

J 10.19

67/14  
C



101  
✓ 14

by E.H.S.  
May 20, 1943  
Report on Minidoka  
to J. F. Embree

REPORT ON AN UNORGANIZED RELOCATION CENTER

In March, 1943, after eight months of existence Minidoka was preparing to establish some form of community government --- the last of the centers to take this step. All of the administrators and most of the evacuees were doubtful of the necessity for such organization. There was a tendency to point to the center's peaceful record and to say, "Let's go on as we are". However, there were certain stirrings within the community and also what was interpreted to be pressure from Washington which were pushing the center toward action in regard to a self-government program. By the beginning of April it was clear that some step would be taken. What might be expected to result from such action?

Elements of Social Disorganization

In relocation centers like Manzanar, Poston I, and Tule Lake there have been social disturbances of various kinds --- strikes and demonstrations. These were symptoms of organization, as well as disorganization. The general strike at Poston I, for example, began as an expression of dissatisfaction with administrative action, and as it progressed indicated various significant splits among the evacuees. But it ended in the creation of a plan for community organization which has subsequently been put into operation and in terms of which the political structure of the community is gradually taking form. Social disturbances in other centers have not had such sweeping and constructive results; but even the successive, apparently aimless strikes at Tule Lake may nevertheless be regarded as part of a "struggle towards consistency" within the community.

At Minidoka such social disturbances have not appeared, except in



very moderate and hardly discernible forms, at the very beginning of the project and again during March and April of this year. The near absence of such symptoms is indicative of a retardation of internal organization, but not necessarily of an absence of social disorganization. Most, if not all, of the elements of disorganization which are present in other centers are also present in Minidoka. They have merely not found the channels of expression which they have found in other centers.

Camp Disharmony The great majority of the inhabitants of Minidoka came from Seattle. They spent from three to four months in the Puyallup Assembly Center before coming to Minidoka. This assembly center was officially named Camp Harmony, but is frequently referred to by Minidokans as "Camp Disharmony". It is remembered by them as an extremely unpleasant place where all the cultural and political conflicts of the evacuees came to sharp expression. In addition to the usual bad features of assembly centers, such as over-crowded conditions, extreme restriction of movement, and inexperienced appointed personnel, the Puyallup center was characterized by an early precipitation of the JACL political issue.

Shortly after the center was established, a representative of the WCCA approached James Sakamoto, president of the Seattle chapter of the JACL, and asked him to assume responsibility for setting up community organization. Sakamoto accepted and established an organization headed for the most part by other prominent members of the Seattle JACL. The JACL leaders had never had the confidence of Seattle Japanese generally, and their actions resulted in arousing intense antagonism. They were regarded by almost all the issei and a large number of nisei as high-handed and dictatorial. One opportunity was given the evacuees to express themselves in



regard to the JACL organization. The single popular expression of opinion permitted was a vote on the question, "Are you satisfied with the present evacuee management of the center?" This was interpreted by the people to mean that if they voted "no" all evacuee control would be eliminated. The result was a majority of affirmative votes, which the JACL group took as popular confirmation of their policies and methods.

The opposition to the JACL group and the general disharmony and internal antagonism increased steadily during the existence of the center. By the time it was disbanded "a grave had been dug for Sakamoto" and threats to beat him up had been passed about. A considerable number of persons were determined not to allow his group to assume control in the relocation center. The antagonisms developed in the Puyallup center are characteristic of the intense reactions against the JACL among other Japanese Americans during the evacuation period. They are indicative of the existence of what is often referred to as the issei-nisei cleavage, but which is better characterized as the JACL-anti-JACL political conflict characteristic of the evacuees everywhere.

The Puyallup experience established two things (1) the potential intensity of this political conflict among Minidokans and (2) a determination on the part of many respected leaders not to let the situation repeat itself.

Physical Dissatisfactions. One of the major causes for social disturbances at other centers has been discontent over the various physical discomforts of the relocation centers and resentment at what have been interpreted as unfulfilled promises on the part of the administrators. Minidoka has had as much cause for dissatisfaction on this score as any other



center. The housing situation at the beginning of the project was at least as bad as that in other centers. Families were crowded into unpartitioned barracks, to the extent that women refused to undress for bed because of the extreme lack of privacy. After settling in a block, one group of evacuees within a month or two were forced to move en masse to make room for the high school. The lack of coal at the beginning of the period of extremely cold weather and the failure to install stoves until along in the winter season in certain parts of the community resulted in some real suffering. The sewage system remained imperfect for a long time. As a result there were no flush toilets until late in February and people were forced to use outside latrines through the coldest weather.

Conditions less extreme than these have been given as reasons for disturbances at other centers, but the dissatisfactions they gave rise to at Minidoka were expressed in only minor ways. The head block manager was threatened mildly early in the history of the project, as a result of the bad housing. A delegation of women visited the project director to protest over lack of coal. But beyond this there was no organized expression of the dissatisfactions.

Gang Threats. The break-up of Japanese community life with evacuation has resulted in letting loose types of social action which do not operate in stable and organized community life, namely, terroristic gang forces. This phenomenon has appeared no less in Minidoka than among evacuees elsewhere. The chief source of such action in Minidoka, as elsewhere, seems to have been among anti-JACL groups or individuals. There is also indication of pro-Japanese elements involved in this type of social ac-



tion. No beating took place in Minidoka, but it is evident that the same forces which gave rise to beatings and suspicion in other centers are present there. The following are examples of threatening letters, as recorded by the reports officer:

"Blindman Sakamoto, you and all of your group: We are all ready to take action. Our group is determined to risk any jail sentence. We will sacrifice anything. It is the terrible time of war. Now it is the time to get rid of the head man who brings the idea of collecting money from the rich as well as the poor to feast in the warm dining hall. Within 24 hours change your mind. The time limit of your answer is 24 hours. Representative."

This was in almost classical Japanese. The next anonymous note received was found in a fire phone box and was translated as follows: "To the Japanese in the United States Armed forces: Pro-American people leave this camp immediately. If not, a danger fall upon you. 6,000 pro-Japanese."

Another anonymous letter was translated as follows: "To Mr. Head Steward and Block Manager No. 8: When the Issei give a program or a play, the Nisei don't have to pay the admission. But when the Issei (the writer apparently meant to say Nisei) give a play, the Issei must pay the admission. If you give too much power to the Nisei, it is dangerous. Do not let the Nisei of the Block 5, 6, 7, 8 have any play. If you must, you have to expect injuries to some persons or a big fire. From a group member."

Miscellaneous Sentiments. The types of attitude towards administration cover about the same range in Minidoka as in other centers, such as for example Poston. Expressions of attitude in this respect which were picked up here and there over the community indicate this. (1) "The administration does not understand Japanese psychology and does things wrong. People are dissatisfied everywhere and things are quiet only on the surface." (2) "They haven't let us have self-government because they are afraid of us." (3) "The administration has backed the wrong people for all the jobs, the people who suit them and don't get along with the rest of us." (4) "It would be better if the army were running the project. Things would be all right, because they wouldn't let anybody stir up trouble." (5) "There's no use having self-government



in Minidoka, because it's only a temporary place anyway." (6) "Why stir up trouble by changing to self-government? It wouldn't get us anything anyway." (7) "Everybody is satisfied because the administration has chosen people who are respected by the rest of the community." (8) "The administration has done more for us than we could do for ourselves. We shouldn't have any changes in the set-up." (9) "As soon as you give Japanese any power, there will be trouble. We won't respect any Japanese. So the Caucasians should run things."

These sentiments are indicative of the usual wide range of feeling on these matters. They run the gamut from non-cooperative and anti-administration points of view to subservient and anti-Japanese viewpoints. They indicate that the reaction to evacuation and relocation and consequently the attitudes toward the community have been pretty much the same as in other Japanese-American groups. They are also indicative of possibilities for political factionalism and for demonstrations against the administration.

It is apparent, through these various lines of analysis, that the sentiments and the lines of cleavage of the Minidoka population are probably basically the same as those for the population of any other relocation center, with only minor differences. The question occurs: Why have not these factors given rise to the symptoms which have appeared in other centers?

#### Minidoka Social Structure

There are many factors connected with Minidoka's failure to show symptoms of social disorganization. The sprawling character of the pro-



ject, the lack of geographical isolation of the center, the personalities of administrators and evacuee leaders, possibly the economic and educational background of the Seattle evacuees have all played their parts. However, it seems to the writer that certain characteristics of the organization of the project have been of primary importance.

The Block and the Section. It has definitely been the policy of the administration from the beginning not to encourage organization in terms of the block unit. It is true that in accordance with general WRA policies a block manager was appointed for each block. However, there has not been a block manager's office for each block and the managers have not had their own individual office forces. Instead, the block manager system has been set up on a basis of the four block unit. That is, there is usually one block manager office for every four block group, and the block managers of the group have acted as their own office force taking turns on duty in the block managers' office. People were forced to become acquainted with block managers who were not of their own block, since their own block manager was not always on duty in the office. The block managers also learned to cooperate in their duties in groups of four. Thus the development of a social unit larger than the block was encouraged. In addition, little encouragement was given to the development of block councils under the leadership of the block manager. These conditions are in contrast with Poston and Tule Lake, where the block manager system has been based on the block unit from the beginning and where block councils developed early in the history of the projects.

Shortly after Minidoka was organized a movement began in the first



blocks settled for the popular election of block managers in mass meetings held in the blocks. This was promptly discouraged by the chief of community services. He took a strong stand against the tendency in the block managers meetings and the movement was blocked. During the first months there was insufficient equipment to supply all the mess halls. This made it necessary for the inhabitants of several blocks to eat in the mess halls of neighboring blocks. This and the discouragement of block manager elections undoubtedly resulted in retarding the social integration of people within the blocks.

Recreation was also organized in terms of a larger unit than the block. Minidoka is divided into seven sections of five blocks each. There is a coordinator of recreation for each of the sections, and the use of the recreation halls was worked out in terms of the needs of the five block section. This was another element in the discouragement of organization on the basis of the single block unit.

Thus, in the absence of block councils and the development of four and five block groupings, the face to face block unit remained unintegrated. Dissatisfaction and discontent which developed tended to be expressed through informal channels and did not become organized.

Issei and Nisei in the Project Organization. The cleavage between issei and nisei has unquestionably been less sharp in Minidoka than in Poston. The Puyallup Assembly Center experience left a deep mark on the people who came to Minidoka. As has been indicated, many came to the relocation center with a determination not to let the experience be repeated. This operated in two ways. In the first place, older Seattle evacuees immediately sought out the project administrators and emphasized the



danger to social harmony if the JACL nisei faction were to be placed again in an influential position. They emphasized the necessity for selecting older men who had had recognized status in the Seattle community to hold positions on the project. On the other hand, many of the nisei who had been prominent in the assembly center set-up were themselves well aware of the conflict and shrank from assuming positions which would precipitate the conflict once more. When one, for instance, was elected to the organization commission he declined the office on that basis.

The placing of older respected men in the project organization was assisted by two factors. The project administration was receptive to the accounts of the unhappy Puyallup experience and quickly adopted the policy of limiting the influence of the JACL leadership. At the very beginning they blocked efforts to re-establish the Puyallup set-up and sought older persons for administrative posts. In addition, there was a large exodus of evacuees to outside employment in southern Idaho. Those who went out numbered over 2000 and the majority were nisei. The result was selection of project personnel from the ranks of older men.

The preponderance of issei in the housing department and among the block managers is quite noticeable. These are important positions from the point of view of community harmony, for these departments bear the brunt of resident complaint and are the ones in which there is a large amount of contact with the older people. The presence of formerly respected older men in these positions has unquestionably been important in maintaining social harmony in the center.

The JACL leadership has remained very much in the background and



has not been especially prominent on the project except on the newspaper and in the community activities department. At Poston and Tule Lake JACL leaders assumed prominent positions early in the history of the project and were the source of much bad feeling and distrust of the administration. In Minidoka the JACL has assumed a different role, acting as an organized civic body independent of the project organization, and has consequently assumed a more normal role in the community, consonant with its former position in Japanese communities. During the winter as nisei came back from outside employment, the JACL increased in importance as a civic body, but is probably on the decline again with the re-opening of seasonal agricultural employment.

Here again we see important factors which have operated to moderate the conflict inherent in the evacuee population. The issei-nisei cultural cleavage and JACL anti-JACL political cleavage have been kept at a minimum as a result of the factors which we have here reviewed.

Self-Government. The actual face to face contacts of appointed personnel and evacuees have probably not been very different in Minidoka from what they have been on other projects. Fewer of the Caucasians have lived on the project and there has consequently probably been less concern with difference in privilege as between the two groups. The Minidoka administration itself feels that it has worked more intimately with evacuees and given them more responsibility in management, but this has not been any more the case than in Poston. One of the noticeable features of the center is the fact that administrators have not yet had the experience of working with any groups of evacuees which are not appointed by and directly responsible to themselves. The organized group



relations have in other words been entirely under the control of the appointed personnel and there has been less opportunity for friction to develop. The general set-up has taken the form of a benevolent dictatorship and is recognized as such by evacuees and administrators.

Nevertheless there have been two moves, prior to the present one, in the direction of self-government. A Fair Practice Committee was set up in September in accordance with administrative instruction No. 24. It was organized rapidly with the guidance of a former GIO organizer and received widespread publicity on the project through the newspaper. By December, however, after dealing with a few minor cases of labor relations, it had practically ceased to function although the organization continued to exist. In March it was in fact defunct and was hardly considered in the project management. It died apparently through lack of need.

The other move toward evacuee government was the setting up of a political organization. In September the project director announced in the project newspaper that a system of self-government would be instituted. The plan was to elect delegates from the blocks who in turn would select a commission for drawing up a plan for self-government. No provision was made for electing a temporary community council. On October 2 elections were held in each of the blocks under the direction the block managers. Two delegates from each block, making a total of 70, were selected by popular vote. Candidates for block delegates were not restricted as to citizenship. The representatives chosen included 41 issei, 28 nisei, and 1 sansei. These seventy then held an election in which they chose seven of their members as an organization commission. These seven were approved by the project director and immediately proceeded to draw up a charter for self-government.



The members of the organization commission were selected without reference to citizenship and consisted of six issei and one nisei. One member of the JACL group which had been in control at Puyallup was elected to the commission, but immediately resigned. The one nisei elected to the commission was from Oakland, California and largely unknown to the other residents of Minidoka. The commission membership obviously represented a reaction against the JACL control group in the assembly center.

By the middle of November the commission had completed its draft of a charter. They embodied in it a plan for an advisory group to whom the citizenship restriction was not applied. Plans were laid for the establishment of a community council on December 7. The charter was submitted to the project director, but no decision was given by him on it. In January the chairman of the organization commission wrote to the director asking what had been done about the charter and pointing out that residents were inquiring as to what had happened to self-government. The project director replied that he was doubtful of the advisability of instituting self-government in view of the disturbances which had taken place in other projects. Nothing more was done until the end of March.

During March and February members of the organization commission began to feel themselves under fire in the community. It was a common experience for certain members of the group to be stopped on the street and asked by residents what had happened to the charter. They did not feel this as an indication of a general desire for the establishment of self-government, but rather as a criticism of their position. Some



began to feel that they should resign and there was some general community sentiment that resignation was the only road open to the commission, since no action was being taken on the charter they had submitted. Their feeling in this regard was passed on to the administrators. At the same time the national director of WRA asked the project director to justify the failure to go ahead with the self-government program in Minidoka. This sort of pressure from two directions on administrators and organization commission resulted in the general feeling by early March that a settlement would have to be reached in regard to the self-government program. The feeling was general that as soon as the crisis of volunteering and registration was over the community would turn to the problem of self-government.

A meeting was called for March 31 at which the organization commission reported to the seventy block delegates who had elected them the preceding October. The delegates made no plea for the speedy adoption of self-government, but pointed out merely that the people in the blocks wanted to know what was going on. Representatives of the administration reiterated their doubts as to the advisability of self-government according to present WRA regulations. They suggested that the organization commission proceed to work out an ideal plan for self-government. This the commission agreed to do. A few days later they met again and began work on a new plan for self-government. They continued with this and completed a new charter on April 15, when they met with Dr. Province of the WRA Washington office.

Thus Minidoka has not had any functioning self-government during its existence. The Fair Practice Committee didd through lack of functional need. A temporary community council was never created. An early



move for popular election of block managers was suppressed. The block delegates have never functioned as an active representative group since their election in October. The organization commission was set up merely for the purpose of working out a plan for self-government. This absence of representative groups has retarded the development of formal channels for expression of evacuee complaint and suggestion. Such channels have remained in the hands of the administratively controlled block managers or have been purely informal. Furthermore, the only representative body which has functioned, the organization commission, has been dominated by issei and has not become a focus of evacuee internal conflict. All of these factors would seem to have been important in connection with the absence of organized social disturbances in Minidoka.

#### Present Trends and Attitudes

Minidoka, in considering the establishment of some form of self-government, is faced with injecting a new element into its social structure. The problem with which the leaders feel they are faced is how to do that without letting loose the forces for disorganization which unquestionably exist in the center. The representative structures which they create ought to be considered in relation to the social trends apparent in the community at present and also in relation to the attitudes of the individual and groups who will take part in them.

Social Trends. During the past two months Minidoka has been moving steadily in a direction similar to that of the older established centers in respect to social organization. This is the development of the block as the basic social unit of the community. In spite of lack of encouragement on the part of the administrators, the territorial unit of the



block is emerging as the primary grouping. Unlike the city block of American towns it is a great deal more than a simple territorial unit. It is in some measure replacing the family unit as the fundamental primary group.

In December conflict developed in one block in which a considerable number of JACL leaders or sympathizers lived. The immediate issue was the raising of a Christmas fund. A measure of harmony was restored by the creation of an elected group composed of both nisei and issei. This council was to make decision in regard to collections of funds and other matter affecting all the residents of the block. It had no functions outside the block. By February four more blocks had established elected groups who dealt with block matters in regard to recreation, mess hall disputes, and sometimes housing disagreements. In March it was apparent that this trend was proceeding rapidly. Fujin kai (women's groups) were organized on a block basis in several blocks and councils composed of family heads or representatives elected at large were beginning to function. In some cases the block manager was a leader in such organization, in others the organization proceeded more or less as an opposition movement to the block manager and a means of controlling his decisions.

This steady development of block organization in recent months is an indication that Minidoka is responding as have other centers to the physical set-up of the relocation center. Eating in common, sharing toilet facilities in common, living in plain sight of and in close proximity to each other, the people have found it necessary to organize social control on a wider basis than the family unit. The theatre of



intimate conduct is to a large extent the block rather than the family group. Former lines of integration and isolation have broken down and that of the block has grown up in their place. In a relatively old center like Poston block social control has in some cases undergone an extreme development, such that blocks seek to eject members or to prevent newcomers from joining them, thus showing a lack of any sense of general community responsibility for individuals.

As the lines of integration within each block become more definite and rigid, the need for some means of harmonizing inter-block relations develops. This was apparent in Minidoka in March and April as indicated in the effort to develop what were called block coordinators to deal with conflicting interests of mess hall crews and block managers and residents of the blocks. Some political strife, tending to focus on the block managers and their powers, was apparent in this connection. The attempt to establish "block coordinators", like the development of block councils and fujin kai was a spontaneous move on the part of evacuees in response to their growing social needs.

Another noticeable trend was in regard to the development of civic organizations. Through the fall and early winter there had been little development of this sort of group, with the exception of the Cooperative Enterprises which had of course received constant stimulation from the administrators. During the winter the JACL began to organize effectively. The Parent Teachers Association was just getting organized in March, as was the Red Cross. There was a noticeable lag in Minidoka as compared with other centers in respect to the importance of civic associations. Japanese Associations and ken jin kai had of course lost their leaders



and, as in other centers, were staying pretty much under cover. But a slight trend toward increasing importance of civic organizations was apparent in Minidoka by April.

An important trend with the opening of seasonal employment and the accelerated relocation program was the decreasing proportion of nisei in the population.

Attitudes of Appointed Personnel. The general set of attitudes within which self-government will have to be instituted in Minidoka is dominated by the view that it is not very important or necessary to the project. There is also noticeable a tendency to regard self-government as potentially dangerous for the peace of the project, and consequently there is an anxiety feeling about any program which is proposed. These attitudes are shared by evacuees and appointed personnel alike, but there is more unanimity in regard to them among the appointed personnel.

General policy at Minidoka has been formulated by the project director working closely with the assistant project director and the chief of community services. This applies especially to policy on community organization. One of the fundamental ideas which has guided policy is that the evacuees are suffering from "a persecution complex". This conception and this terminology have been widely disseminated among the appointed personnel generally. They involve the view that the evacuees are patients and must be dealt with as such. It is coupled with the feeling that the administrators should have a sympathetic understanding of the patients, but it does not dispose them to accept the patients' judgment in regard to matters concerning their own welfare.



Another idea which has dominated the thinking of the administrators is that which has resulted in their lack of encouragement of block organization. The assistant project director maintains that he has been influenced by Lincoln Steffens and is therefore opposed to a community organization based on territorial representation, or as he says, "the aldermanic system". This attitude has resulted in efforts to discourage the development of block loyalties or loyalties based on pre-evacuation residence and to encourage project-wide organization and loyalty. Along with this has gone the policy of discouraging "factionism" which has resulted in the efforts to prevent the Puyallup Assembly Center organization from growing up in Minidoka.

A third basic idea which has determined policy is the conviction that any form of self-government is only pretense under relocation center conditions, since ultimate decisions lie in the hands of the project director regardless of what sort of political organization is set up.

All three of these ideas dispose the administrators to view with lack of enthusiasm the creation of a community organization which proposes to bestow a measure of autonomy on evacuee groups. It also disposes them to look askance at an organization based on the block as the fundamental social unit. They have resulted in the establishment of a community which is frankly managed closely by and very much in the hands of these administrators. While they have sought to give responsibility to evacuees in the administration of the project, they have not seen the need for any organization apart from the administrative structure. They have felt that informal complaint channels were sufficiently open to make such bodies unnecessary. They have accepted the responsibility for vigorous leadership flowing from themselves to evacuee leaders



and, as in the instance of the campaign for army volunteers, have never adopted a laissez faire policy. They have moved out vigorously into the community to promulgate ideas and to create a sense of responsibility for the solution of center problems on the part of the evacuees. They say that they have a benevolent dictatorship and see it as the only practical course.

Evacuee Attitudes. The present evacuee leaders of the community see pretty much eye to eye with the administrators. They share the latter's anxiety about any self-government program which may be adopted and tend to be cynical about the benefits derivable therefrom. They differ in minor ways, for example, when attempting to characterize the evacuees as a whole, instead of applying the term, "persecution complex", they use the term "Japanese psychology". And several of them are well aware of the block emerging as the basic social unit. The present important evacuee leaders are the members of the organization commission, the block manager head, and members of the housing adjustment board. Their attitudes and relations to the community are significant in connection with the future of self-government in the center.

The members of the organization commission have acted as an informal advisory group to the project director since their election. They have influenced the administrators in their view of the community and they have in turn been influential on the community in formulating their view of the administrators. The views of the organization commission members cover a considerable range and are probably fairly representative of community attitudes, with the exception of the most non-cooperative.



One member of the commission, the eldest but one and an issei, represents what is probably a widespread view in the center. This viewpoint has been examined in some detail in Poston. The Minidoka version of it, judging from this member of the commission, is probably closely similar to the Poston form. This point of view is that a relocation center is a sort of prison or at least detention camp, where there is little to be done except bide ones time until the war is over. Do what is necessary to keep alive and amused, but nothing beyond that. This viewpoint favors fixing up ones own apartment to make it as livable as possible and encourages the development of entertainment and recreation such as kabuki drama and wood-carving and wood-polishing. It opposes constructive activity, for a number of reasons: (1) evacuees have been placed in centers against their will, have been neutralized, and therefore should remain neutral, (2) to engage in constructive activity in the center, such as the development of agricultural land, is to allow oneself possible to be exploited, for there is no certainty as to who will reap the benefits of such labor. (Along this line it might be noted that rumors that Minidoka was to be abandoned, possibly made into an army hospital camp very shortly, were rampant in Minidoka in March.) In short, the relocation center is not to be taken seriously as a community; it is a vacation place and a temporary and uncertain one at that.

It follows from these beliefs that the management of the center should rest in the hands of the people who established it, namely, the Caucasians. It is a fulfillment of their purposes and objectives, and there is no reason for the evacuees to assume responsibility for it. So long as it does not become intolerable, evacuees ought to refrain from accepting responsibility for its management. This view ceases



to be passive as soon as the suggestion is made that the nisei be given responsibility for the center. The implication that parents be placed in the custody of their children arouses a spirit of rebellion.

This set of attitudes, the writer would guess, is probably the basic social matrix in which self-government will have to be set up in Minidoka. The member of the commission who holds them is representative of the great majority of issei in the center. His basic position in organization meetings was that "The self-government program is not important because everything here is temporary". This was supplemented with the plank: "If self-government is started, it will go smoothly in the hands of the issei." This man has not been active as an adviser to the administrators and they have had little contact with him.

The views of other members of the commission are somewhat varied. One viewpoint which seems to be generally held by them is that issei domination of the representative institutions will not guarantee peace, but rather will result in disharmony. One issei member of the commission, college-educated in the United States, holds this view and bases it on his conviction that issei meetings are "not conducted in a democratic manner." He sees the issei as inclined to bicker among themselves, fight for position and power, and play dirty politics. In holding this stereotype he is of course not assessing the fact that in Minidoka the block managers and the organization commission are at present dominated by issei and have been from the beginning. He represents a viewpoint often expressed by aggressive nisei. The fact that he, an issei, holds this position indicates the impossibility of assigning sentiments in regard to government on issei-nisei lines. But his view is one suffi-



ciently widely held in the community to make it an important consideration.

An older member of the commission, who is also a member of the housing adjustment board, seems to have a widespread popularity in the community. He is convinced of the necessity for establishing some sort of representative system and points to the recent development of block councils and leaders and the movement to create the office of "block coordinator". He and other members of the commission are aware of the recent growth of political factions in the community, particularly one which centers around an opposition to the present block manager head and another less definite one which opposes the organization commission itself. He believes that these political currents are a sign that it is time to organize the political life of the community, but is inclined to expect that such action will necessarily produce a manifestation of factionalism and consequently that the smooth running of the community may be temporarily upset.

#### The New Charter

The charter which has just been formulated by the organization commission is an attempt to formalize two sets of relationships which have been developing recently in the project. These are (1) advisory relationships between the administrators and various informed and responsible evacuees and (2) the block organizations. It seeks to institutionalize what has been taking place in the social life of the community, to channel the friction that has been developing between block managers and various groups within the blocks and to formalize the hitherto miscellaneous contacts of the administrators with the community. It strikes



a compromise between the administrators' preference for over-all type of organization and the community tendency toward block solidarity by placing the advisory council on an election-at-large basis and insisting that the control of the block organizations remain in its hands. In not limiting eligibility to office to citizens, in accordance with the revised administrative instruction No. 34 it also seeks to avoid the issei-nisei cleavage. This is in accord with the previous policy of the administrators and the views of the majority of present community leaders.

The new charter then provides for a minimum of change in the social structure of the project and appears to be in accordance with present social trends, including the recent trend toward the development of representative bodies within the community.

It seems doubtful that the injection of representative groups into the social structure on a project wide basis should result in important social disturbances. In the first place, it is in accord with the stage of development of community life. It is to be based on the now developed block units. In the second place, Minidoka has waited for representative government until the physical facilities of the center have been established and stabilized. Resentments based on inadequate physical facilities have run their course and are not likely to develop on a large scale in the future. In the third place, the issei-nisei issue is now on a different basis from what it was at the beginning. Nisei are leaving the center in large numbers and the tendency is to regard the community as an issei community. Nisei are willing to withdraw from political life and are doing so. Finally, the community has waited long enough so that people have had an opportunity to become acquainted.



It is likely that representatives will be chosen on a basis of real knowledge and confidence. All of these conditions point to the probability that the institution of self-government on the project will not be accompanied by social upheaval on a large scale.

However, it should be recognized by the administrators that in the process of becoming organized, certain things are likely to take place in the community. In the first place, there are antagonisms which have crystallized against present leaders. One such leader is the block manager head. The antagonism to him will probably find expression in the new political groups. The fact that he has served faithfully and that the administrators have come to have confidence in him does not mean that the greater part of the community has confidence in him. The administrators must be prepared to see some of "their men" decline in community influence. Antagonisms which have had no means of expression thus far will unquestionably come to the surface. In the second place, there is already a struggle for power in the community, a struggle of which the members of the organization commission are aware. There will be bickerings and dirty politics which may result in a temporary instability of the leadership. The present anxiety of members of the organization commission to resign is indicative. If this struggle for power is allowed to run its course, it is likely that it will be over quickly, in view of the general low level of interest in self-government in the community. In the third place, the administrators should recognize that they may have to accept new advisers, picked by the community and not by themselves. They will have to develop confidence in them and make as free use of them as they have of their old



friends. Personal biases will have to be forgotten. Finally, it seems a little doubtful to the writer that the advisory board can remain independent of and yet maintain control over the coordinating congress as proposed in the charter. If conflict develops, the leaders might be prepared with a plan for appointment of the advisory board by the congress.