

CHAPTER VI

THE HITOMI MURDER AND ITS AFTERMATH

an extreme  
By the end of June the camp had reached a state of  
tension and nervous anticipation . Every informant expected  
~~that~~ any day to hear that one of the  
number one inu had finally been caught off guard and had  
received his just deserts. 1/ However, ~~the people longed more~~  
~~than they bargained for.~~ this anticipation was fulfilled  
in a manner which shocked even the most voluble denouncers  
of the inu.

*Differences bet. "camp"  
& "center" with explanation  
I thought the people were  
and only below out of TL - this  
discovered for were merely  
removed to Ad. area.*

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1/ Many months later a well-posted informant stated that ~~the~~  
during this period men like Yamatani and Yateishi seldom  
slept more than one night in one place. They shifted from  
barrack to barrack and slept with friends. ~~knxsnapex~~

chapt VI. (V)  
PART V  
THE HITOMI MURDER and its aftermath.

On the morning of July 4, the camp was electrified by the news that Yaozo Hitomi, the General Manager of the Cooperative Enterprises, had been murdered while on his way from a carnival held the preceding night. A long knife had been driven through his throat, from the region of the larynx to the base of the brain. He had, evidently, been attacked near his apartment, for he was found on the doorstep of one of his neighbors. Whether the assailant or assailants followed him from the carnival or waited for him near his home is not known. Some investigators were of the opinion that several men were involved, since the knife was driven in a manner which would indicate that Hitomi was held by one or more men while another stabbed him. Other investigators stated that a man who knew how to use a knife could have done it alone. Much later, it was remarked by the Project Attorney, Mr. Noyes, that it had been discovered that the murderer had gone into the latrine and washed himself, at which time he might have been easily captured.

On July 6, the following information was released in the Newell Star.

COOP MANAGER SLAIN BY MYSTERIOUS ASSASSIN

Officials Offer Resignations

Victim of an attack by an unidentified assailant, Yaozo Hitomi, 44-year-old general manager of the Tule Lake Cooperative Enterprises, was found ~~knifed~~ stabbed to death Sunday night near his residence at 3514-A.

Hitomi was found by his niece Fumiko Hitomi lying against the

porch of his neighbor's apartment with a stab wound through the throat, which apparently was administered with a long-bladed knife. He was dead when removed to the base hospital.

Prior to evacuation the victim had lived in Sacramento as an agent for Sunlight Insurance Company.<sup>1</sup> He is survived by his wife, Shizuye, and three children, Mamoru, Mitsuru, and Reiko, all residing in this center.

#### MEETING

As a result of his slaying, an emergency Cooperative Board of Director's meeting was called Monday morning; at which time all 17 members of the board resolved to tender their resignations collectively.

Subsequently, the following officials of the Cooperative tendered their resignations which were approved and accepted by the Board of Directors: Masao Nishimi, assistant manager; Masamori Maruyama, treasurer; Reno Yoshimura, executive secretary; George Nakamura, business manager; Masao Iwawaki, personnel director; and Toshio Tomoshige, information director.

Canteens were reopened yesterday as the result of a meeting between the Board of Directors and canteen and factory managers on the same day.

*Insulted here.*

~~Yaozo Hitomi was an old Tulean, and had assumed the position of Manager of the Cooperative Enterprises at the time of segregation. Previous to that time, he had worked in Mess Operations. An insurance man from Sacramento, he was popularly accused of practicing a great deal of nepotism in his important Co-op position. *His brother had been head of about six weeks before because, said rumors.* He was reputed to get relatives and friends from Sacramento good jobs. He had also taken a fairly prominent part in the resistance the Co-op made to the Daihyo Sha Kai in December of 1943, and had been among that group of evacuees who gave advice and assistance to the administration in breaking the status quo. Though he was certainly not popular, he did not become an object of general public dislike until May and June of 1944, when <sup>the</sup> a wave of public hostility~~

*By [unclear]*

1. This is a misprint and should be "Sun Life Insurance Company."

H.

Yaozo Hitomi was an Old Tulean. Before evacuation he had been in the insurance business in Sacramento. Prior to segregation he had been employed in Mess Operations and after segregation he secured the position of Manager of the Cooperative Enterprises. He was popularly accused of practicing a great deal of graft and nepotism in his important Co-op position. His brother had been <sup>severely</sup> beaten about six weeks before. ~~because, said rumor,~~ Hitomi had given ~~his brother~~ a <sup>him</sup> good job in the ~~camp~~ Co-op immediately after the brother had come to Tule Lake. Hitomi was also reputed to have gotten other relatives and friends from Sacramento good jobs. He had taken a fairly prominent part in the resistance the Co-op made to the Daihyo Sha Kai in December of 1943 and had been among that group of evacuees who gave advice and assistance to the administration in breaking the status quo. Though he certainly <sup>was</sup> not popular, he did not become the object of general public dislike until May and June of 1944, when the wave of public hostility against men alleged to be inu arose. The pressure group in particular <sup>spread</sup> ~~repeated the~~ vicious stories about him. It is possible that they were following Kira's lead in this matter, since Hitomi is supposed to have resisted Kira's ~~gangster~~ tactics in attempting to control the Co-op.

*Some people said that he had been mis taken for his brother Yaozo. Others held that the brother was beaten because*

*Not clear here*

~~against men considered to be public enemies arose.~~  
*alleged to be inu*

Events Immediately Following Hitomi Murder

Immediately after the murder, the Board of Directors of the Co-op and all the key employees resigned. For a time it appeared as if there would be wholesale resignations among the entire Co-op staff. The storekeepers wished to resign but were eventually coaxed into keeping their jobs by the new Board of Directors. *all of them* Every member of the old Board resigned, except Mr. Gunderson, the Caucasian member who held his position by virtue of canteen number 4, which was located in the administrative area for the convenience of the personnel.<sup>1</sup>

Fifteen families of Japanese were removed from the camp to protect the lives of some member who had reason to believe he might be murdered next. Among these men were Yamatani and Akitsuki, ex-members of the Coordinating Committee; Mr. Tateishi, the rumored public inu number one; Mr. Shimokon, the Japanese head of Internal Security; Mr. Matsuoka, the present *del* of the Co-op who had also resigned; Mr. Takahashi and several other persons who had held high positions in the Co-op. Whether this exodus was initiated by the Japanese or by the <sup>a</sup>Administration is not certainly known. Well informed persons stated that the members of the Caucasian police called at these men's homes and told them to come with them or the administration would not be responsible for their lives. Some are said to have gone under protest. Almost half of them returned to the center a few days later. The remainder refused to return for

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1. R. Hankey, Notes, July 12, 1944, p. 2.

several weeks, even though Mr. Best, after about ten days, urged them to do so. Three of the men, Yamatani, Shimokon and Tateishi, eventually left Tule Lake on August 15 and took up residence in other centers. The latter was later reputed to have been forced out of Heart Mountain, his center of refuge, by adverse public opinion there.

*Murderer?*  
It is impossible to say that the removal of these men was unwise. Yamatani, Tateishi and Shimokon were so unpopular that had they remained in the center during this tense period they might have suffered violence. The administration received word of several anonymous threats immediately after the murder; one threat in particular, is said to have promised the murder of all the Board of Directors of the Co-op.

Immediately after the murder the canteens were crowded with people stocking up on food supplies. They feared that the stores would be closed, a policy which Mr. Yamatani strongly urged upon Mr. Runcorn to Runcorn's great disgust.

*Murderer*  
"Yamatani just pleaded with me to be a dictator and close the stores. I was disgusted with him. I can see how the people feel about him."<sup>1</sup>

The stores were not closed and the hoarding impulse wore itself out.

*Explosion*  
Two weeks after the murder, the entire staff of the Japanese Colonial Police resigned in a body, having no doubt decided that they could no longer carry on in their state of unpopularity.

The Murder a Climax of a Period of Tension

This murder was preceded by an extraordinary surge of tension

1. Ibid., p. 3.

(1)

in order of their guilt, were common. Whispered hints that one of the assaults might end in murder were heard occasionally. The ordinary camp resident himself did not make threats of murder, nor did he know who was compiling the hypothetical lists. But even though he might disapprove of the beatings, he joined wholeheartedly in the gossip and every new story of a particularly dastardly action on the part of a "dog" was enthusiastically passed along. Whenever a person was beaten, the news spread rapidly and the details of the story and of the victim's misdeeds which had caused the beating were enlarged and distorted in the manner of a folk tale. Many persons, especially nisei women, expressed shock and disapprobation. But the most usual reaction expressed to a new beating was, "Well, I see another dog got what was coming to him."

Immediate Evacuee Reactions to the Murder

The immediate camp reaction to the murder was a universal state of great excitement, tension and fear. At first, the majority of the people assumed that Hitomi had met his fate because of his tremendously bad reputation, and the fear of committing any act which would remotely resemble that of an inu rose so high that all but the most courageous of the Japanese refused to receive Caucasians in their apartments. After a period of about two weeks, the fine edge of this terror decreased and guarded contacts with Caucasians were resumed.

The dominant immediate reactions to the death itself was a conviction on the part of some people that the deceased had met the fate he deserved, coupled with a <sup>strong</sup> disapprobation which many did not

*This fear of committing an inu was a reaction to the fear of the inu. It was a strong reaction.*

yet dare to express. Fujimoto expressed the camp attitude excellently in one sentence; "The funny things is that the murder has split the camp into two parts. Half feel sorry for the guy and the other half are glad." 1/ Fear ~~was~~ also manifested itself in the extreme determination not to say anything which would betray the murderer. As Oishi expressed it, ~~everybody~~ "The chief attitude is that everybody shut up like a clam." 2/

Nevertheless, the first overtly expressed reaction of many people, ~~was~~ people who were in no way radical or blood thirsty, was that Hitomi deserved his fate. Oishi's sentiments, quoted below, were echoed by many:

"The killing of Y. Hitomi was a blessing to the residents. I have yet to see who really feels sorry for him, other than those of his immediate family. Never have I seen such pleasant reactions to a murder in all my life.

"Several others are said to be in line for the grave. Had they not been given protective custody, they too may be dead by now; and their death, violent as it may be, will be openly rejoiced by the residents.

"The public sanction of Y. Hitomi's murder will undoubtedly encourage the executioner to carry on his or their work. A good work. He doubtless is feeling like a hero receiving public approval and rejoicement. Hope he won't betray himself, feeling elated. . .

"Why do I approve it? Because there is no law here in this camp. . . The administration have so far listened to the Rats (inu) and upon the strength of their flimsy charges, it arrested and threw many into the stockade." 3/

"The murderer did a nice piece of work as far as that goes." 4/

A ~~nisei~~ girl, Miss Doik, who like Oishi was not radical in her

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1/ ibid., July 17, 1944, p. 1.

2/ ibid., July 20, 1944, p. 1.

3/ From a MS prepared by Oishi immediately after the Hitomi murder.

4/ R. Hankey, Notes, July 20, 1944, p. 1.

Suggestions?

→ Add O'Connell's story - & Wake  
threat with beating?

Increasing tension,  
some people believed -

Add - Tarkenton - "People rise up - ?  
and camp become fearful - 5-14. - ?"

June 16 - Charles Speck at }  
Commencement? }

→ Pressure guy threatens trouble  
over coal crew - y, -19-20, - - :?

(7A)

general views expressed herself almost as frankly:

"This might sound awfully heartless, but nobody has any sympathy for him (Hitomi). The whole camp felt that way. It had a lot to do with the Co-op and people felt he was really behind all the things going on with the administration and especially for the people sent into the stockade--especially the more recent pick-ups. The people began to hate the Co-op especially after Akitsuki was transferred from the Co-op head to the Coordinating Committee. Akitsuki and Hitomi were suspected. When people kept being put into the stockade after the Coordinating Committee was put into office, the people became angry."

Mr. Abe, a kindly issei, made a similar statement, emphasizing the reaction to Hitomi's death by contrasting it with that which followed the shooting of Mr. Okamoto:

"I have not heard a single man say, 'I'm sorry he's dead.' When Okamoto was shot to death the whole camp closed down all entertainments, even small parties at homes."

Abe pointed out that the large camp recreation events, such as baseball games were carried on after Hitomi's death as if nothing had occurred.

Japanese Attitudes on the men who fled camp

The treatment meted out to the men who fled the camp by some of their fellow Japanese was extraordinarily cruel. While some of the residents held to the view that some of the men who fled were not suspected and should not have left camp, the prevailing attitudes were one of indescribable satisfaction over every inconvenience and humiliation heaped upon these unpopular men. Few opportunities to heap additional humiliation upon them were ignored. The more the inu suffered, the better many people felt. They were housed in the hospital, and the Japanese hospital mess crew refused to

1. R. Hankey, Notes, July 18, 1944, p. 1.
2. Ibid., July 24, 1944, p. 2.

*only kindness or sympathy shown on our part is to make one in hospital as an inmate also.*

*[Red scribbles and handwritten notes on the left margin]*



humiliation upon them were ignored. The more the inu suffered, the better the people felt. They were housed in the hospital, and the Japanese hospital mess crew refused to

(11)

feed them. The Japanese workers in the hospital <sup>said they</sup> would not sit down to eat with "dogs." They <sup>"dogs"</sup> were then instructed to eat in the Caucasian mess hall. The Japanese mess crew <sup>there</sup> promptly refused to feed them. ~~One of the suspected individuals complained to the writer:~~

"And Mr. Akitsuki got that cook (the head chef) his job. The Caucasians didn't want any Japanese cooks or waitresses, but Mr. Akitsuki convinced them they should have them."<sup>1</sup>

← The unfortunate refugees were at length forced to eat in one of the warehouses where facilities for cooking were set up for them by the administration. Mr. Tateishi acted as cook. A rumor promptly sprang up <sup>in camp</sup> that pressure was being brought on Mr. Tateishi to poison them. It is obvious that this cruelty was largely instigated by fear, fear of assisting an inu.

*Reader will remember who T is.*

Whenever any of <sup>the so-called inu</sup> ~~them~~ walked about the Caucasian area in daylight, they were likely to be greeted by barking noises from the Japanese employed there. Some of the refugees were utterly terrified. They were under considerable pressure from Mr. Best who, a few days ~~later~~ after they were removed, began to urge them to return to the center. Some of <sup>them</sup> ~~them~~ regarded this as a death sentence.

Background of Camp Reactions to Hitomi Murder

As has been stated, the specific surge of public feeling which culminated in the murder began late in May, about a week before the Okamoto shooting. The fundamental causes, however, had a long history; some of them extended back to the first few weeks

1. Ibid., July 19, 1944, p. 5.

(17)

can tell you that everybody in the block thinks very little of him (Mr. Takahashi). The feeling is very bad. . . .

"The people are very upset about the people being sent to Santa Fe. Many people say that they have been fooled: they aren't going to be sent to Japan first, just because they were sent to Santa Fe.

"I don't know. The people here just shut up. With Mr. Takahashi here, nobody trusts him."<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Yamaguchi implied that the people in her block did not dare to express themselves frankly on the matter of the transfer to Santa Fe, for fear that Mr. Takahashi would report them to the administration. Two nights after this statement was made, Mr. Takahashi was assaulted by mysterious assailants but was not injured seriously.

*Shabush*

Change in Residents' Attitudes ~~after the Hitomi Murder~~

For several weeks after the murder, many informants expressed themselves as bitterly or almost as bitterly against Mr. Hitomi and the inu as they had during May and June. *Oishi, a moderate and intelligent man* prepared a manuscript full of invectives against the "dogs" and against the administration. In his opinion, the beatings which preceded the murder and the murder itself "can be placed at the very doorstep of the administration." He also denounced the Co-op and the Co-ordinating Committee. According to him, "the basic reasons of constant grumbling that finally culminated in a murder" were (1) that the Co-op sold "articles such as buckets, brooms, and even coal handshovels at a handsome price," while the WRA should have provided for the colonists; (2) the administration "deliberately withheld the distribution" of these articles though they "were piled high

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1. Ibid., June 30, 1944, p. 1.

in the warehouses"; (3) the Co-op's continued sale of luxury items against great public opposition; (4) any person who "unflinchingly attacked the Co-op" was then apprehended and thrown into the stockade and confined there indefinitely without even a semblance of a trial";<sup>1</sup> (5) the Co-op was responsible for the defeat of status quo. "The Co-ordinating Committee . . . were men who were directly connected with the Cooperative. . . . Instead of helping the residents (they) became the tool of the administration."<sup>2</sup>

Other informants also continued to repeat uncomplimentary rumors about Mr. Hitomi.

Yamaguchi remarked:

"Also they said Mr. Hitomi hired nothing but Sacramento people in the Co-op. He hired his brother in the Sewing Factory, his relatives and friends in the Co-op."<sup>3</sup>

*Oishi*  
said:

"Matsumoto (the chairman of the Board of Directors) bankrupted the Nippon Bank in Sacramento. Do you think he came out penniless?"

"Mr. Yamatani has said numerous times, 'If I'm afraid of two by fours, I can't make money' . . . ."<sup>3 4</sup>

(By the above statement, Yamatani, if he said it, meant that he could not afford to fear the clubs of any gang of enemies. In camp parlance, the pieces of lumber which are sometimes used in a beating are known as two-by-fours).

Indication that the gossip about the Co-op was not confined to transferees but was also indulged in by old Tuleans may be seen in the remarks of a very Americanized young nisei girl, an old Tulean, who planned to leave Tule Lake and enter a nursing school

1. This particular accusation was very widespread before the murder. Particularly, the underground pressure group members repeated it.  
 2. From ms. prepared before July 20.  
 3. R. Hankey, Notes, July 19, 1944, p. 2.  
 4. Ibid., July 31, 1944, p. 3. Since "K" is an expert accountant and was hired to investigate the books of the companies concerned in these swindles, his remarks deserve credence.

ASSERTION ON PAGE 15

The informant added that she had heard of a lady who found \$300 dollars in a box of cake she purch<sup>ed</sup> at the Co-op. Being honest, she took the money back whereupon the clerks gave her a couple of more cakes so that she would not spread the fact that they had ~~been hiding~~ ~~money~~ secreted the money in a cake box with the intent of stealing it. 2/

(15)

in the United States.

"The old Tuleans, I know, felt he (Hitomi) got what he deserved. After all he did! They were all saying he was going to resign and leave camp. They said this after he died. They said he had made his kill and was planning to go.

"Even the old Tuleans hated him. Everybody knew him for what he was.

~~"A lady found \$300 in a box of cake. She was honest and took it back to the Co-op. They gave her a couple more cakes to keep her quiet.~~

"Individually in the canteens they graft too. If you have a friend you can go to the canteen and buy things for half price. The clerks have no personal feeling toward the Co-op as their organization.

"I hear the new manager found lots of luxuries in the warehouse. We don't need such expensive cosmetics and things.<sup>1</sup> They found a lot of ice skates. They must have gotten them on the black market, because you can't buy them outside now. They have nothing but black market stuff!"

Insertion  
here

Another old Tulean girl said:

"They say the Co-op was buying WRA stuff and selling it in the canteens."<sup>3</sup>

A few weeks after the murder, however, a change of <sup>attitude</sup> mind began to make itself shown. The disturbing fact that a murderer or a group of murderers was free in camp who, encouraged by apparent success, might turn on anyone whose actions did not meet approval, began to obtrude itself through the satisfaction of seeing a man regarded as a hated traitor meet his proper doom. As Mr. Fujimoto, who was growing steadily more conservative in his views, expressed it:

"The funny thing is that the murder had split the camp into two parts. Half feel sorry for the guy and the other half are glad. Of course, they say he was killed for embezzling Co-op funds, but that was just talk. Nobody could prove it."

Fujimoto expressed another camp reaction with regard to the

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1. It is interesting to see this anti-luxury attitude expressed by an old Tulean.
  2. R. Hankey, Notes, August 24, 1944, pp. 4-5.
  3. Ibid., August 30, 1944, p. 3.

attitude of the administration, a reaction very typical of camp psychology:

"The people are saying that the administration is deliberately not making a serious attempt to find the murderer. If the people think that the murderer is loose in camp, more of them will want to relocate."

He added that he had been snooping in the project attorney's office and seen an enormous sheet of applications for leave clearance.<sup>1</sup> Whatever he may have seen, there was no appreciable increase in relocation at this time.

The Yamaguchi's expressed a ~~very interesting and~~ delicate alteration of sentiment:

"The people are very quiet about it. Mr. Hitomi is dead; so the people are quiet. If they aren't quiet they may go to jail. They say, 'Well, he's passed away. After all, he's a Buddha now. Let him sleep peacefully.' It used to be he had a very bad reputation. But since he's passed away the people don't say much. It wouldn't be good manners."<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Abe also expressed a different attitude about a month after the murder:

"Of course, Mr. Hitomi was one of the most hated men in camp. But he wasn't bad enough to be assassinated. I heard that Hitomi signed a petition to send the people in the stockade away (to Santa Fe)."<sup>3</sup>

Several months after the murder, a nisei girl stated that in her opinion the stories circulated before the murder were rumors. Though many other colonists must have had their doubts about the wilder stories, these doubts were very seldom expressed:

"In camp there were so many rumors at that time. People believed they were true. They always said, 'My friends say it.' It almost makes anybody believe it."<sup>4</sup>

1. Ibid., July 17, 1944, p. 1.
2. Ibid., July 19, 1944, p. 1.
3. Ibid., August 8, 1944, p. 1.
4. (check)

It is probably that much of the apprehension of this time was due to the ~~imminent~~ threats of violence which certain members of the undercover pressure group had made prior to the ~~murder~~ murder. Whether the group was implicated or not, many people, including the authorities, suspected that they might be. Much later, a well-posted informant stated that Kira had engineered most of the beatings. The leaders of the group spared no effort in pointing out that the murder was a glaring example of administrative ineptitude and should make it clear to the American public that somethings was seriously wrong with the administration of Tule Lake. Naturally, they hoped that the murder would result in Mr. Best's dismissal.

Mr. Yamashita stated that "the attacks which ended with the murder" (here he caught himself and said with a sinister implication "temporarily ended for the time being" ) had made the people optimistic, "especially since the attack was successful and the administration was not able to find the attacker." This was certainly not true, unlesshe was referring only to the optimism of the pressure group. He continued:

"People were sorry for the victim, but the camp as a whole, if they did not rejoice for such a happening, thought that it was the last resort to be taken to let the (American) public and the administration know that wrong-doing cannot continue forever.

"Deep thinking people do not think the choosing of this barbarous action is wise and think that it would be more or less criticised by the American public when it is known outside by the paper or radio."

He ~~added~~ pointed out that the camp condition was such that the people were forced into committing beatings and murder because no other path of righting their grievances

*does not make sense*

*doesn't make sense*

Mr. Yamashita stated that "the attacks which ended with the murder" had made the people optimistic, "especially since the attack was successful and the administration was not able to find the attacker". ~~He added with a sinister implication that the attacks were only "temporarily ended for the time being".~~ He continued: This was certainly not ~~xxxx~~ true. ~~He was referring only to the optimism~~ Perhaps the pressure and believed that because of the murder Mr. Best would be forced group was optimistic. No ordinary resident ~~showed that he~~ to resign. indicated that he ~~had no faith in things because of this~~ had any hope for improvement in camp conditions because of the murder. Yamashita added with a sinister implication that the attacks were only "temporarily ended for the time being". He continued:

"People were sorry for the victim, but the camp as a whole, if they did not rejoice for such a happening, thought that it was the last resort to be taken to let the (American) public and the administration know that wrong-doing cannot continue forever."

He explained that he realized that the murder would cause the American public to think badly of the Japanese in Tule Lake but pointed out that the ~~xxxx~~ condition of the camp was so bad that the people were forced into committing ~~xxxx~~ and assaults and murder because no other ~~px~~ method of righting their grievances

was open to them. "It was more or less in the atmosphere of the camp that they were forced to use such a method." His wife remarked with satisfaction, "It was a perfect crime." 1/

While Mr. Hitomi's evil reputation was only mitigated to some extent by the passage of time, the camp sentiment toward the murder

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1. ibid., July 28, 1944, p. 1.

and the apprehension of the murderer underwent a marked change after the passage of three or four months. Many people began to refer to the murder as a deplorable thing, stating that after all nobody had ever proved anything against Hitomi and that, moreover, other individuals in camp were far more objectionable than he. The satisfaction over the fact that the murderer was not apprehended dwindled also and though the sentiment was far from unanimous many residents cautiously expressed the hope that the murderer might be taken. On the whole, ~~the sentiment~~ only the pressure group remained unchanged in its contention that the murderer was <sup>a</sup> type of public benefactor and openly rejoiced over his non-apprehension.

?  
*earlier  
 fuller  
 murder  
 relevant?*

Camp sentiment as to why the murder was committed was never uniform. Some people held to the view that Hitomi was murdered because he was a dog, others that the slaying was a private affair, committed by a man with whose wife Hitomi was supposed to have philandered.

~~The beatings and the murder had a far reaching effect on the general camp resident which did not, however, become apparent for several months.~~ The majority of residents were more shocked by the murder than they would at first openly admit. Never again did an illogical obsession of extreme hostility toward men purported to be "dogs" seize on the entire camp. From this period on the greater number of people <sup>spoke for</sup> ~~wanted~~ peace and began increasingly to express attitudes such as "if only the camp would quiet down"; or, "why can't we Japanese live peaceably here till the end of the war, or until we're exchanged." Henceforth, when men were beaten, the news did not spread rapidly nor did the general resident remark

that "another dog had gotten what he deserved". Instead, the beaters were regarded as "gansters" and not as public benefactors.

Fate of the Suspected "Dogs" -- Residents' Attitudes.

All of the men who fled from the camp eventually returned with the exception of Messrs. Yamatani, Tateishi and Shimokon, who were transferred to other Centers. About a month after the murder when some of the refugees had still not returned to camp, Mr. Robertson called on Oishi and asked him for his opinion on whether it was safe for them to return. Oishi told Robertson:

"Some are all right but some shouldn't be back even for a day. . . Yamatani won't live very long (if he returns)." 1/

However, several moderate individuals expressed regret that some of the suspected men had been so foolish as to flee the camp. In their opinion, it would have been far better if they had stayed and not given such obvious grounds for suspicion to their neighbors. Mr. Takahashi, in particular, was thought to have made a great error by fleeing.

The men who

that "another dog had gotten what he deserved." Instead, the beaters were regarded as "gangsters" and not as public benefactors.

Fate of the Suspected "Dogs"

All of the men who fled to the hospital eventually returned to the <sup>Camp</sup> hospital with the exception of Messrs. Yamatani, Tateishi and Shimokon, who were transferred to other centers. Those who returned to the centers met with varying receptions, depending largely upon how they had been regarded before the murder. Mr. Akitsuki, showing great courage, returned to the colony after several weeks. However, he left his family and took up residence with a group of judo boys who were reported to have sworn to be ready to give their lives for him. He also acquired two large dogs, an act which was commented upon with malicious relish by some of the evacuees. Some of the Co-op Board members were reported to have established themselves satisfactorily in their blocks. Mr. Akitsuki and Mr. Takahashi, however, remained symbols of despicable treachery and continued for some time to live miserable pariah-like lives. Nobody in camp "who knew them for what they were" would talk with them or be seen with them.

A generally widespread attitude <sup>toward the returning men</sup> was expressed by <sup>Oishi</sup> who also analyzed the errors in judgment made by the members of the Co-ordinating Committee:

"Akitsuki is not wise in coming back. If he wants to continue to breathe it's better that he stays out. Many of those boys (Co-ordinating Committee Group) were too arrogant. If they had listened to the voice of the people they wouldn't be in trouble now.

"They didn't stop to think. They were just getting in well with the administration. Especially those in the Co-op,

*Is this correct  
was  
p 20 ?*

23.

"But those people (the inu) who may return - I don't think they could contrive to sleep without worries. The longer Akitsuki maintains bodyguards, the longer he'll be hated. If he lived alone, the people might forget. Getting bodyguards was a very short-sighted policy. 1/

a-7-3-4

"If Akitsuki wants to continue to breath it's better that he stays out. Many of those boys (Coordinating Committee ) were too arrogant. If they had listened to the voice of the people they wouldn't be in trouble now.

"They didn't stop to think. They were just getting in well with the administration. Especially those in the Co-op,

④  
Ibid., Aug. 7, 1944, pp. 3-4.

that bunch of gamblers and embezzlers. They were sitting in high offices. They shouldn't have held those positions. They did not stop to think that there were many well educated persons who were not working in the Co-op but were far more capable. . . .

"They didn't have the character strong enough to refuse. They went ahead and co-operated with the Administration. Little by little, they were dragged into the mire until they couldn't get out any more."<sup>1</sup>

About a month after the murder when some of the refugees had still not returned to camp, Mr. Robertson called on <sup>Oishi</sup> K. and asked him for his opinion on whether it was safe for them to return.

<sup>Oishi told Robertson's</sup> K. repeated his reply to the writer:

"~~Mr. Robertson asked me about sending the people back. I said, 'Some are all right but some shouldn't be back even for a day. I told him Yamatani won't live very long (if he returns).'~~"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>However,</sup> During this period, several moderate individuals expressed regret that some of the suspected men had been so foolish as to flee the camp. In their opinion, it would have been far better if they had stayed and not given such obvious grounds for suspicion to their neighbors. Mr. Takahashi, in particular, was thought to have made a great error by fleeing.

When however, three of the most unpopular men transferred to other centers, most residents were happy about it. A few remarked with satisfaction that they would be hated and despised in the other centers also. Mrs. Matsuda, an active agitator, expressed disappointment, insinuating that it would have been preferable to have them stay and meet the same fate as Hitomi.<sup>3</sup>

~~After Akitsuki returned to the colony, K. expressed himself as follows:~~

1. Ibid., July 20, 1944, p. 2;  
3. Ibid., August 16, 1944, p. 2.

2. Ibid., July 31, 1944, p. 3.

go before

Combining  
square  
Akitsuki

"But those people (the inu) who may return - I don't think they could contrive to sleep without worries. The longer Akitsuki maintains bodyguards, the longer he'll be hated. If he lived alone, the people might forget. Getting bodyguards was a very short-sighted policy."<sup>1</sup>

When he heard that the three men had left the center, <sup>Oishi</sup> expressed the following attitude, which was common throughout the center:

"Yamatani, Tateishi and Shimokon - it was wonderful that they were transferred. That also helped to relieve a great deal of the tension. But I feel sorry for them; they're branded for good. People from Tule are writing to Minidoka, telling their friends all about them."<sup>2</sup>

Actions of the Administration

Immediate suspicion of implication in the murder fell upon the fourteen men still detained in the stockade. All ingoing mail to the stockade was stopped and large pieces of plaster board were attached to that portion of the stockade which faced the colony so that no signals could be exchanged. Gate number 2, through which persons had heretofore passed in and out of the colony was closed, and gate number 3, which was located several hundred yards farther from the stockade, was used instead. The object again was to keep camp residents as far from the stockade as possible. The stockade internees were given to understand by Mr. Best and by certain members of the Internal Security that they were under suspicion of having directed a conspiracy within the center to murder Mr. Hitomi. This accusation made them very indignant.<sup>3</sup>

The administration also suggested to the block managers that a camp-wide curfew be enforced. The block managers refused to

1. Ibid., August 7, 1944, pp. 3-4.  
2. Ibid., August 21, 1944, p. 1.  
3. Ibid., September 15, 1944, p. 8; September 18, p. 10.

*This may not be understood unless administration's extreme fears are recognized upon.*

*I think it's ok but should use capital letters*

accept the responsibility for this act and suggested that it be referred to the people. The people were by no means enthusiastic about it and the matter was dropped.

From second-hand information gained chiefly from Dr. Opler and Mr. Robertson, it appeared that the administration had two theories about the murder. One was that already mentioned: that the detainees had conspired with some group in the center. Two separate groups in the center came under suspicion: one was the so-called Resegregation Group, and the other was the group headed by Mr. Tsuda. Both groups had been working for the release of the detainees for many months. The motive in this case would be a deliberate attempt on the part of these groups to embarrass the administration and particularly Mr. Best by bringing down so much adverse publicity upon his head that he would be forced to resign. The second theory, said to have been espoused by Mr. Best and Mr. Schmidt, was that the murder was a personal affair, committed by only one man well-known to Mr. Hitomi. Schmidt's reasoning was that Hitomi would have cried out and been heard, had he been approached by a stranger or a strange group. The motive in this case would be revenge for a personal injury, i.e., that Hitomi had been killed by the husband of some woman with whom he had been philandering. Later, this theory was directed against Mr. Hitomi's brother, with whose wife Hitomi was rumored to have had immoral relations. The fact that the brother did not accompany Hitomi's corpse to the hospital was considered very suspicious. On July 13, it was rumored that four Japanese had been taken from the colony and were being given a twenty-four hour third degree by

the Internal Security. So far as is known, no information was gained from them. The grilling was reported to Mr. Besig of the American Civil Liberties Union. This action on the part of the administration was not approved of by ~~these~~ <sup>several</sup> Japanese who expressed themselves on the subject:

<sup>Oishi</sup>  
~~Mr.~~ said:

"Several boys from Leupp were investigated. But the good thing was that they were released immediately. If they had been put into the stockade, the administration would have been doing a great injustice. They were very studious boys. One of the boys was taken just because the administration thought he was a fanatic. That was no reason."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Yamaguchi said:

*Does not say much*

"I heard those boys were grilled for three days and nights. One of them was Kitadani, a tough kid. We used to call him the 'dead end kid' in Leupp. He was grilled because they found him with a knife."<sup>2</sup>

#### Attitudes of the Appointed Personnel

The murder plunged the Caucasian residents of Tule Lake into a state which in some individuals bordered closely on panic. One of the manifestations of this was a meeting held by the Caucasian members of the Co-op <sup>at which</sup> ~~where~~ it was proposed that canteen number 4 be severed from the Japanese Co-operative Enterprises. This was not done.

For many weeks the staff members remained very jittery. Some expected another murder and the subject of who would be next was frequently discussed among those members of the staff who had contact with the colony. ~~Several intelligent~~ <sup>she</sup> Japanese also expected another murder, particularly if the men who had fled the colony

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1. Ibid., July 19, 1944, p. 1.
  2. Ibid., July 13, 1944, p. 1.

returned. <sup>Bishi</sup> went so far as to say:

*Act of  
murder* ○

"There will be one more incident. The administration is at fault, if that incident develops as I anticipate. I feel that the camp is in a state where unless the administration makes an absolute change, the beatings and the killings will continue. Now it's beyond the administration's power to control it. Things have gone too far."<sup>1</sup>

#### Election of the New Co-op Board of Directors

With the resignation of its Board of Directors, the Co-op was left leaderless and loaded with a burden of public opprobrium and suspicion which surpassed that of any other organization in the history of Tule Lake. For a time, it appeared that resignations would spread wholesale throughout all the positions in the organization. However, the appeal of a courageous group of Japanese, who temporarily stepped into the vacancy left by the resigned Board, and probably the fact that a job was a job and ~~the~~ tension was <sup>slowly</sup> decreasing, kept most of the employees at their posts.

The attitude and past history of the men on the new Board was in sharp contrast to the old. Instead of being ultra-conservative representatives of the "vested interests" of Tule Lake, some of these new men had been confined in the stockade during the November difficulties, and were classed as "agitators" by the administration. In its helplessness, however, the administration could not be too particular about the past history of individuals willing to step into a position which might cost them their lives. Some attempts were made to get some "level-headed" Japanese on the Board, by which the administration meant persons of an anti-status quo conviction. However, for the most part the policies

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1. Ibid., July 20, 1944, p. 3.

followed in the month which followed Mr. Hitomi's death were left almost entirely up to the newcomers. Runcorn, the Supervisor of the Co-op, whole-heartedly favored letting the Japanese take a major part of the control and anticipated, correctly, that the New Board would be much more aggressive than the old and that it would be <sup>good policy</sup> ~~intelligent~~ for the administration to make them some concessions.

The new board did follow a more "demanding" policy which, in the following months, was frequently regarded as "pressuring" by the administration. One of the first actions of the new board was to make inquiries at other centers to determine how much the domestic workers there were paid. They found that the wages ran from 38 to 40 dollars a month. At this time, Mr. Best and Mr. Black held that <sup>at full rate</sup> a wage of 30 dollars a month was enough. The board determined to ask for 35 dollars or nothing.

The administration did not give way, and this particular issue was not settled until August, when Messrs. Currie, McNeil and Rossman arrived from Washington and managed to please both sides by removing the domestic work from Co-op supervision and placing it directly under the WRA placement organization.

The writer contacted one of the supposedly "radical" new board members at this time, <sup>the man who accepted the position of Treasurer</sup> and was given the following brief but clear statement of policy:

<sup>11 (when I was offered the position)</sup>  
"Naturally I refused the first time. <sup>D</sup>ut three representatives of the Board of Directors came and gave me a full view of the policy to be followed. The present board definitely states that they will never touch any political problems. They will keep to their business. The present camp feeling is just waiting to see how the Co-op Board acts."<sup>1</sup>

1. Ibid., July 30, 1944, p. 6.

*Handwritten notes:*  
F = room held  
is changing  
over to confounding  
records of before  
to make clear  
of it

Later, serious factionalism arose in the Board because of the markedly different views of some of its members. Nevertheless, the personnel of the Board was able to work out a policy which, in less than two months, caused an almost miraculous change in the public attitude toward the Co-op.

The Board released a great deal of simply worded information in the Tule Lake Cooperator, but this was probably only a minor factor in the public confidence which the Board rapidly acquired. The truly significant factor was that the Board did its best to live up to the statements and promises it made and, little by little, as the people became conscious of this change in policy through the tangible changes in the Co-op policy which affected their daily lives, they began to pay ~~serious~~<sup>some</sup> attention to the statements issued. ←

On July 6, Mr. Runcorn released a clear statement of the financial condition of the Co-op in the Newell Star, though it is doubtful if the residents paid much attention to the statement. Ward meetings of the Co-op members were held and temporary board members elected in some of the wards. Some wards put up no representatives, because no one could be found to take the positions. ↵

Mr. Runcorn commented upon the dubious character of these elections. Under the circumstances, however, he made no complaint, believing that any board members, no matter how selected, were better than none.

"I don't know what's going on in the block elections or how difficult it is to get the people out. There is no quorum required in our rules. Probably very few turned out.

We were careful to make the Board members representative, but at the block level the elections are just a black spot."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Runcorn meant that he was quite in the dark as to procedure and attendance at these elections, not that they were a disgrace.

On July 9, the newly-elected directors and the old Board met in joint meeting at which the personnel of the new Board was selected, subject to approval of some of the incumbents at an additional ward meeting held in those wards where the Board members had been selected by a group too small to be considered a quorum.<sup>2</sup>

After taking office, the new Board released statements requesting the support of the people and urging the people to assist in the selection of capable key workers, the General Manager, the Treasurer and the Executive Secretary.

"Your fine judgment and generous cooperation is needed to carry on this program. We say there is a slight tendency of an atmosphere of 'none of my businessism' can be found among us members. Doesn't it?

"We must eliminate totally such unfavorable feeling because it might happen to be a cause of unwelcomed incident. We especially take this opportunity to appeal to you for your hearty assistance and cooperation which is essentially needed to adopt a successful plan for mutual benefit of all patrons."

Patronage dividends, the script issued to all Co-op members at intervals, were issued in July, which also increased public rapport. *suggested.*

With the arrival of Messrs. Currie, McNeil and Rossman from Washington, early in August, the complexion of the situation changed somewhat. With remarkable insight, these men quickly took in the camp situation and the position of the Board, and adopted a policy

1. Ibid., July 12, 1944, p. 3.
2. Tule Lake Cooperator, July 11, 1944.

of championing the Board's reasonable requests against the reluctant administration. As has been mentioned previously, they settled the perplexing domestic service issue by obtaining Washington's permission to transfer the management of the domestic workers to the WRA placement bureau.

The Board of Directors took another important action which was not known either to the residents or to the administration. This was the acquisition of a special accountant, a Japanese of recognized integrity and prestige, who consented to undertake the periodic checking of the Co-op's books, [providing he received no salary for this] The Board now felt itself backed by the certain knowledge that their accounts were under periodic scrutiny by a man in whom they could place complete trust, and, consequently, they could dismiss the nagging fear of grafting which might take place without their knowledge.

#### Changing attitude of the People Toward the Co-op Board

It is difficult to picture the great change in the public attitude toward the Co-op Board because, as the confidence in the new Board increased, the people talked about it less and less. At the very first, some persons were cynical and expressed attitudes like those of Mr. Yamaguchi when he heard that a new Board had been elected:

"I was shocked. I was completely dumb. They told me to come (to the Co-op meeting) but I didn't go. Those people who took the job belong to the unwise group. Maybe they do it just to get a name. Perhaps it was somebody who used to be a farmer. He has no name and he's going to do something about it (i.e., get a name for himself).<sup>1</sup>

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1. R. Hankey, Notes, July 19, 1944, p. 1.

The changing attitude is shown in a statement made by this same informant's wife, three weeks later, when asked how people were feeling toward the new Board, she said:

"People I know are very glad about it. It seems everything is in order now."<sup>1</sup>

That public sentiment was already changing as early as three weeks after the murder is shown by the following statement from a nisei girl:

"Well, as far as our block is concerned, they (the people) were very satisfied with the new Board representatives. The people expect some improvement now, although some people think maybe it will not go on as smoothly as I hope it will."<sup>2</sup>

On July 20, <sup>Oishi</sup> ~~W~~, who had excellent contacts on the new Board, said:

"I don't think the administration can run this new Co-op Board so easily."<sup>3</sup>

On July 31, he ~~again impressed the writer with the fact~~ <sup>stated</sup> that the old "luxury issue" must be settled. This attitude was widespread at this time:

"The quickest way to straighten out the Co-op from my point of view is they must cut out luxuries. If they cut out all the luxuries, then they will be respected.

"All the Japanese in this camp are not rich. Some are very poor. The sixteen dollars they get barely buys their tobacco. But if my neighbor buys watermelon for his children at 20¢ a pound, I can't afford to buy it for my children. As a parent, I will feel hurt. Those things hurt. I think the majority of the people agree; they don't want luxuries."<sup>4</sup>

On July 24, Mr. Abe said of the new Board:

"The people feel it's better than it used to be. They will have a hard time though trying to make the whole camp understand. The Co-op is the biggest source of trouble."<sup>5</sup>

1. Ibid., August 7, 1944, p. 5;      2. Ibid., July 18, 1944, p. 2.  
3. Ibid., July 20, 1944, p. 2;      4. Ibid., July 31, 1944, p. 3.  
5. Ibid., July 24, 1944, p. 2.

*I don't think this is very relevant.*

On August 8, the conservative Mr. Okamoto said:

"The people don't say anything. It used to be the people complained so much."<sup>1</sup>

This improved rapport between the residents and the Co-op continued for the remainder of the camp's existence. A few agitators made uncomplimentary remarks on occasion, but for the great majority of the people the Co-op assumed the status of a decent and correctly run organization working for "the good of the people."

#### Results of the Okamoto Verdict

The release of the Court Martial verdict in the case of the soldier who shot Soichi Okamoto on May 24 followed closely on the Hitomi murder. The soldier was acquitted.

*Some other  
plans.*

Unfortunately, very few attitudes were obtained because the state of tension in the camp, brought about by the murder, made visiting almost impossible. On incomplete evidence, it appears as if the acquittal of the soldier caused extreme resentment in some individuals. With others it was received cynically, as all that might be expected of the American government. No action was taken by the residents, although some threats against Caucasians are rumored to have been made by hot-headed individuals. K., a very idealistic individual, said:

"The unfavorable verdict on Okamoto's case will be a ground for further killing. The resentment will be great. It will know no bounds, therefore it will be my advice that all should be careful. Slightest suspicion will be magnified manifold and the poor suspect will in course of time be beaten or killed. (K. referred here to suspicion against the inu.)

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1. Ibid., August 8, 1944, p. 5.

Therefore, too intimate a friendship with any Caucasian will be dangerous. Explanation will not help. It will only tend to add greater resentment. . . . .

"The American laws are born out of Congressional incubator turned out by the thousands to suit the occasion which benefit themselves. I would rather live among the barbarians than among the hypocritical, selfish, everything-for-myself Americans. Their laws are mockery to civilization. They can shoot and kill an innocent man for no reason whatever and be acquitted, as pronounced by the Court martial freeing Pvt. Bernard Goe who shot Shoichi Okamoto on May 24. . . . .

*other place*

"The resentment over this very unfavorable verdict is great. Why shouldn't it be? To kill a man just because he was afraid of him is no excuse, yet the officers have acquitted the sentry. A cowardly shooting and a shameless verdict. That is American, a hypocritical America."<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly, many individuals felt as bitterly as this, although they would not express themselves so frankly. A nisei girl said:

"There were very harsh reactions (to the acquittal). It was very shocking and disappointing news. It seemed so unfair and unjust."<sup>2</sup>

Another nisei girl of very conservative point of view said:

"The verdict was kind of expected. They knew the result before they even started. All those things are whitewashed."<sup>3</sup>

Resignation of Internal Security

The resignation of the Japanese Internal Security on July 19 was one of the most serious repercussions of the Hitomi murder. The administration experienced extreme difficulty in recruiting another force and the change brought about in the attitude of those Japanese who finally consented to serve altered the character of the body a great deal. Before their resignation, the Japanese police had been called dogs; after the resignation, the succeeding body was called timid, spineless, and cowardly and the men were

1. Ms., July 20, 1944, pp. 4, 5.
2. R. Hankey, Notes, July 18, 1944, p. 2.
3. Ibid., July 19, 1944, p. 4.

considered as all but useless by the residents. The mention of their names would usually evoke a scornful, albeit somewhat tolerant smile.

The reasons for this mass resignation were well understood by the residents. The Japanese police had been unpopular since segregation. Some of the members had been arrogant and had used their positions to threaten fellow residents with their power. They were also widely believed to be taking bribes from the gambling groups. It is very possible that they were. The murder of Hitomi, the threat against Mr. Shimokon and, possibly, the fear that they would be forced to co-operate in the apprehension of the murderer and thereby incur the wrath of the greatly feared underground group ~~or~~ ~~groups~~ was too much for them. Moreover, public pressure against them was tremendous. Mr. Abe explained their unpopularity as follows:

"The first trouble was that the camp residents suspected them, that they were spies of the administration. That was the main reason the police couldn't get the co-operation of the residents. And also there were the gambling groups who were protected by the police."<sup>1</sup>

The resignation was announced to the people in an extra issue of the Newell Star on July 20, which stated that on July 19 the entire Colonial Police had resigned in a body, giving as reason lack of cooperation from the residents. In this statement, Mr. Best asked the residents in each block to select two men to serve as policemen in their own blocks. "These persons selected by the blocks will be accepted by the administration without question and will be assigned to the colony police force."

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1. Ibid., July 24, 1944, p. 2.

The mass resignation left the administration in an untenable position, since the policing of the colony was quite impossible without evacuee help. It was imperative that a new force be recruited immediately. Accordingly, Mr. Schmidt and Mr. Holding, addressed the block managers and attempted to point out that the recruiting of this force was a responsibility of the block managers. This attitude was greatly resented by the block managers, especially Mr. Holding's statement:

"If there's a failure it's going to be your responsibility. You've got to see that people in the block co-operate with the policement. For those blocks which supply no policemen, no protection will be given."

Chief of Police Schmidt told the block managers that those blocks which did not elect representatives would have no service for the issuance of passes or sending of telegrams. (These duties were ordinarily undertaken by the Colonial Police). Two of the block managers thereupon contended that the block managers "were merely an instrument for channeling information and announcements and emphatically should not be responsible for the failure of the Police Force."

The resentment which these statements by Schmidt and Holding aroused was shown by the fact that Mr. Okamoto, a conservative block manager of the mildest character, ~~denounced it, and~~ became very angry over the matter. Okamoto believed in co-operating with the administration as much as possible, but on this occasion he lost his temper, saying with indignation:

"When Mr. Holding of Internal Security said that those blocks who didn't elect policemen would not get any telegrams delivered or no Sunday passes to the hospital, everybody got mad. That's why some people tried to get him off the force."

We feel they are using the block managers as a weapon. If that's WRA's policy, that's pretty serious.

"The reason we can get no organization is anyone taking such a job is afraid of being called an inu. That's why most persons don't want any jobs where they have to contact Caucasians.

"In certain of the meetings, like the Police, the Co-op Board elections and the Spanish Consul, we could get only about 5 or 6 people to come out. That was not only in my block here either. The block managers have a very hard time. That's why so many block managers are quitting. They're having to take too many orders from WRA."<sup>1</sup>

The block elections were held and about two thirds of the blocks elected wardens. The success of the election of the police officers varied through the camp. The Manzanar section filled every position. Ward VI and ward VII filled least. In spite of the threatened penalties, some blocks refused to elect wardens and remained unpoliced for six months or more. Some of the reasons for refusing to serve in this capacity <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ fully explained by *Quishi*:

"I don't think the Japanese want the name 'policeman.' The Japanese don't want Japanese to rule over them. They say, 'We are all behind the fence, behind barbed wire, and we don't want anybody to pick us up.'<sup>2</sup>

"What I heard is that some blocks are going to have watchmen and that others are not going to have anyone serve as police in their block.

"The rumor that whoever serves as police in the centers and works as stooges - their records will be sent to Japan - that has a great bearing with many.

"There is also a matter that has been confirmed by one of the boys from the stockade. When he was released he asked why he had been impounded. The policeman (Caucasian) told him that a man in the block had written a letter saying that he was dangerous. The boy asked to see the letter. The Caucasian said he can't have it because the letter is going to be sent to Japan with the man who wrote it. All the records concerning him will be sent to Japan. If this is true, that is the most wonderful thing that could happen."<sup>3</sup>

The following descriptions of block meetings were given:

1. Ibid., August 8, 1944, p. 5.
2. Ibid., July 30, 1944, p. 10.
3. Ibid., August 7, 1944, p. 4.

Mr. Okamoto stated in a letter:

"Up to date the reputation of police is so grave that it seems to me the colonists have no interest in the colonial police affairs. It tells very clearly by past experiences and every meeting which we held has failed. None of them succeed. The colonists held meetings regarding the election of the police commissioners but unfortunately failed except for two or three blocks. It appears to me that the colonial police department feels they have no support by the colonists<sup>1</sup>.

Mr. Abe, who lived in the Manzanar district where the election was most successful, stated:

"I think they'll get an Internal Security but it will take time. So far, the police department has been looked upon as administrative agents."

Abe went on to tell how he had attended the Internal Security meeting in his block. He had been offered the position of Police Chief for the Manzanar section but had refused. In his opinion the men who attended the meeting "were a bunch of rabbits . . . . and didn't even know how to handle the meeting. But most of the people there were well meaning and wished to organize a camp police force." He also stated that the men appointed to a committee to discuss certain matters relating to the police force with the administration had been afraid to take the positions. He concluded with an expression very common among the more recently arrived Manzanar transferees, stating that the new group wished to keep to itself, that it had nothing to do with the November, 1943, incident and that the newcomers couldn't get along with the old police force.<sup>2</sup>

*irrelevant  
New*

It should be stressed here, that the underground pressure group did all in its power to spread propaganda to inhibit the

1. Ibid., July 24, 1944, p. 5.

2. Ibid., July 24, 1944, p. 3; August 8, 1944, p. 2.

election of the police.<sup>1</sup> However, general pressure was so strong that their efforts were scarcely needed. Considering the amount of pressure it is remarkable that the police force was re-staffed at all. This pressure continued to inhibit the police force a year (and will probably continue for much longer). The "wardens," as they were henceforth called, came to be looked upon as meek, ineffectual individuals. Whenever any infringement of law ~~in~~ occurred which might remotely be connected with "politics" or might conceivably offend the residents if action were taken, the wardens refused to act. They would call up the Caucasian police and say, "You better take this. It's too hot for us."

On August 8, when wardens had been obtained for most of the blocks, Mr. Okamoto said:

"Finally they changed the name of the police to wardens. I believe that the main cause of the resignation was that the police say, 'The colonists don't support the colony police.' Their bad reputation, I think, was due to their lacking capable personnel. Some reported very little detail of anything that happened in the blocks. It used to be that the Japanese police didn't report every little thing to the Caucasians and then things would settle down."

Okamoto means here that it is far better to allow minor matters to settle themselves and not drag the Caucasians in on every occasion.

"They said the name of 'police' was too official. "Our block failed the first time. Particularly the issei were against it because they heard the rumor of sending records to Japan. Also the Internal Security used to wear a badge of the regular United States police. It said United States police on the badge. Most of the people were afraid (to connect themselves so obviously with the U.S. government).

*I should be put in previous organization.*

*422*

1. Ibid., July 31, 1944, p. 2.

"The old police were always looking for something to report. They got a very bad reputation. That is not police officers! That just disturbs the public order!"<sup>1</sup>

On behalf of the new force, a statement was printed in the Newell Star on August 10. It was announced that the new force had asked the Project Director henceforth to instruct the Internal Security or the FBI to inform the Colonial Police of the reasons for the arrest of any resident,<sup>2</sup> and that it had emphasized to the director that "problems arising between the administration and the residents did not come within the jurisdiction of the police force."

#### The Rape Rumors

Coincident with the resignation of the Colonial Police, the camp fell victim to an extremely bizarre rumor. For ten days story after story of rape, perpetrated by one individual or a gang of boys, swept through the camp. The rumors were taken very seriously by many of the people in camp. For about a week the girls and young women imposed a curfew on themselves and a woman was seldom seen outside of a barrack after dark. Girls who attended the Japanese night school were escorted home by a group of the young men students. A typical variant of the rumor follows:

From Mr. Yamaguchi:

"They say a girl was attacked in block 69. She ran away screaming. The girls can't go to school (Japanese night school). Now the boys are getting together and they all leave school together.

"Some people say that the administration is spreading

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1. Ibid., August 8, 1944, p. 4.

2. This request was complied with. Kira raised a fuss over its supposed non-observance when threatened with complicity in the Hitomi murder.

the rumors to frighten the people so they will quick make another Internal Security. Other people are fighting for it (for Internal Security). So there are two groups fighting; one wants an Internal Security and the others say we can take care of it ourselves.

"It's a fact that some people are scared. Especially all the girls. Ward III quit night school. Even the movies have quit.

"People would like an Internal Security, but nobody wants to run. They don't want to be inu. I think the trying to get a new Internal Security will fall to the ground."<sup>1</sup>

After a short period of extreme concern, the rape rumors died down very rapidly. Long before the Internal Security was securely established they were heard no more.

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1. Ibid., July 24, 1944, p. 1.

It is probable that much of the apprehension of this time was due to the incautious threats of violence which certain members of the undercover pressure group had made prior to the murder. Whether the group was implicated or not, many people, including the authorities, suspected that they might be. Many later, a well-posted informant stated that Kira had been ~~XXXXXX~~ engineered most of the beatings. The leaders of the group spared no effort in pointing out that the murder was a glaring example of administrative ineptitude ~~xxxxMnxxYamashita expressed in the xxx that since~~ "the attacks which ended with ~~xxxx~~ and should ~~pointment to the~~ make it clear to the American public that something was ~~wrong in the~~ seriously wrong in Tule Lake. Naturally, they hoped that this would result in Mr. Best's dismissal. Mr. ~~stated~~ stated Yamashita that "the attacks which ended with the murder ~~xxxx~~ " (here he caught himself and said ominously, "temporarily ended ~~xxxx~~ for the time being") had made the people optimistic, "especially ~~xxxx~~ since the attack was successful and the administration was not able to find the attacker." This was certainly not true, unless he was referring only to the members of the pressure group. He continued. ~~parthere.~~ parthere. He pointed out that the camp conditions was such that the people were forced into beatings and murder because no other path of righting their grievances was open to them.

with 4 cents to  
implication

PROPOSED CHANGE OF EMPHASIS END OF CHAPTER VI \* HITOMI MURDER

Police commission election (2/3) first overt behavioristic evidence of change in public attitude.

Tie in public acceptance of Co-op Board.

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1. The police resigned after the Hitomi murder because:

- A. Knew they were unpopular had long been regarded as stooges for the administration.
- B. People as a whole were expressing opinion that murder was a good thing. Condoned the murder.
- C. Knew they would be expected to assist Caucasian police and help investigate
- D. Great fear of pressure group whom many must have suspected had something to do with the murder - Shimokon's fear - S. flees the camp.

BUT--

Residents shocked by the murder: though most afraid to say so.

Afraid to be without police - tie in rape rumor. Though everybody afraid to take jobs, must have been coaxed to do it with promises of support.

IMPORTANT - General population afraid to take active overt step to restore ~~peace and order~~ peace and order but felt it necessary to have a police force.