

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 maintaining 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

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.

¹Extract 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.