or modify the orders issued as administrative instructions. He was also subject to pressures from his own staff, from the evacuees, and to a lesser extent from an intangible thing called "the public." He was frequently much more sensitive to maintaining good public relations than to the pressures emanating from the community. The staff pressures were those inevitably arising in a situation of this kind. They came from conflict of personalities, interpretation of policies, attitudes, methods of procedure, and intrastaff politics. Several project directors have commented that they were required to spend fully three-quarters of their time on staff problems.

Any attempt to describe common patterns of administrative attitude and behavior suffers from the danger of over-simplification. The personalities and experiences of the project personnel varied widely. There were some who had had a long career in Government service. There were others who had had no previous governmental experience. There were those who tended to be paternalistic; some were dictatorial and still others approached problems in a democratic fashion. Some were well-trained and efficient, others inefficient and incapable. In spite of these differences, there were certain similarities appearing as recurring constants influencing the behavior of all personnel: the necessity to conform to the policy and program determined oy the national staff; the need to maintain cooperative relations within the staff and between the staff and the community; the ever present threat of public criticism.

Attitudes of the "administrator" were frequently the controlling influence in relations with the evacuees and specifically the community councils. It is the practice of any administrator to utilize the administrative hierarchy for the accomplishment of his objectives. Usually, he secures cooperation by explanation and persuasion, but sometimes it is necessary to resort to the use of threats and even elimination of recalcitrant members of the organization. No successful administrator can long allow organized opposition within his staff to prevent the accomplishment of his objectives. That these objectives were determined for the project directors made little difference except in the demand on his ingenuity to gain their acceptance with both his staff and--something new to most administrators--a community.

The administrators, from long habit, extended the administrative viewpoint to include the community council. Protests from the council

that its function was to represent and work for the welfare of the residents were sometimes brushed aside by an administrator who sought effective methods of reaching his objectives. This philosophy and its results were all too clearly seen and described by one project director as follows:

> "From all appearances the council seems to be undergoing that process of disintegration which besets every attempt to set up a liaison group between the administrator and the administered. Because of necessity the administration must rule by fiat, the residents, at first optimistic, soon recognize the fact that the liaison group has not power to enforce the residents' interests when these interests are counter to the administration. The net result is that the liaison group, afraid of arousing the residents' overt animosity, becomes progressively more cautious and, as its reliance upon buck-passing increases, progressively less effective in furthering administration policies."

Many of the crises which developed at the centers arose because of the failure of the project directors to recognize the conflict between the utilization of the council as an administrative arm and the function of the council as representative of the residents' interests. There was, in fact, little appreciation that the interests of the residents could logically or desirably be different from those of the administration. In fact, these interests were frequently widely divergent and found expression in conflict between the administration and the community council.

Administrators who were in the habit of eliminating opposition from their staffs by whatever means were needed, were not always able to use the same techniques to bring the community councils into line because each proceeded from basically different assumptions. Project directors viewed opposition as expressions of individual obstructionism and not as signs of community disquiet. In one such instance a request was made to the National Director for permission to remove four individuals who were suspected of activities inimical to and critical of the administration. The project director admitted that it was impossible to develop any concrete evidence as to their subversive activities, but he maintained that their behavior convinced him that the project would be better off with their removal. These four individuals included the chairman and vice chairman of the community council and the other two were members of its executive committee.

Administrators frequently rationalized their behavior by stating that no one can bargain with the United States Government. They assumed that attempts to secure modifications of policies were in some measure

a flouting of the authority of the Government and should be suppressed. Sometimes they took the position that the policies laid down by Washington were beyond their control and they had no choice except to enforce them. There were occasions, however, when they transmitted protests from the community to the attention of Washington. A common attitude on the part of many administrators, when complaints were made to them was, "if you don't like conditions here you can relocate."

As is true of most administrators, the project directors used a number of techniques to secure compliance with the policies and procedures of the Government. These techniques included persuasion, threats, coercion, passive inaction, compromises and attempts to split the unity of the evacuee community by ignoring or bypassing the complaining groups, especially the council.

Persuasion, through consultation and discussion, was the most frequently used technique. One example where the interests of the community were involved brought agreement for reduction in consumption of gasoline and the use of motor equipment. The order had originally created considerable resistance from evacuee drivers and stimulated fears within the community that essential services would be curtailed. Agreement was reached, however, by working out the problem with the community council and pointing out the advantages which would accrue, as well as emphasizing that no essential activities would suffer. It was shown to be to the advantage of the evacuees that by careful use, there would be equipment to supply food to the mess halls, transport workers, and to provide transportation for events such as funerals and weddings. It was pointed out that the same rules applied to the appointed personnel as to the evacuees, and under the existing conditions this was a sensible and desirable procedure. With only minor protests from some of the evacuee drivers, a marked reduction in the consumption of gasoline was achieved.

Bargaining, accompanied by compromises and concessions, was a technique used by some project directors. At one project, a shortage of labor was overcome by an agreement that if the administration would pay overtime, the council would recruit sufficient labor to cultivate and harvest crops. Special privileges, such as food or clothing, were oftentimes demanded and given in order to recruit workers for distasteful jobs. If these arrangements were made with the community council it assumed the responsibility for securing labor.

The use of passive resistance or inaction was effective where the welfare of the residents outweighed the interest of the administration. Situations arose, for example, where it was impossible to recruit workers to collect garbage. The administration took the position that as far as it was concerned it was unimportant whether garbage was or was not collected. It was quite willing to provide trucks and to pay

workers, but if the community remained disinterested, then the administration was also disinterested. Threats on the part of certain groups of workers, particularly drivers of coal or food trucks to strike unless their demands were met were frequently ignored by the administration, which took the position that this was an operation of direct concern to the community, and if coal was not delivered or food provided to the mess halls, then the people would freeze or starve. In such situations the responsibility for solving the problems rested with the community and not the administration. There were some reverse situations where the council attempted to force action from the administration to solve food and fuel shortages.

The ultimatum technique, accompanied with actual or implied threats, was another of the devices used by some administrators to get action or agreement from the council. This technique was used in many situations and varied from simple demands to direct threats.

One of the more dramatic situations illustrating the use of this technique occurred at Minidoka where the project director created an issue around completion of the gymnasium and set off a chain of events which had widespread repercussions. The construction of the gymnasium had been allowed to drag along because of its low priority in relation to staff housing, hog pens and chicken houses. Organized pressures from both staff and evacuees began to appear in the summer of 1944. There was common agreement that early completion of the gymnasium for community use was desirable and that something should be done. An abortive attempt was made to arouse interest by the announcement of a joint staff-evacuee "Build the Gym Week." This proved an unhappy affair since only a few staff members and no evacuees appeared for the volunteer work. It was reported that staff members while working made slighting remarks about the efficiency of evacuee labor and that these were overheard and caused bad feelings. Too, the staff volunteers refused to be supervised by the evacuee foreman in charge, with the result that he walked off the job in a huff.

The project director, in the meantime, had secured an agreement with Washington that unless community interest to complete the gymnasium was demonstrated by an adequate number of workers, the gymnasium would be boarded up. Having secured this agreement, he addressed a communication to the community council advising it that it was to the community's interest to finish the construction of the gymnasium; that it was the community council's responsibility to provide workers, and that unless action was immediately forthcoming, the gymnasium would be left unfinished. This ultimatum, as it was interpreted by the council, aroused deep resentments and many of its members advocated that the council resign in protest against the dictatorial attitude of the project director. The situation was saved by the chairman of the

council who hoped to overcome the ill-feeling generated by the administration and wanted the gymnasium completed for center use. The council members addressed a letter to the project director, advising him of their willingness to cooperate. Their resentment, however, was reflected in the reply, a portion of which is quoted below:

> "The council has gone on record, unanimously, as regretting and resenting the fact that you have chosen to approach the council on this matter with an 'or else' ultimatum. We are told that in the meeting of the Manpower Commission held October 25, 1944, you emphasized the fact that your memorandum to the council actually was intentionally an ultimatum seeking to guarantee, 'or else,' and that you felt that you would 'just as soon board up the gymnasium right now' as the easiest method whereby to discharge your administrative responsibilities. We fail to understand the psychology which prompted you to adopt such tactics in dealing with the council; surely you are not so naive as to believe that either the council, or the evacuee residents as a whole, can best be moved to action under the brunt of dictatorial ultimatums?
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> "We might make the comment, incidentally, that majority opinion among residents clearly indicates a resentment towards the administration which is blamed for the fact that this project's gymnasium is at this late date still in the process of construction, while gymnasiums at all other projects (according to popular understanding) were completed and in use since long ago. The delay here is being attributed to the project administration's lack of sincerity in the matter of evacuee welfare, as manifested, specifically in the tardiness with which the construction was commenced despite having plans, materials, and abundant labor available during the early months of the project, in the substantial reduction of evacuee workers assigned to gymnasium construction via terminations ostensibly made necessary by budgetary limitations, and in the diverting of the reduced number of evacuee workers from the gymnasium to the construction of resident housing for the appointed personnel and for other work.
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> . . . . .
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> "The council will participate in the recruiting of additional workers for gymnasium construction, via the 'Irrigator,' and via block commissioners who were called to a joint meeting held specifically for this purpose on October 27, 1944, and, in consideration of probable best

> results, Mr. Ishimitsu and his men are to 'spearhead' the recruiting campaign. In spite of the manpower shortage now existing here, therefore, the community council now feels reasonably certain that the gymnasium will be completed for service, or in readiness to hold a function, on December 31, 1944."

The project director's reaction to the council's position as contained in his weekly report of October 21-28 was as follows:

> "The administration's ultimatum of course put the council members squarely on the spot insofar as they were, for a change, unable to pass the buck either back to the administration or on to any group of residents. This is not to say that they did not try--they tried valiantly--but they were hedged on one side by a deliberately uncompromising position on the part of the administration and on the other by the residents' desire for the gym, and--thanks to the editor of the Irrigator's Japanese section--by the residents' knowledge that the completion of the gym depended upon the council's action. The gym, therefore, will be completed December 30."

The confidence on the part of the project director that the gymnasium would be completed by the deadline was premature. Utilizing the known desire of the community to complete the gymnasium, he instituted an unannounced system of time checking which recorded the actual hours worked. When this became known by the workers and was brought to the attention of the council, which protested the method adopted, he justified his position on the grounds that he was responsible for expenditure of Government funds and that this responsibility included payment for work actually performed. Protests of the council that this system of time checking had never previously been used in any other activity and was not then being used except in the case of the workers at the gymnasium failed to influence the project director. Other issues also intruded including the status of the evacuee foreman who had for many months carried the burden of construction work and his relation to the additional Caucasian supervisors placed on the job. The regular crew walked off the job and new workers could not be recruited. Negotiations between council, workers, and administration continued, but with no success.

The council hoped to break the impasse by an appeal to the National Director. Its communication stressed not only the difficulties existing between the administration and the workers, but also its position as a successful mediating body. This last was made explicit in the paragraph which read:

> "The council was required to accept responsibility for the construction of the gymnasium, but it was never consulted thereafter before changes were made, and its advice calculated to avoid trouble was not accepted. The prolonged attempt to reconcile the stands of the administration and the workers has resulted in general demoralization of those who took part in the arbitration, and a further reduction of confidence in the council on the part of both the administration and the residents. If this final attempt at settlement of a relatively minor issue fails, it is clear that the usefulness of the council in aiding smoother relationship between the administration and the residents has approached its end. With a number of difficult problems already in sight, there seems to be little use for the present members to stay in office if this matter cannot be solved."

The reply from Washington was in the form of a teletype (Message No. 499) dated December 2, 1944, signed by the Director and addressed to the project director at Minidoka:

> "Reurtel November 29. Report of community council on gymnasium construction was not considered to require any reply from Washington and involves decisions which can only be made at project level. The decision on the construction was well outlined in page 3 of Mr. Utz's letter of October 25, 1944, and my phone conversation of November 27 authorized you to continue in your attempts to secure full council and community support in completion of work but no change in official position was possible so far as adhering to deadline established. In view of work stoppage and delays in negotiation completion by date set now seems impossible. Please assure Chairman Fujii for me that we consider council cooperation of paramount importance and that only desire of administration is to work out common problems on basis of common understanding and mutual assistance."

Work was not resumed and the gymnasium remained unfinished. The council suffered loss of prestige in the community by its failure. The council chairman was the scapegoat—to such an extent that the community held a mock funeral for him and erected a cross symbolizing a tombstone in memory of what the community termed "an administrative stooge and dog." Needless to say, the chairman was not a candidate for reelection.

Another technique which was used by some project directors was that of "passing the buck." A common complaint of councils was that whenever difficult administrative problems affecting the community

arose, the project director would place the responsibility for solution upon the council. Illustrative of this technique was the attempt of the project director at one center to make the council responsible for moving residents from a particular block that had been designated for school use. After thinking the matter over and discovering that any action on the part of the council would make it very unpopular with the residents, the council passed the responsibility for the decision back to the administration. There it was laid away quietly, and nothing was done about evacuating the barracks that were wanted.

Although several other techniques were used, reference should be made to the one of "do nothing." If, for example, the community council addressed a communication to the project director requesting certain administrative action, the letter or memorandum was sometimes filed away without comment or reply. If, of course, the council pressed for some decision, then it was necessary to use any one of several approaches to indicate the unwillingness of the administration to take the desired action.

Project administrators in some cases failed to understand or accept the fact that community councils were basically political bodies, or that members were sensitive to the demands of the community and retained their prestige and status only to the extent that they were able to convince their constituents that they had won concessions from the administration. The most successful councils were those led by the most skilled practitioners of the political arts. These leaders rewarded and punished, made deals and compromises, used cajolery or threats, avoided or joined issues, depending upon the wisdom of the moment. They too, along with the administrators, learned the uses of coercion, passive resistance, or of persuasion, and used these devices against administration or community as the need demanded. This behavior won approval or condemnation from administration or community as it coincided or clashed with their respective objectives.

Councils composed of politically mature members were much better able to discharge their functions for the welfare of the residents and in the interests of smooth administration. The maturity, however, came only with experience gained from false starts, missteps, crises, and successes. It was in part a product of increased stability of both administration and community, producing an environment in which known factors could be evaluated against current situations, and a course of action agreed upon. Success in dealing with situations won for the council confidence from both the administration and the evacuees. The confidence was not granted, however, upon the basis of successful political manipulation; it was given in recognition of the council's promotion of the objectives of either one group or the other.

Although a number of those who lived and worked in this scheme of things attempted to utilize the councils to accomplish their objectives, it is not clear that many evacuees or administrators ever really understood the fundamental political basis of council action. Although elected by the residents and representative of them, the council had to be more than a representative body. Encouraged and established by the administration and listed on the organization charts as a section in the community management division, it could not be an arm of the administration and survive. The councils were subject to pressures from two sources which were oftentimes opposed in their objectives. Only as the councils were able to soften, reconcile, compromise, or divert, were they able to survive. In two instances the opposing pressures were so great that the councils did not survive, and there were a number of less dramatic situations where disaster was only narrowly diverted.

## B. The "Council"

Community government was an attempt to provide a formally organized mechanism to maintain systematic relations between the administration and the evacuee community. As such it was a reflection of and a contribution to community organization. Through organization, it could respond to and reflect community sentiments. To the extent that it succeeded in this double role of organization and reflection of evacuee sentiments, it fulfilled its function with both the community and the administration.

Basic to its successful functioning was the understanding and utilization of the principles of joint participation and responsibility on the part of administration, councilmen and the evacuee community, all three. If it can be said that the administration all too frequently failed to keep the council adequately informed as so consciously or unconsciously prevented its members from assisting in making decisions which affected the community, it may be said with equal appropriateness that the council or individual councilmen often failed to keep the people informed or to develop interest in meeting new problems. Joint efforts, to be successful, were as much an imperative of council-community relationships as of administration-council relationships.

Essentially the community attitude was that the council should win concessions for a population that felt aggrieved and often oppressed. The success of the council's efforts was measured by the extent to which it obtained redress of grievances, negotiated complaints and won favors from the administration. In this role the council could not appear to be too cooperative with the administration, nor could it afford to agree to the imposition of new controls which might prove repressive. The council was expected to maintain toward administrative action an attitude compounded of latent hostility and eternal vigilance, and to make occasional strong protests. In contrast, the project



698233 O - 46 - 6

administration conceived of the council as a group created to explain policy and procedure in favorable terms to the residents and to assist the administration in achieving its objectives.

The position of the community council in the social organization of the relocation center prevented it from meeting completely the expectations of either the residents or the administration. With the passage of time, it became representative of the community, a negotiating body to resolve the conflicting interests, and an advisory body to the administration. It was perhaps inevitable--with the council obliged to enact this triple role--that there should have been occasional charges by members of the community that the council was cooperating too closely with the administration, and, on the other hand, charges by the administration that the council was obstructionist or subversive.

There is evidence that this definition of its function was understood by a number of the more able council members. The address of the chairman of the council at Central Utah at the induction ceremonies in the summer of 1944, recognized this position as the only effective basis of council action. In his speech he declared:

> "The community council realizes that the problems of today and problems to come are and will be much graver and more serious than those of the past two years. With this fact in mind, the present council has begun their serious thinking in terms of the welfare of the residents.
>
> "The council is not and will not work for the self-interest of any individual or group of individuals but for the mutual and general welfare of the all. We will welcome any suggestions and criticism that are constructive and helpful at any time, through your councilmen or direct to the office of the council in Block # 1.
>
> "We will use every means available to inform the residents on every subject that is brought to us, the action that is being taken, and the progress and the final decision. We will make every effort to follow through on every problem and issue so that we may be able to write its finale to the satisfaction of the residents.
>
> "The present council has decided that in order to perform its duties for the general welfare of the residents, it is necessary that we have: (1) solidarity of councilmen; (2) support and confidence of every resident; (3) support and confidence of every organized group in the center."

• • • • •

"To the members of the administration—

"There may be times when the residents' request be considered unreasonable. We want the administration to appreciate the fact that these requests will be made only after thorough and careful investigation, study, and analysis. Only those which we believe are reasonable shall be presented.

"Any request the council determines is out of reason will not be brought to the administration. We believe this is the council's responsibility.

"Once we determine it is a reasonable request we wish the administration to appreciate this fact and grant us favorable consideration, otherwise, the council shall be placed in a most difficult position. Mainly, because of lack of confidence which will be greater on part of the residents. In case our request cannot be granted, we expect the administration to give us justifiable facts in black and white.

"I believe there must be a mutual understanding for better relationship.

"With mutual understanding between the residents and the council, between the administration and the council, I, as chairman can assure the administration of the council's sincere desire to put forth every effort toward the harmonious and peaceful operation of the center.

"On this basis then, this council hopes to be able to leave a record to be proud of . . ."

Council growth could be measured by an increasingly efficient organization and effective system of relations between it, the administration and the community. At Gila River, there evolved an executive board composed of the chairmen and three members from the councils at Butte and Canal camps. This board of eight members met each week with the project director. At these meetings, the project director announced new policies, discussed procedures, and asked and received advice on questions affecting the community. Opportunity was provided for the members to present current problems to the project director and thus to direct his attention to questions which were of immediate concern to the residents. Council chairmen then reported at a subsequent meeting of the community council the problems discussed at these executive sessions. As an example of subjects covered in these discussions, one meeting was devoted to evacuee property complaints, Japanese language

classes, shortage of doctors, segregation problems and program, explanation of food situation during the summer months and replacement of appointed personnel by evacuees.

The project director spoke favorably of the cooperative attitude of the council and on one occasion invited the chairman of the Butte council to address a staff meeting called to discuss labor problems. At this meeting, the council chairman made explicit the responsibility of the appointed staff to utilize efficiently evacuee labor. He commented that any breakdown in service or supply was a reflection on the ability of appointed staff and would reflect adversely in their civil-service standing. He offered the advice of the council and the manpower commission in solving labor problems but made it clear that these evacuee bodies were advisory only and not administrative. He explained that the interest of the residents was in an efficiently managed center where goods and services should be adequately and efficiently supplied, and that it was from this view that the council concerned itself with this problem. Although his speech carried a threat and a demand to the appointed personnel to do their job, it coincided with the sentiments of the top administrative group which expressed its approval of his remarks. Although this period of well-organized relations with mutual understanding and agreement on many problems between the administration and the council was not marked by any serious crises, there did develop suspicion of one chairman by the residents. When the time came to elect a new council, he was not renominated by his block.

In contrast to well-developed relationships at Gila River, the council at Minidoka in December 1944 was at loggerheads with the administration. This had come about as a result of controversy surrounding the construction of the gymnasium, the dismissal of the community activities staff by the project director and other problems. The situation was sufficiently serious for the council to send a letter to the Washington office explaining the situation and asking for assistance. After reviewing the "joint responsibility" function of the council and referring to an appropriate paragraph from the community government handbook, the letter stated:

> "For several months the council has been experiencing increasing difficulty in maintaining a working relationship with the administration. Underlying this lack of rapport seems to be some differences in the interpretation of the function of the community council. In the first place, very rarely has the council been consulted before hand on any matter. When the council was consulted, and it advised the administration as to the proper method of approach, it was often considered as being 'uncooperative,' or as shirking its responsibility.

"During the recent months, the common pattern has been for the administration to make its plans without consulting the council. The council would then be asked to help effect a program in which it did not participate in the planning stage. Criticism of such a program by the council would often be ignored, or difficulty would be experienced in withdrawing the program without disrupting the plans of the administration. It should be noted that the criticism of the council was usually directed, not at the program itself, but the way in which it was attempted.

"While this state of affairs has not caused any serious disruption of life within the project, the community council feels that its duties have been overlooked. The advice and recommendations of the community council have been ignored by the administration. The increasing reaction of the residents is to look upon the council as the tool of the administration rather than a body which protects their welfare. On the other hand, members of the council are not able to present protests against the administration when they consider it to be in the wrong without fear of being accused of stirring trouble.

"The community council members feel that steps must be taken immediately to clarify their position."

The reasoning of the council is better understood if it is realized that the community attitude was that either the council was ineffectual and therefore useless, or that it continually gave in to the administration and failed to represent community interests. The project director was even approached with the proposal that he permit the council to win some minor point in order to restore resident confidence. This advice went unheeded. Except for minor matters, the council withdrew from further attempts to seek solutions to problems through the administration during the remainder of its history.

## C. The "Official Functions"

Issued in November 1943, the Handbook for Community Government outlined these functions for the community council: legislative, judicial, advisory, communication, planning, and ceremonial. Councils did discharge these functions to a greater or lesser extent, and in so doing made significant contribution to the organization and sanctions of the community.

The legislative and judicial functions which loomed so large in the early discussions on policy constituted only a minor but

nevertheless important part of council activity. Through definition of asocial behavior and the punishment of violators, the council gave expression to certain moral attitudes. The councils defined offenses against property and persons, made regulations governing traffic and sanitation, and legislated on other matters of direct community concern. One such example was an ordinance passed by the Poston Community Council prohibiting the keeping of pets in close proximity to habitations. Several blocks registered protests. The council heard the petitioners, but insisted that the ordinance be observed, and increased the penalty for its violation. As another example, the Central Utah council classified bingo as gambling and prohibited it. Two blocks which had scheduled bingo contests previous to the passage of the regulation ignored the council and continued with their plans. The chairman then requested enforcement by the project director and asked that, if necessary, the military be called in to prevent the bingo game. The issue was successfully negotiated and no arrests were made.

The judicial commission, although infrequently used, provided another opportunity for the crystallization of community sentiment. A few gambling, traffic violation, theft, and assault cases were heard. Juveniles who got in trouble at one center were ordered to give up zoot suits and were given a hair cut as punishment. This action met with community approval and apparently solved the immediate problem of delinquency.

In the performance of its advisory function, the council brought the full expression of community sentiment to the administration. Administrative acceptance depended on factors which have been already discussed.

Perhaps the most important of all these functions was that of communication. The community councils by reason of having a direct channel to the project director and with entree to all portions of the administrative hierarchy and the community was in a better position than any other group to transmit community sentiment, and to learn administrative policy and procedure. The election of councilmen on a block basis made it relatively easy to utilize block meetings to transmit information and learn residents' attitudes and problems. Some councilmen conscientiously kept their residents informed of all activities. Others made little effort to work with or for their block people.

Planning in conjunction with the administration was primarily on a day to day basis. The long-range planning was retained by the administration and was a responsibility of technicians who did not welcome "lay" or council interferences. The most significant planning efforts were those concerned with the future of the Japanese in America, and little or no assistance was provided by the administration in this sphere.

The council's role in ceremonial activities filled a definite community need. The numerous memorial services held to honor the Nisei soldiers who died overseas were ordinarily sponsored by the council in conjunction with patriotic groups. Induction ceremonies for departing servicemen were also council-sponsored. The dedication of new buildings, observance of holidays and other special events, were either under the direct sponsorship of the council or held with its cooperation. The block councilman always attended each funeral in his block, and bereaved families frequently sent letters of appreciation to the council.

## D. The Techniques of Action

In actual experience the establishment of the prerogatives of the community council was a slow process. Pressures from the administration, the community, or from within the council itself frequently produced crises, from which there came precedents for future action. Councils assumed, for example, that they had full freedom to conduct their own meetings without interference and to hold public meetings within the center. Only at Granada was this right questioned by the administration, and there, after a stormy period, it was granted.

The prerogatives of the council in relation to administrative affairs were much more limited. A situation involving the activities of the council and administration at Topaz illustrates the process by which precedents were determined. The council made an investigation of the hospital and as a result demanded the dismissal of the chief medical officer. The ensuing discussions between the council and the project director were concerned not alone with the dismissal of the individual in question, but with the relation of the administration to the council and their respective responsibilities. The project director granted that the council had the right to investigate conditions at the hospital in terms of the relation of the hospital as a public institution to the welfare and needs of the residents. From such investigations, the council could call attention to the existing conditions and make recommendations for improvement of the hospital as a public institution. On the other hand, the project director insisted hospital management was a technical and administrative problem, the complete responsibility for which rested with the administration. This being the case, the demand for the dismissal of the chief medical officer was out of order and beyond the legitimate consideration of the community council.

The council chairman and his committee took the position that their fundamental interest was the welfare of the residents. The residents had lost confidence in the chief medical officer and held him responsible for what was considered to be inadequate organization of health services. They asked for his removal. They were disturbed, too, that the hospital administrators took refuge behind the plea of

technical qualifications and responsibilities.

Hospital administrators maintained that the community council, composed of laymen, was not qualified to judge the adequacy of hospital services and that such judgment could be made only by qualified technical supervisors; the problem, since it was both technical and administrative, was thus beyond the concern of the council. If this contention had been accepted, its effect would have been to deny to the council the right to investigate conditions on the basis of community welfare. The project director appeared as the arbitrator in this conflict of the technical staff versus the political body and took a position which modified the claims of each.

The role of the community council in community affairs became defined through similar trial and error procedures. A number of autonomous or semiautonomous evacuee groups were formed in response to certain community needs. Among these we find community enterprises, community activities, religious organizations, Boy Scouts, P. T. A., and similar associations. These groups were engaged in activities which affected to greater or lesser extent all the residents of the center. On the basis of its claim to promote and protect the welfare of all the residents, the community council at several centers regulated or entered into the activities of a number of these groups. The council at Gila River, for example, ruled that the Red Cross membership drive and collections for the Community Fund should be the only recognized fund-raising activities within the center. The council at Topaz found itself in controversy with the Red Cross and raised certain questions regarding the utilization of funds collected by that organization. At most centers, the relations between the council and community enterprises were cordial, but there were two examples of actual or threatened investigations of community enterprises management by the council which were justified on the basis of protecting the welfare of the residents. In the first, the issue was satisfactorily settled by an explanation from the enterprises, and in the second, the administration ruled that the matter was beyond council jurisdiction.

Regulatory activities of the council sometimes extended to individual behavior. There were two centers which adopted resolutions limiting the amount of money to be given as gifts at funerals, weddings, or other events. This was impossible of enforcement, but it did serve the purpose of expressing a community attitude that competitive gift giving was inappropriate in a relocation center.

The techniques by which the council governed its affairs with the administration and the community resembled those used by the administration in its relations with the council. Councils issued ultimatums, made demands, bargained, and compromised with the administration as the occasion permitted. It was seldom, however, that the ultimatum or

demand technique was effective. Councils on occasion employed passive resistance and sometimes ignored requests or orders emanating from the administration. For example, one council received an order from the project director to cease collection of funds for the hospital welfare association. The chairman of the council, to whom the order was addressed, placed the memorandum in his desk and no action was taken. The collection of funds continued and was ignored by the administration. In its advisory capacity, the council used the art of persuasion. It also "passed the buck" on certain difficult or controversial problems to the administration.

Councils often found it necessary to seek an expression of confidence or to determine a course of procedure by seeking action from the residents. In important issues it was the practice for each block councilman to hold a block meeting at which discussion frequently resulted in agreement. At a subsequent meeting of the council, each member would report the decision of his block and the action decided upon. There are, however, a few examples where the council found itself in disagreement with block decisions, and as a result held additional meetings with further explanations in an attempt to secure community acquiescence to the council's point of view.

One of the most difficult tasks of the council was to prevent hasty action on the part of either the community or the administration. It is obvious that if an issue became joined it would be impossible for the council to fulfill its function as a negotiating group seeking suitable compromises. In this role, the council was a buffer, a safety valve, and a device for the regulation of conflict. It was an institution through which the antagonisms and agressions of both the administration and the community could be released without doing essential harm to either. As long as it could control these divergent pressures until resolution of the differences was achieved, the council's position was assured.

There are many examples of attacks on the council by either members of the administrative staff or residents of the community. The attacks from the community were ordinarily taken care of in good time and by methods which the council understood and could use. The attacks by administrators were more difficult to control. In the examples which we have, it was only in the event that these attacks simultaneously threatened the position of the project director that administrative action was taken. The charge by an assistant project director that the chairman of the community council was an agitator brought unity to the community and support for the council but no administrative disciplinary action. When the same administrator questioned the position of the project director, it was not long until the former's resignation was secured.

## E. Community Participation through Community Government

The participation of large numbers of evacuees in the problems of the community was achieved through community government. The description of formal organization by which this participation was organized has been purposefully left until after the analysis of the relations between the council and the administration and the community was made.

Almost immediately following the election of the first council at each center and the selection of council officers, a number of standing committees drawn from council membership were appointed. These varied in number from 6 at Minidoka to approximately 20 at Gila River. The organization plan at the latter center duplicated almost exactly the structure of the administration. The system of numerous standing committees was found to be unworkable and was later reduced to the appointment of chairmen for administration, works, and welfare. As problems arose in any of these fields, temporary committees were appointed to investigate the situation and report to the council.

There gradually developed at all centers a number of council-appointed groups which included noncouncil members. These were created in response to recurring problems of wide community interest. The council at Gila River established 10 permanent bodies including the judicial commission, juvenile board, juvenile guidance commission, recreation association, health board, public relations committee, manpower commission, resettlement advisory committee, food committee, Butte community fund committee. These groups were distinct from regular council committees in that their membership was in large part drawn from noncouncil members. These bodies, under council sponsorship, worked for the welfare of the residents. Some of these commissions included members of the appointed staff either as full committee members or as advisers.

The community council at Rohwer followed a slightly different plan in its organization. Committees were established for agriculture, education, food, fuel, health, investigations, and welfare, and there were in addition a judicial commission, a labor relations board, a resettlement planning commission, and an executive board of the council. The fuel committee and the board of health included one member from each block, who in most instances were not members of the council. The other committees included a majority of members who were not councilmen. The Rohwer and the Gila River plans differed in one major respect: at Rohwer the committees, commissions, and boards were directly supervised by the council and made their reports to that body; at Gila the council delegated to these groups the right to initiate action.

Variations of these systems were found at other centers. The council at Central Utah created a labor relations board which included members drawn from the labor committee of the council plus one representative elected by each of the operating divisions. This total group met weekly and from its discussions, the labor committee presented plans and recommendations to the council which were then presented to the administration. There also developed at Central Utah a pattern of electing one or more members from each block to form committees concerned with special community problems. There are several examples of such groups including the committee of Japanese nationals, a committee of citizens, and a committee for the consideration of problems arising from center closing. Although these groups originally received their impetus outside the council, they eventually became a part of council organization.

Through the exercise of functions derived from the community-approved charters, through a trial and error learning process of the prerogatives of the council and those of the administration and the community, and through organization created in response to needs, the structure of community government remained an emerging and growing segment of relocation center organization. If there had been sufficient time, there would have evolved at all centers, as there did at Poston, two well-organized structures, the administration, and the community, related to each other through council, block managers, and an evacuee coordinating hierarchy representing both groups. Even at Poston, however, there was never created a community structure that was sufficiently strong to resist the enforcement of administrative policies. In part, this was because the community was itself divided on many issues, and in part because the survival of the relating structures depended upon compromise and adjustment, and the politicians who performed this function were unwilling to let issues destroy the position from which they could operate. If there had been established an evacuee organization representing all centers, operating on a national level with relations with other American groups, and able to bring and enforce pressures upon the national administration of the WRA, then the center councils might have been able to negotiate to better advantage the issues arising out of administrative decision. The next chapter is a discussion of the beginnings of the movement in this direction.

## CHAPTER VII

## COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT AND THE FUTURE OF THE JAPANESE IN AMERICA

### A. The "All-Center Conference"

On the morning of February 16, 1945, in Salt Lake City, Utah, 30 representatives of 7 relocation centers began a week-long discussion of problems facing the Japanese in America. Three-quarters of these delegates had been born in Japan. As enemy aliens, they had been obliged to obtain approval for their attendance at this meeting from the Department of Justice. Many of the delegates, including several of the citizens, had not set foot outside the soldier-guarded gates of the relocation centers since the evacuation in 1942. Some of them had traveled more than a thousand miles to attend the conference. This was the first all-center evacuee conference. It came in response to the crisis precipitated by the announcement on December 17, 1944, of the reopening of the West Coast and the closing of the relocation centers.

These announcements were not unexpected. For several months rumors had been current in the centers that reopening of the West Coast would closely follow the end of the campaign for the election of a new President. Those who speculated on this subject realized that further reduction of center population would inevitably lead to the closing of additional centers. It was a shock to many, however, to learn that the WRA intended to liquidate all centers by the end of 1945.

The mixed feelings of jubilation at the restitution of rights curtailed by evacuation and fears from deep anxieties about personal and economic insecurity found expression in conversations and meetings among most of the center residents. As random discussions became organized, there developed a widespread disbelief in center closure. Rumors circulated that the Arizona centers would remain open to receive those unable to relocate. Among those who had plans or hopes to return to their former communities on the West Coast, the belief was prevalent that the Government should and must do much more than was provided for in the WRA program. The individual problems were myriad, but the mass problems included personal security, economic status and housing. The center residents saw these problems primarily as rehabilitation, not relocation. There was no confidence that the WRA could or would provide what the evacuees considered minimum essentials of assistance.

These two problems of retention of the centers as war duration homes for some, and a program of rehabilitation for those who wished to return, became subjects of discussion by the community councils. Almost simultaneously, there had arisen at four projects proposals for a national meeting to discuss these two problems. It was first hoped that

this conference could be held at some project. The Director in Washington took the position, however, that if the evacuees wished to hold an all-center conference, members of the WRA staff would be willing to attend upon invitation, but that such a meeting must be planned and financed by the evacuees themselves and must be held outside a relocation center.

With these conditions as the basis for a national meeting, the Topaz Community Council under the leadership of its chairman, Masaru Narahara, sent invitations to the community councils of all centers to attend a meeting in Salt Lake City in February. To this specific proposal, there were mixed reactions. Problems of finance, selection of delegates, and the wisdom of such a meeting were debated. As it became evident that most of the centers would send delegates, those who had been hesitant, with the exception of Manzanar, fell into line and proceeded with the preconvention task of preparation.

The preconvention period was one of great activity. Community and council interest in the conference ran high. There were many extra sessions of the councils to formulate and plan. Committees were appointed to work out various details. Block meetings were called to secure resident opinion and to argue the pros and cons of the instructions to be given the delegates. Surveys were conducted. Groups favoring a flat rejection of cooperation with the WRA struggled within the council and community for a following. Center-wide elections were held at Poston and Gila to select representatives. Councils or a committee appointed from this group determined delegate selections elsewhere. Funds to cover expenses were met by assessment and collection from each block or from council money.

The councils at Rohwer and Heart Mountain conducted center-wide surveys to determine the number of people who could or would not relocate. The council at Topaz through a series of block meetings secured agreement for a set of resolutions which were to be presented. Delegates from other centers were given instructions and urged to formulate resolutions.

Concern over the possible adverse effects emanating from the decisions reached by the evacuee delegates was expressed by several project directors in their weekly reports. They were fearful that agreement for organizing opposition to center closing was inevitable. They felt that the hopes aroused in their centers for concessions from WRA were hindering relocation and acceptance of the necessity of center closing. These attitudes were expressed by one individual in his weekly report as follows:

> "Most of us here on the staff including me are of the opinion that the conference idea is very ill-advised and

> will produce far more harm than good to the program. Unfortunately those most interested and those who are likely to be sent as delegates are the anti-administration, disaffected, demanding and petitioning Issei type who will gain no other end but to destroy much of the good attitude which has been created here and cause people to be dissatisfied with the present program."

Although the National Director had some concern lest the conference deliberations should be framed as ultimatums or demands, he maintained that a conference by the evacuees and held outside the relocation center was a legitimate activity. He accepted the invitation extended to him to attend the conference meetings and expressed hope that measures leading to constructive cooperation and solution of the problems of the evacuees would be a result of conference discussions. An invitation was also extended to the head of the Community Government Section in Washington to attend as an adviser.

From the all-center conference held in Salt Lake City in February 1945 came the first group expression of the hopes, needs, and aspirations of the thousands of people of Japanese ancestry who had been evacuated from the West Coast in 1942. It was more than a declaration by evacuees. It was in effect a definition of the position of Japanese Americans in America and was intended for consumption by the center residents, the American public, and the United States Government. In the eyes of the delegates, it was a restrained and generous offer of cooperation to assist in solving the problems of the people they represented. It was believed to be a statement of the minimum Government assistance needed to achieve just and decent reintegration of the evacuees into American community life.

When the delegates arrived at Salt Lake City, they were in a mood to protest vigorously what they believed to be the coercive tactics of the WRA and the niggardliness of the relocation assistance. This protest was what the center residents wanted. The delegates knew that unless they fulfilled the expectations of the electorate that they would be subject to severe criticism and indignities. The shift from the desire to strike back for all the wrongs of the past, irrespective of the consequences, to one of comprehension of the realities of the situation facing them, was remarkable for its rapidity.

Although there was unanimous agreement regarding the objectives of the conference, early meetings disclosed serious disagreement on methods of expression. An analysis of the delegates on the basis of their attitudes toward relocation, the WRA, and the future, disclosed three groups, described as follows:

"(1) The Hopefuls: This group was composed largely of the Nisei and young Issei who had made up their minds that they should relocate and soon. They already had more or less definite plans as to what they should do. They were convinced that there was a future for them in this country, and that they had the ability and the courage to make a living for themselves and their families. This group was also largely the group of vocal liberals which shaped the thinking and direction of the conference in a constructive direction.

"(2) The Desperates: This group was composed largely of late middle-aged Issei. They were men who in their preevacuation communities were the middle-class respectable small business men and farmers. They had insurance and real estate agencies, or businesses that catered to a Japanese urban and rural population. Their success had depended upon a Japanese community. They were men with obligations of family, who felt themselves too old to start at the bottom of the ladder with physical labor, and whose small savings were insufficient to carry them through an uncertain period of reestablishing businesses that would have to depend upon non-Japanese customers.

"This group was basically cooperative. Its members see a home for themselves and their children in this country, but it feels that there is an obligation on the part of the Government to provide some special help, or restitution or guarantee, to help them reestablish themselves.

"This group gave assent to the proposals of the liberal and hopeful group and thus provided the weight of delegate strength toward a conciliatory and cooperative attitude.

"(3) The Resentful and Reactionary: This group includes two elements--those who are potentially cooperative and those who are completely negative. Circumstances could shift most of its members in either one direction or the other. It was composed of both Issei and Nisei. Its members expressed themselves as bitter at the treatment of the Japanese in America. They were bitter about their treatment by the WRA and particularly about the intention to close the centers. One member expressed himself as saying that the WRA treated the evacuees like children. A Kibei was resentful that he had been on the WRA stop list, and now excluded by the Army. The reactionaries

combined all these feelings plus a probable strong feeling of Japanese nationalism.

"It was this group which argued that the proposals of the conference should be worded as either demands or ultimatums. It was also the group which in terms of the entire population was most inward looking in that the effect of their action on public opinion and the amount of cooperation from public and private agencies was a matter with which they were not concerned. It was the group which would have favored the attendance of the Spanish Consul and sought recognition entirely as Japanese nationals."

The division of the delegates into "liberals," "reactionaries," and those "in between" was made by some and coincided closely with the classification made above. The "liberals" were those who sought to enlist the support of various public and private agencies for their cause. They contended that if the facts could be presented to a sufficiently wide audience that it would be possible to secure greater assistance in accomplishing relocation. This group was not in disagreement with the others on the issue of center closing. They felt that there were many who because of age or economic circumstances were unable to relocate, and the most satisfactory provisions for them could be made in a relocation center.

The "reactionaries" were more concerned with--and expected--center disapproval of a moderate position. They believed in full restitution previous to agreement to cooperate. They were insensitive to the possible adverse effect of conference declarations on the American public, Congress, or the WRA.

Leadership of the conference was won by the liberal group. Through well planned strategy this leadership was able to secure approval of the constructive approach. The early emphasis on a strongly worded protest against center closing was diverted to consideration of measures to increase relocation assistance. It was contended that the delegates should be most concerned with the majority of the evacuees who wished to relocate but could not do so without greater assistance. The smaller numbers of those who under no circumstances could leave the center obviously were a responsibility of the WRA. Their problem would be solved by continued center residence. This leadership also insisted on the importance of establishing good public relations and the need to enlist the support of various civic groups. Agreement that formal invitations should be sent to representatives of such organizations as Friends of the American Way, JACL, Citizen Committee for Constitutional Rights, American Civil Liberties Union, Buddhist and Christian churches, American Friends Service Committee, the Pacific Coast Committee on

American Principles and Fair Play, Protestant Commission, Maryknoll Mission, American Red Cross, Y. W. C. A., and to numerous individuals interested in the welfare of the evacuees was a gain for the cooperative element.

The contention that the delegates should not forget that they were Japanese nationals was met by a telling argument. It was pointed out that those who were resident in relocation centers had cast their lot with America. The separation of those who turned toward Japan had been made with segregation and their removal to Tule Lake. Thus those remaining in the centers could take no other position than that of eventually seeking reintegration in American society.

The attendance of the National Director at the sessions on February 21, provided further assurances to those who advocated a cooperative approach. The Director reiterated his confidence in the ability of the evacuees to reestablish themselves and pledged the continued efforts of the WRA to battle the forces of discrimination. He explained some of the limitations of funds and policy under which WRA operated and promised sincere and honest attention to every recommendation which they offered. He paid tribute to the many civic groups which were cooperating and helping to solve the problems created by evacuation.

The chairman of the conference, in his speech to delegates and guests at the open meeting Wednesday afternoon, reviewed the history of evacuation, the losses, the contribution to America and requested sympathetic understanding for the evacuees to reestablish themselves. His speech was an attempt to describe past relations and future hopes of the Japanese in America. Some of the significant parts are quoted below:

> "It is now nearly three years ago that 110,000 persons of Japanese ancestry were evacuated from the West Coast to relocation centers . . .
>
> . . . . .
>
> "During the past three years a great many things have happened to us. We have found that there are many public and private organizations, and many people of good will who were interested in working toward a just solution to the difficult problem imposed by evacuation.
>
> "No one is better acquainted with the fact that thousands of our sons are now serving in the armed forces on all fronts of the world, and that their record is one which has continually called forth praise and recognition from



698233 O - 46 - 7

military commanders and even from the President of the United States.

"America is a country of pioneers. We, too, wish to think of ourselves as pioneers. Most of us (aliens) came to this country 30 and 40 years ago. With the strength of our bodies we helped to build the West's railroads, to mine the ore and coal, we worked in forests and lumber mills, and we helped turn desert and waste lands into fertile gardens. In terms of the vastness of America's millions, we are only a handful, but we would like to think that we too have contributed toward the building of this country.

"We know that neither the Government nor any man can guarantee what the future holds but it is possible for the Government and its representatives to make a forthright statement as to the objectives which it is now endeavoring to reach. Such objectives should include in behalf of people of Japanese ancestry equal opportunities with all others for them to work out their destiny in proportion to their ability."

The significant accomplishments were contained in the "Statement of Facts" and the 21 recommendations. The first was a recital of the adverse social and economic future facing the evacuees as a result of evacuation. The recommendations listed requests for increased financial assistance, greater aids in housing and property, and preventive measures against possible terrorism and prejudice. These two documents are significant as expressions of the minimum conditions which the evacuees believed necessary before their relocation could be achieved, and are included in their entirety.

Statement of Facts

(1) Mental suffering has been caused by the forced mass evacuation.

(2) There has been an almost complete destruction of financial foundations built during over half a century.

(3) Especially for the duration, the war has created fears of prejudices, persecution, etc., also fears of physical violence and fears of damage to property.

(4) Many Issei (average age is between 60 and 65) were depending upon their sons for assistance and support, but these sons are serving in the United States armed forces. Now these Issei are reluctant to consider relocation.

(5) Residents feel insecure and apprehensive towards the many changes and modifications of WRA policies.

(6) The residents have prepared to remain for the duration because of many statements made by the WRA that relocation centers will be maintained for the duration of the war.

(7) Many residents were forced to dispose of their personal and real properties, business and agricultural equipment, etc., at a mere trifle of their cost; also drew leases for the "duration," hence have nothing to return to.

(8) Practically every Buddhist priest is now excluded from the West Coast. Buddhism has a substantial following, and the members obviously prefer to remain where the religion centers.

(9) There is an acute shortage of housing, which is obviously a basic need in resettlement. The residents fear that adequate housing is not available.

(10) Many persons of Japanese ancestry have difficulty in obtaining insurance coverage on life, against fire, on automobiles, on property, etc.

## Recommendations

We recommend:

(1) That special governmental agencies or units be established solely for providing assistance to evacuees who might require funds in reestablishing themselves.

   a. Resettlement aid (grants)
   b. Loans

(2) That the present relocation grant be increased. It should be given to every relocatee. The penalty clause on the present form should be deleted.

   We further recommend that Federal aid be granted according to every individual's particular needs until such time as he is reestablished.

(3) That long term loans at a low rate of interest be made available, without security, to aid the residents in reestablishing themselves as near as possible to their former status in private enterprises, such as business, agriculture, fisheries, etc.

(4) That the WRA use their good offices so that consideration may be given on priority by OPA. Because of evacuation, residents were forced to dispose of their equipment, trucks, cars, etc., many of which at present require the approval of an OPA board. These equipments are essential to many residents in order to reestablish themselves in former enterprises.

(5) That the WRA make every effort to obtain a return of properties, for evacuees who, due to evacuation and consequent inability to maintain installment payments, have lost the same; further, in order to prevent loss of property, to obtain some definite arrangement for the granting of governmental aid, as may be necessary, to evacuees unable, as a result of evacuation, to maintain installment payments.

(6) That the WRA give financial aid to residents with definite plans, for the purposes of defraying the expenses of investigating specific relocation possibilities.

(7) That the WRA establish adequately staffed offices in important areas and employ persons of Japanese ancestry since they understand Japanese psychology; and also establish in these field offices, legal advisory and employment departments.

(8) That the WRA continue the operation of evacuee property offices for the duration, to fulfill the needs of relocatees.

(9) That the WRA accept for reinduction into centers those who relocate and who find themselves unable to make satisfactory adjustments.

(10) That the WRA arrange for the establishing of hostels and other facilities in various areas; and furthermore, build new housing through the FHA, with WRA assistance.

(11) That the WRA provide transportation of evacuee property door to door.

(12) That the WRA negotiate for the establishing of old people's homes exclusively for persons of Japanese ancestry.

(13) That the WRA make negotiations to arrange (1) so that evacuees formerly civil-service employees will be reinstated and (2) so that persons of Japanese ancestry will be able to secure business licenses as formerly.

(14) That short term leave regulations be changed to permit an absence of two months with one month extension privileges. Also, that the evacuee investigating relocation possibilities be permitted to become employed, without change of status.

(15) That when an evacuee relocates or returns to his former business or home, WRA should make every effort to release frozen assests (blocked accounts), both in cases of individuals or organizations.

(16) That the WRA negotiate for the concluding of arrangements whereunder alien parents may be able to operate or manage properties with powers of attorney issued by their children, particularly by sons in the United States armed forces.

(17) That the WRA arrange to secure outright releases for parolees who relocate.

(18) That the WRA obtain the establishment of some avenue of governmental indemnities for relocatees who may become victims of anti-Japanese violence in terms of personal injuries or property damage.

(19) That the WRA arrange for adequate Government compensation against losses to evacuee property by fire, theft, etc., while in Government or private storage or while in transit.

(20) That the WRA arrange to provide students of Japanese ancestry with adequate protection in case of need, and opportunities equal to those enjoyed by Caucasian students.

(21) That the WRA make every effort to secure work opportunities for returnees and relocatees on equal basis with Caucasian citizens, particularly in reference to admittance into labor unions.

## B. Post-Conference Activity

In the interim period of six weeks between the return of the delegates and the receipt of a reply from the National Director, the temper of center residents changed markedly. The possibility of organized resistance to the WRA program seemed to disappear. At Heart Mountain, the center newspaper made an editorial attack on the delegates and community council. There was an exchange of letters with eventual editorial recognition of the fact that the council wisely or unwisely did work for the welfare of the residents. A group of Nisei at Rohwer, dissatisfied because they had had no representation at the conference, held a three-day meeting of their own and invited several outsiders. Council leaders at Granada, in a public meeting, reported

conference activities and informed the residents that it was to their advantage to relocate and they should begin making plans immediately. The chairman of the council at Poston was reported to have stated "the war is over," meaning that he had shifted his position to one of approving relocation. The delegates at all centers reported conference activities at public meetings. There was some disappointment that a stronger position had not been taken. There was hope that some relaxation of policy would be achieved.

The receipt of the National Director's reply was a distinct disappointment to those who had been optimistic. With the exception of the agreement to employ Japanese-speaking assistants in relocation offices, the WRA made no concessions. The reply reiterated that efforts had been made and would continue to be made to solve economic and social problems. It was pointed out that the problems of those who were parolees or who had frozen accounts or needed loans, priorities or welfare assistance would have to be met on an individual basis, and could be met only as the evacuees brought these problems to the attention of WRA officials. It was emphasized that the WRA was cooperating with various governmental and civic bodies to counteract terrorism and prejudice and to facilitate the reintegration of the evacuees into American life.

The WRA reply did not halt the efforts of councils and the headquarters organization at Topaz to achieve other objectives. Petitions were prepared and sent to Washington, asking for a reconsideration of the policy which eliminated school activities. Unsuccessful efforts were made to persuade State and local officials to assume educational responsibilities. A letter addressed to the Director from the chairman of the conference declared that center residents believed that West Coast WRA officials were inadequately discharging their responsibilities and requested assistance in arranging meetings between representatives of returning evacuees and local officials.

Another general letter was addressed to the National Director from conference headquarters in June. This letter commented that the reply to the recommendations made little or no change in "the original plan of the WRA relocation program. We see no improvements or acquiescence to any of our recommendations." It asked for special reconsideration of recommendations on loans and grants, the continuation of property services beyond April 1946, housing aid, payment for door to door delivery of evacuee property and provisions for personal and property security. The letter viewed the closing of schools as a coercive measure against families with children and anticipated deterioration of food as another repressive measure. The concluding portion summarized the prevailing tone of the letter with the statement:

> "We are now at the beginning of dissemination and redistribution. As we stated before, we need better understanding and cooperation from the WRA and the U. S. Government in order to go back to normal livelihood. Thus far, we see no special attempt made to make things easier for those relocated. Numbers of incidences [sic] have been occurring in which relocation has been discouraged even by the use of gun play and fire. No special policies or provisions have been advocated to right the wrong committed three years ago. To those of us still in these centers, such incidences and poor legal justice meted out do not enhance in any way our attempts to relocate."

In his reply the National Director was firm on the point that no reconsideration of the policy of center closing was possible. He stressed the fact that great progress had been made in helping the evacuees to return to a normal and independent status. It was stated that it was impossible for the WRA to wipe out the results of evacuation, but that through relocation office assistance with housing, employment and property, evacuees were reestablishing themselves. It stated further that, contrary to the belief expressed in the letter, WRA was doing a great deal and was pledged to continue doing so in the future.

Announcement of the schedule for center liquidation—in June and July—the steady streaming of people out of the centers, the serious planning of neighbors to leave in the near future, and the inevitable disintegration of community life and service began to convince the "bitter-enders" that center closure was an inevitable reality that must be faced. Community councils were caught between the insistence of the WRA that centers were going to close and the hope of many residents that some centers would be retained. By means of relocation committees, assisistance was given to those who wished to leave, but the councils worked at the same time for the welfare of the group which had no plans.

The elections held during June and July of 1945 for the new council term indicated that a fair number of residents remained "center-minded." Officers were chosen and committees were appointed with apparent disregard for the fact that within a few months the centers would be deserted villages. However, it was only at Topaz (Central Utah Relocation Center) that the election aroused center-wide interest. There the issue, aside from being personal and political, was one of the degree of cooperation with the WRA. The more moderate faction succeeded in electing its candidate as chairman by a narrow margin. The chairman in his induction speech reported the need for continuing centers for those evacuees who were unable to relocate but promised assistance to those who wanted to relocate.

By August it was obvious that the days of the councils were numbered: the minutes of each successive council meeting revealed additional vacancies caused by relocation of the councilmen. Problems of center life and relations with the administration were no longer of much concern to the evacuee community. Families remaining in the center were too busy planning their future in the outside world. With the dwindling community focusing its attention upon life outside the centers, the councils had no reason for withholding cooperation from the administration. The councils were at this stage uncompromisingly committed to furthering relocation, not only for the communities which they represented but also for themselves.

The last and greatest effort of the evacuees to gain through community government some greater measure of participation in decisions affecting their future had come too late. In the attempt, however, much had been learned by many people.

# APPENDIX

## ORGANIZATION OF THE SECTION OF COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT

The War Relocation Authority gave recognition to the need for technical supervision in the field of community government by establishing a section in the Community Management Division. This section was given the title of "Community Organization" in the San Francisco office and "Community Government and Activities" in Washington. The San Francisco office was consolidated with the Washington office in January 1943 and the name was later changed to "Community Organization and Activities."

The first person appointed to the position in San Francisco was Mr. Vance Rogers, who came to the WRA on a loan basis from the Soil Conservation Service. He was followed by Mr. Solon T. Kimball in July 1942. Mr. Kimball had originally been attached to the Colorado River Relocation Center staff on a loan basis from the Indian Service. With the reorganization of the San Francisco office in December 1942, he was transferred to Washington as head of the section and remained in that capacity until August 1945. Dr. Charles Kneier, professor of political science at the University of Illinois, was employed as a consultant for the Washington office in July 1943, and remained in that capacity for approximately two months.

The responsibility of the section in Washington included preparation and consultation on policy, preparation of manuals and other materials to aid in the function of community government, and an advisory and liaison role in Washington and at the centers. Two community government manuals for the use of staff and evacuees were issued. The first was largely technical in its content and was issued in November 1942. It contained suggestive material for the preparation of the plan of government, the size and organization of the council, the nominations, elections, conduct of meetings and organization of committees and commissions. The second manual was issued in November 1943 and was titled "A Summation of the Functions, Organization, and Relationships of the Council and Administration." Both manuals were issued in sufficiently large numbers to allow wide distribution among both staff and evacuees.

The manuals proved to be a basic guide in community government development. They were supplemented by frequent visits to the centers and consultations with both staff and evacuees on community government problems by the head of the Washington section. Occasional special visits to the centers were made at the request of the project directors or the chief of the Community Management Division in Washington.

The responsibility for community government was divided among three project officials. On the project director rested responsibility for leadership, liaison between the council and the National Director, and conducting negotiations on community issues. The assistant project director in charge of community management held the responsibility for providing advisory assistance to the councils and maintaining relations between the councils and the other administrative sections and divisions. The project attorney was responsible for providing technical advice on legal problems, assisting in the wording of regulations and resolutions, and giving advice and assistance to the judicial commission.

The section of community government was listed on the organization chart in the community management division. This was the only recognized section which had no project staff supervisor. It was felt that the development of community government would be more in accord with the needs of the community if allowed to develop in its own way. It was felt, too, that there should be no intermediary in the administrative structure between the community council and the project director or his assistant. The proposal was made in early 1943 that an administrative assistant to the project director with responsibility for liaison with the community be established. This suggestion, however, was disapproved.

The advisory and technical guidance given to community government varied widely from project to project. The assistant project directors in charge of community management at Gila River devoted a very large share of their time to organization and functioning of the council and served as the liaison between it and the administrative staff. In contrast, the comparable person at Colorado River gave little or no attention to community government responsibilities, all of which were handled in the beginning by the project attorney. At most centers, the staff relationship was carried by both the community management head and the project director, although the evidence of any advisory function is slight. These relationships were largely those which had to do with day to day problems.

Under existing policy, the work of the Community Government Section would have been facilitated by the addition of one person to the Washington section and a qualified liaison representative at each center. The presence of an additional person in Washington would have permitted the section head to make more frequent visits to the centers, and would have made possible the issuance of a monthly summary of community council activities, which would have been useful to both staff and evacuees.

Under a policy which gave increased status to community government and the development of center organization for consultation with

the Washington office on policy, there would have been needed a different kind of organization and responsibility. There should have been established in Washington an assistant director responsible for liaison with the evacuees. In a situation of greater permanence, this would have been a desirable step.

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