

Block 5 Meeting
Army Registration
February 10, 1943

Miyamoto

In the afternoon joint meeting of the Planning Board, Council and Block Managers, it was decided to hold block meetings throughout the project tonight to discuss the important question of registration. The purpose of these meetings was to be, as the afternoon meeting was, to raise those questions which rise in the minds of individuals concerning the questions on the registration form; but it was not to be a discussion of the points of view or reactions to the questions.

About 120 Issei and Nisei met in the messhall at 7:00 o'clock. The meeting was unusual for its attendance (usually not more than 20 persons, mostly Issei, attend) and for the promptness with which the people gathered. Issei women were relatively few in numbers, but Issei men and Nisei fellows and girls were all out in large numbers. Tom Uyeno started the meeting as chairman.

Uyeno brought out the discussion of the afternoon meeting and told the people what was under discussion tonight. There had been many objections to the registration questionnaire because of the lack of clarity as to the meanings of some of the questions. In particular question 28 on Form 304-A and 126-A Revised which inquired into the allegiance of evacuees was found objectionable. The matter had been referred to Mr. Coverly by Harry Mayeda and the former promised that he would send a letter to Washington in two or three days when it had been further ascertained that the question was unanswerable. Uyeno pointed out the injustice of asking the Issei to express their views on allegiance to the U.S. and commented that there were some at the afternoon meeting who had openly declared that they would not agree to sign the registration or that they would prefer to say "No." Uyeno was extremely careful in his statements, recognizing the position of the Issei yet attempting to restrain them from taking rash action. He introduced Mr. Shigehara who had attended the afternoon meeting as representative from the block to the Planning Board.

Mr. Shigehara started by declaring that he is new in his position as Planning Board representative, having been elected only during the past week to the position in view of Mr. Uyeno (the elders) resignation, and apologized for his lack of knowledge about the subject. He then went on to declare that he had sampled the opinions of the Planning Board members in the adjacent blocks, Blocks 4 and 6, and wished to present what they had to say. Mr. Obayashi of Block 4 had declared that this was perhaps the most important question to confront the people yet. As far as those Nisei over 21 years are concerned, they are presumably mature and of age and are supposed to be able to think for themselves. He implied that they should be allowed their personal decision on the question. But the registration requires all those over 17 years of age, and with the latter age group the parents are inclined to have considerable influence in the formation of opinion, or at least will desire such influence. In consequence, to have a split in the family may cause dire difficulties and something needs to be done to restate the question. For his own part, Mr. Shigehara is inclined to say **NO!!** in reply to the question of swearing allegiance to the United States and rejecting the Japanese emperor. Many at the afternoon meeting had expressed this opinion, and he was inclined to agree with those

who expressed that view. However, the matter is a difficult one to answer, it is an individual question, and perhaps further discussion of the question is desirable.

Uyeno then read off the question No. 28 which is the one over which most of the discussion has taken place. "Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese Emperor, or any other foreign government, power, or organization?" He stressed the demand for unqualified allegiance and the difficulties it placed upon both the Issei and Nisei in replying to the question. He also pointed out that Mr. Coverly had declared that it would be permissible to leave the question unanswered or that a qualified answer might be given. The floor was opened for discussion.

Mr. Kawasaki: Most of us Issei have lived in this country for twenty or thirty years or more, and we have received privileges from this nation as well as assumed responsibilities in it. We are not ungrateful for what we have received, but, on the other hand, we have had to struggle for what we have gained. One thing we have not received is, of course, our citizenship and under the circumstance we have been ~~forced to~~ remained citizens of the Japanese empire. Considering this situation, it seems to me too much of the Government to ask that we sign away our allegiance to the United States and reject the Japanese emperor. By the nature of our circumstance, and by our natural sentiments, we cannot reject the emperor. We have been removed from our homes and have been forced to give up our property, often at losses amounting to thousands and even to tens of thousands of dollars. What assurance do we have that in the future we shall be reimbursed for our losses? If the Government declares that we may return to our former homes and businesses, then perhaps we may be in a position to sign our allegiance. But if that is not the intention of the Government, I wonder if it isn't too much of the Government to ask us that we reject Japan and sign our allegiance to the United States, in which case we would be people without country.

Mr. Imai: Last Thursday evening I attended a meeting, and I wish to speak briefly of some of the discussion that came up at the time since it seems pertinent to our discussion tonight. Our Project Director was then explaining to us the reasons for the new proposal to permit Nisei to volunteer for the army. His view was that the Nisei should be glad of this opportunity to show their loyalty to the United States. By volunteering for the army, the Nisei are in a position to demonstrate to the world that the evacuation had been based on a false premise of their disloyalty. The question which I asked was, why should it be the responsibility of the Nisei and the Japanese to prove their loyalty to the United States? Have not the Americans by their act of evacuation demonstrated their unwillingness to accept on an equal level any other racial group but themselves. I recalled to mind something I had said to another friend of mine at one time more or less as a joke, 'If war should ever occur between Japan and the United States, we might as well fold up our businesses and head for the concentration camps.' I had said this as a joke, but what strikes me now is the truth of what I had said. There is no place in the United States for any

but the white race. Look at what is happening to the colored peoples of the south, and look at what has happened to us. Under the circumstance, isn't it asking too much of us to give up our sons who have whom we have cared for and brought up over a period of twenty years and more? If we send off our sons, what assurance does the Government give us that their parents will be cared for? What assurance do they give us that the parents of the Nisei shall not be reduced to poverty and degradation? These were the thoughts that occurred to me in connection with the discussion of that Thursday meeting, and which I thought might be of interest to you tonight.

Mr. Kawasaki: One question which I should like to ask here is, what does the statement mean when the Government declares: '.....that ways shall be found to restore you as quickly as may be to your normal and rightful share in the present life and work of the people of the United States.' (Tulcan Dispatch, Feb. 10, p.4, 1st col.) Does that mean that the Issei and Nisei shall be permitted to return to their old homes and businesses and carry on under normal circumstances without fear of danger from anyone? If that is what is meant, then perhaps we might sign our allegiance to the U.S.

Tom Uyeno: No, I am sure that is not what is meant. It seems highly improbable that we would be permitted to return to the Pacific Coast during a period of war, and it may be questionable as to the future. That's the problem we're confronted with. If we say, "Yes" to question number 28, then we get it in the neck. If we say "No" then we get it in the neck again. We're in difficulty in either case, and we need to give careful thought to this matter.

Komure (younger): I want to speak as a Nisei, a citizen of the United States. As far as I am concerned, my answer to question number 28 is "No"! (Komure is a Kibei, and he spoke in Japanese.) (applause)

Imai: If the Nisei are sent to the battlefronts, it may be expected that they'll be sent to the forefront of battle, just as the Negroes have been sent forth. And in the army, are the Nisei permitted the same privileges as anyone else? They are not. How can we hope to expect fair treatment under any circumstance from the keto. The keto are out to save their own necks, and they only ~~coming~~ come running to us for help when we need it. Yet, they give us nothing in return for what they ask. If the Issei sign their names to question 28, it means that they'll be people without countries. We'll be just like the Jews who wander over the world without any place to call home.

Min Aoki (Nisei): I'd like to say a few words concerning the problem of the Nisei. It seems to me that we need to start fighting for our rights. We've been kicked around all our lives because of race prejudice, and it's time that we started doing something about it. When we were evacuated, we didn't say anything against it, and didn't move a finger to prevent it; that's why we're here today. Everywhere we've gone, we've been discriminated against. In Seattle the Japanese couldn't get homes in 9/10th of the area residential districts. The Nisei have been discriminated against even in the army. I don't think we should go on taking it forever.

We've got to take into consideration our parents too. If we're taken into the army, the Government isn't going to guarantee their livelihood in the post-war years.

Addie Kuge: I don't see why there should be any question about the Nisei signing the registration. As long as the registration is compulsory, is there any reason why we shouldn't sign? I think it's pretty clear what our citizenship allegiance is.

Tom Uyeno: I think myself that the Nisei problem is the more difficult of the two. I agree that it's asking too much of the Issei to declare allegiance to the United States and forswear allegiance to the emperor, but that problem is to be corrected in the next few days by Mr. Coverly. But in the case of the Nisei, it's an army ruling that every Nisei citizen has to fill out the registration, and there's no getting around it. The Issei have to give some consideration to the Nisei in this problem.

Imai: I don't see that there's any further necessity of the Issei discussing their problem further. In my way of thinking, there's only one answer we can give to the question number 28, and that answer is "No." Don't you think it would be neater and less deceptively if we all say "No" together? (loud applause)

Mr. Aoki: On two occasions in the past I requested the WRA to give permission to the Nisei to farm the land here at Tule Lake in much the same way as the cooperative, in much the same way as our Community Enterprise is now operated. If this were permitted, the future of the Nisei at least would be assured and there would be assurance that they could at least make a living here in this country. But the answer of the Project Director to this request was "No". The Government does not wish the Japanese to make any money during the present war, and it seems that their main intent is to keep the Nisei from having their citizenship rights recognized. If this is the type of discrimination that is to continue, I see no reason why the Nisei should be inducted and be forced to fight for a nation that does not protect them.

Komure (older brother): I'd like to say something, and though I don't speak very well in Japanese, I shall ask your forgiveness and speak in that language. I think it's asking too much of the Government to come and ask for our help when they haven't recognized our rights as citizens and have evacuated us from our homes. We have always been treated badly. The history of the Japanese in America has been filled with instances of discrimination. Even in the army, there is the story that a group of Nisei who wanted to sit down at one table with a group of keto and they were told to go and eat somewhere else. You know how the Negroes are being treated at the present time. And even when we're asked to volunteer, we're ~~showed off~~ ^{shoved off} into a team of our own separate from other groups. In the face of all this, it's too much when the Government comes to ask that we help in the war effort. If the President and the American press were to come out and give us some support, tell the people of America that we are loyal and that we should be free to have all the privileges which an American citizen should have, then I think we might stop to consider the problem more favorably. But they don't even give us that much assurance. I think we should fight for our rights rather than continue to be kicked around by the keto.

Min Aoki: I want to speak in Japanese. (The first couple of times he addressed his audience in English. His Japanese was extremely poor and he scarcely got his point across.) At present there are efforts in California to take away rights from Nisei by amending the constitution. The way things look, we're not even going to be permitted to return to our former states. There have even been efforts to take away our citizenships entirely. Why can't we do something about it? Can't we get organized some way and fight this thing out?

Komure (elder brother): Yeh, this is the time to fight. We've been kicked around enough.

Min Aoki: If we join the army, will the Government guarantee citizenship to the Issei?

Uyeno: I don't know, but I'll put that down as one of the questions to the Planning Board.

Another: I've heard that the girls are asked whether they would be willing to join the WAAC, but when a girl asked if Japanese were taken into the WAAC, she was told that they weren't at present. Is that true?

Uyeno: Don't know, but I'll ask the planning board.

Min Aoki: It seems to me that there's no use our answering the questionnaire until these questions are cleared up. I move that we all refuse to register until the questions are cleared up.

Uyeno definitely hesitated to take this step. His position was that the Nisei registration was compulsory in the sense that the Army is demanding it and you can't push a question to the army too far. Moreover, his inclination is to declare his citizenship allegiance although he is one of the most outspoken opponents to the evacuation.

Komure (elder): Yes, I think we should refuse to register. We're bound to be discriminated against in the future. This is our chance to make our demands known. . . .

Nakamura (older Kibei speaking in Japanese): Sure. We shouldn't register. If we all get together and decide to say "No", it's much better.

Komure(elder): Say, mister. This is a Nisei problem. You leave this discussion to us. We're the ones who have to decide this issue.

Nakamura: Sure, I'm Nisei. I'm a Nisei too.

Uyeno: The purpose of this meeting, as I said, is to raise questions to present to the administration and the army. We can't decide all—not to register or anything like that.

Min Aoki: Why shouldn't we all decide not to register. Take a vote anyway.

Uyeno: This is an individual problem.

Min Aoki: No it isn't. It concerns all of us together. Take a vote and see how everyone votes on it.

(Uyeno called for the vote by raising hands. The latter was suggested from the floor. There was a definite majority in favor of waiting before registering. Uyeno did not call for the contrary vote to save the skins of those who were in opposition.)

The meeting ended with this since there were no other questions.

My personal reaction to the meeting was one of disgust and discouragement. My impulse had been to stand up and talk, but because of my research interest, plus perhaps the feeling that it would be unsafe to do so, I failed to openly discuss the question. That is, I felt that it was unwise to risk the research interest at the moment for I felt that something was bound to happen in the near future which would give me an opportunity to voice a definite opinion if the need arose.

It struck me, however, that if this trend continued, it was the beginning of end of Nisei citizenship. The Government itself might not take direct action, but certainly the negative action of the Nisei to citizenship would gain wide publicity. Whereas the evacuation concerned only the three Pacific States in the main, a declaration of non-allegiance would strike everyone in the United States. The national reaction was bound to be negative.

The meeting was clearly dominated by the Issei, and especially of the element who feels that they have been jilted by the Government. Their resentment against the evacuation is the main symbolism by which they depict the discriminatory action of the keto. Those Nisei who spoke up, too, were of the same variety. The Komure brothers are definitely Japanese. Min Aoki, however, has undoubtedly been influenced by his family, who fears to have him inducted into the army, and he himself, one suspects, has a stake in not being inducted in the sense that he is engaged to a girl and treasures like dearly and romantically at present.

The difficulty with the meeting was (1) the registration had not been given sufficient pre-publicity so that people understood what they were to register for, (2) as a consequence the Issei and Nisei questions, which are in fact separate issues, became involved with each other. I could not help feeling that the Issei were justified in objecting to the statement of the 28th question, for it would obviously leave them without any international status if they answered "Yes." But there should have been no doubt on the Nisei issue. The latter, however, was confused by its mixing with the ~~Nisei-probi~~ Issei issue. I voted for the deferment of registration for a few days since it would clearly split families for the Issei to have to say "No" and the Nisei to say "Yes" (future probs. were bound to arise then), but I was equally convinced that I should say "Yes" sooner or later.

Wingman

I went to the bathhouse about 5:15 in the evening to take a shower. The whole issue of registration was still muddled in my mind and though I had thought that I should sit down and think the thing through carefully taking up each point in turn, I hadn't gotten around to it. Nor were all the points then clear in my mind; I could not quite clearly decide what was at issue, what were the assumptions being made, what prognostications one could make of the future if one view or another were taken of the issue.

I met Komure (younger, Kibei) in the showerroom with one of his friends.

Komure: What do you think of the registration?

Myself: (groping) As I see it the issue is complicated by three views. First, the Issei obviously can't answer that 28th question, and if they do, they have to say "No". I think that much is pretty clear; if I were an Issei, I'd feel exactly as they do. Second and third, there are the Kibei and Nisei issues. The difficulty is that both groups have to answer the same questionnaire, yet their background and position are bound to be different. After all the Kibei have been in Japan, they've built up sentimental attachments to Japan, they know something of the country, and they might even have a sense of loyalty to the Emperor. It's obviously difficult for the Kibei to say "Yes" to the question of forswearing allegiance to the Emperor of Japan. But with the Nisei

Komure: You mean there should be three different groups in this project? You mean to have one Issei, one Kibei, and one Nisei group each with it's own ideas?

Myself: No, no. What I'm saying is that the background for each group is different and it makes it pretty difficult for everyone to answer in the same way.

Aki A. (the friend, a Nisei) Listen, this is a problem in which all of us are in for it in the same way. Our citizenship doesn't mean a damn thing; if it did, we wouldn't have been evacuated. I know guys who tore up their citizenship paper as soon as they heard about this business of registering for volunteer combat troops. I know guys who threw theirs in the stove and burnt it up; and some guys went and asked for expatriation. God dammit, we've got to fight this time. All the Nisei have to get together and fight this thing out. We've been kicked around enough. Most of my friends are plenty mad.

Myself: What are they mad about? I mean, specifically what are they sore about.

Aki A.: About the voluntary induction. Those meetings Monday night when the army officers made their speeches. That's what they're sore about.

Myself: Oh, I can understand that. It burns me up too to see the kind of stuff they hand us. They ask us to assume the responsibilities of joining in the war effort and carry a gun, but they don't

tell us anything of the privileges that we deserve as citizens. Hell, they've got to give us some guarantees for the future if we're going to go in there and carry a gun. But as for fighting the issue out right now and here, I don't agree with that. This isn't the time to fight. It would be a sell-out of our citizenship to fight the issue now. (What I had in mind was that a negative declaration against allegiance to the United States was bound to cause a terrific reaction throughout the United States, and that it was a losing battle from the start.)

Aki: What do you mean this isn't the time to fight? Now is the time. Boy, the whole thing makes me fighting mad, and I feel it right here (indicating the pit of his stomach). Kokoro no naka de wakaru no da. (Inside the soul is where you know it; properly speaking, he should have said, 'Hara no naka ...' ((inside the stomach)) since that was where he was indicating, and it would have been more truly Japanese idiom, but the fellow was obviously a Nisei with only a fair command of Japanese. However, our conversation was intermixed between Japanese and English, and for a while I thought that he might be a Kibei who spoke rather good English.) When you feel it here (stomach), you've got to fight. What the hell, if the army inducts us, what's going to happen to our fathers and mothers? Whose going to take care of them I'd like to know?

Myself: Sure, but we've got to think about the Nisei problem too. If the Nisei lose their citizenship, where do we stand? If we say No to question 28, we're going to lose our citizenship for sure. What the hell's the use of fighting a losing battle?

Aki: Sure, maybe it's a losing battle. But when are we going to fight if not now? This thing makes me so mad that I don't care what happens. I've got some property back in Bellevue where I come from, but I don't care what happens to that. All I care is that our rights haven't been recognized, and now they come to tell us that they want us in the army. Our citizenship isn't worth a goddam if the keto aren't going to give us our rights.

Myself: I don't argue with you at all on that point. Of course, our rights haven't been recognized. And you damned rights we've got to fight for it. What we needed to do was to start fighting for it long ago. But what I'm saying is that this is the wrong time to fight. If we fight this issue, we're going to find ourselves without citizenship. Hell, it won't take much for the people of the United States to get riled up enough over this thing to pass an amendment to the constitution demanding that our rights be taken away. What I'm saying is that there's no use fighting a losing battle.

Aki: Well, goddamit, when are we supposed to fight. Man, this is the time--right now. It's when all the guys feel it right in here that you can get them to act together.

Myself: Well, I can't tell you right now when we should start to fight. What I'm saying is that you can't buck a whole nation unless you've got something to fight with. By way of analogy, let me mention what I think of the treatment given the Germans right after

the end of the last war. It was right after the last war that the nations of the world, on the side that was victorious, should have given the Germans a fighting chance to recover themselves; but they weren't given that chance. It was after 1932 when Hitler came to power, however, that the Allied nations should have begun to clamp down and started to fight. But they didn't. Both times, when the opportunity was offered, the allied nations did the wrong thing. What I'm saying is that there's a right time for everything. The same things true if you want to organize a strike. You can't get anywhere if you suddenly call people together, who've gotten mad over something, and tell them to strike. Sure, they'll strike, but the strike doesn't last because there's no organization. You've got to organize for anything, and the Nisei aren't organized to fight right now. Jesus Christ, if we strike now, we'll all be in one hell of a pickle.

Aki: Christ, the Issei have been saying the Nisei haven't got any guts. That we're afraid to buck the keto. You know what one of my Caucasian friends up in Seattle, a big business man who's gotten somewhere in the world, told me. He said, "The trouble with you Nisei is that you're always crying about something, but you never go out and try to do something about it." Even the keto tell us that. Why, some of the Caucasian teachers quit because they didn't believe in this registration. And what the hell are we doing; not a goddam thing.

Myself: Well, maybe I think too much about these questions. Maybe one should go by one's feelings about a situation. But it seems to me that we've got to start from the conditions ~~are~~ as they are. The time for us to have fought the whole goddam business was before the evacuation. Now, if we tackle the Caucasians we haven't got a chance. We might as well get ready right now for deportation.

Aki: I don't know. Maybe it is a losing battle. But goddamit, when you feel it in here you've got to fight. All the Nisei have to get together and start fighting. It's when things go hard with you that you learn to fight; you begin to feel like you've got some guts. You can tell the difference right away between the people from Washington and those from California. The California Nisei know how to fight because they've always had to buck prejudices. Up north, we're soft because things have been easier. You can see it right away. This is the time; when the hell are we going to fight if not now.

Myself: Well, if you go on that assumption, okay, sure we've got to fight. If everyone feels that way, maybe the best thing to do is to make it a real battle. But it seems to me that just to fight because you're good and sore isn't going to get you anywhere. You get the satisfaction of having made a battle of it, but what else are you going to have to show. It's like a kid who's been kicked around all his life. Suddenly he decided to make a fight of it but since he's never fought before, he gets licked. You can admire the kid, but it doesn't get him anything.

Aki: Well, when the hell are we supposed to start fighting then? You know what this whole relocation business is all about? The way I look at it, the Government's trying to scatter us so that they

we won't be able to act as a group. How the hell are we going to fight as a group if we're all scattered?

Myself: Well, I don't know. All I've got to say is that this isn't the time. What gets me is that the Nisei didn't start fighting and organizing earlier. Christ, we might have gotten somewhere if we fought it out at the time of evacuation. That was the time to fight. Now, if we take issue with this registration, I'm telling you, we're all going to be people without a country. What we should have done was to get organized five years ago, ten years ago. You can't build up a fighting organization overnight. What in the hell were we thinking about then besides girls friends, playing basketball, and that sort of thing. We knew that discrimination existed. We knew that there was definite danger for us in case there was a war between U.S. and Japan. What the hell were we thinking about then.

Aki: Well, maybe I'm wrong, but I still think we've got to fight now when people are good and sore. How else are we going to organize the Nisei except when they're really worked up over a problem. I admit we should have been thinking about this thing long ago. We've been too easy going all this time.

Myself: Sure, we should have been organizing and fighting all the way down. It's our own fault that we've gotten into this mess. We should have been using our heads long ago.

Myself: Aki: Yes, that's true. We can't blame anyone else for our getting into this hell hole. Guys around here are blaming the JACL for getting us into this mess, but I think it's our own fault all right.

Myself: I quite agree. The JACL never has appealed to me very much but it's a lot of boloney that they were to blame for the evacuation. It's because the Nisei as a whole are what they are that the JACL is what it is.

Komuro (older brother, entering): I think the JACL had a lot to do with getting us in here. If they had stood up at the time of evacuation and fought it out, we would have gotten somewhere. Look what they've done this time with military service? They're always licking the pants of the Caucasians.

Aki: No, I don't think we can blame the JACL. It's because the Nisei as a group didn't take interest in the organization that the leaders did what they did. No, we can't blame the JACL. We're the one's who are at fault.

Myself: Sure, if the Nisei had their eyes open, they'd be organizing right now; and they would have organized to prevent the evacuation. They should have been out there making themselves powerful enough so that they could gang up against the guys who wanted us out of California and Washington and Oregon. There are plenty of whites who believe in us.

Komure: Yeh? What organizations of white would help us out?
labor unions

Myself: Well, the CIO for example. There's one organization that we should have been tied up with.

Aki: What the hell; I was member of an trucker's union and what the hell did they do. Put us all in a separate group without any power.

Myself: Sure, the AFL, but why the hell have we been afraid to join up with the CIO. There's one organization that defended us.

Komure: Well, that's true. You know down our way there were plenty of Japanese who never met Caucasians and have never known anything about them. I always went around with them, but the Nisei were afraid even to approach them.

Aki: That's true. Even up our way they used to be afraid to go near the Caucasians.

So on, So on, Son

Aki: You know, Professor Ichihashi's just waiting to see us Nisei start fighting.

The conversation was broken up by the dinner bell. I felt deeply dissatisfied with my arguments. In retrospect, they all seemed terribly weak and ineffectual. I felt elated to the extent that I did cast doubt into the minds of my opponent and they did concede points to me even though they started out with a belligerent dogmatism. As soon as I viewed my discussion quietly, I realized that what I should have clearly indicated was the impossibility of answering question 28 other than by a "Yes", unless I intended to repatriate. That was the point to drive home, that there could be no question of at least that point. Of course, we have to fight for our rights. But there are ways and means, and those means aren't feasible unless we have declared our allegiance and are actually loyal American citizens.

Murajawa

The questions and answers presented at the joint meeting of the planning board, block managers and council on the 15th was to be mimeographed immediately and be communicated to the people on the same evening, but because the mimeographing could not be completed on the same day, the block meetings ~~of~~ were postponed one day until this evening. This evening at 7:30 p.m., however, a meeting was called at our block. Tom Uyeno of the council acted as chairman, and Tom Maekawa, block manager, and Mr. Shigehara of the planning board sat at the head table.

Uyeno read off the questions and answers from the mimeographed sheet. The reading in Japanese and English took time, and the people listened with impatience and some boredom. The floor was then opened to discussion.

Mr. Aoki: It seems to me that these questions and answers are absolutely useless. They have been prepared, as I understand it, by Mr. Coverly and Lt. Carroll at this project, but we have no guarantee that what they say is necessarily what the Government actually thinks. The men here can say anything they want, but they have no authority to assure us that what they say are the actual facts. Unless we can communicate with Washington, D.C. and know exactly what is in the minds of the people there, I can have no confidence in the questions and answers presented us tonight. Why, this thing doesn't even have the signatures of Mr. Coverly and Lt. Carroll.

Uyeno: Certainly we got their signatures. It doesn't appear on these mimeographed sheets, but on the original copies they bear the signatures of both Mr. Coverly and Lt. Carroll. We wouldn't accept anything like this without getting signatures to verify the questions and answers.

Mr. Aoki: You mean the original sheets have the signatures of both these men on them? (reply: ((Shigehara and Uyeno)) Yes, yes, of course.) But how are we to know that the Government or the War Dept. wouldn't change their minds about these things. How do we know that Mr. Coverly and Lt. Carroll have the authority to speak for the Government?

Uyeno: Of course, we don't know anything certain about that. But Mr. Coverly represents the WRA and Lt. Carroll is here from the War Dept. so that they must surely be delegated with some power to speak for their respective agencies.

Aoki: I understand. I didn't realize that you had gotten their signatures. That's clear now.

Mr. Imai arose to ask a question concerning one of the points brought up in the questions and answer sheet. It was surprising that Imai limited himself to such a point for he generally makes a speech when he gets the floor.

There was slight lull in the meeting, and I wondered if the meeting was to break up without much further discussion. Mr. Uyeno, Tom's father, had come in in the meantime and was standing near the front of the messhall. He asked for the floor.

Mr. Uyeno (father): I had originally intended to stay away from this meeting since it seemed impossible to do anything about the situation. Yet, the more I have thought about the matter, the more it seems to me that there must be some points that must be given consideration, and for this reason I have decided to enter into the discussion once again. As you know, on February 19th the cases testing the constitutional rights of Nisei are to appear in San Francisco before the District Court. At this time the rights of Nisei as citizens is to be tested, and from these hearings we shall learn what is meant by the citizenship rights of the Japanese Americans. I think it asking too much of the Nisei to register for selective service when their citizenship status has not even been clarified. Without knowing what rights are to be guaranteed them, how can the Nisei say whether they will fight for the United States or not? I think the wisest thing for the Nisei to do is to wait until the decision from the trials of Feb. 19th are known and then to register accordingly. There is no hurry about this matter, and the Nisei should give the question a great deal of thought before registering. Why don't all the Nisei in this block get together and make one decision to not register until the trials are over and they know what their citizenship status is? If a unified stand is taken, the Nisei will be that much stronger.

Tom: (Tom had started to object, but his father kept on talking the louder until he finally finished.) I don't think this is an issue on which all of us can make a single decision. Whether we a person wants to swear allegiance to the United States, or whether he wants to swear allegiance to Japan is strictly a personal matter. It isn't something in which the whole block can get together and force everyone into a single decision. As far as the Feb. 19th trials go, there's no time to wait for the decisions to be handed down from them. I refuse to accept any proposition for a unified action on the matter.

Komure, Ray: No, I disagree. I think this is the time for all the Nisei to get together and make a stand for their rights. I am as willing as anyone else to shoulder a gun for the United States. But before I do that, I want to know three things. In the first place, there has been a lot of discrimination against the Nisei in the army. I think it's pretty bad when Nisei who are even willing to give up their lives for their country are discriminated against. Another thing I'd like to know is, when are the newspapers and magazines going to stop printing adverse accounts of the Japanese. The Government can control these expressions, and yet they permit these things to continue. I think we should also wait to find out how the government is going to take care of our mothers, fathers, and sisters before we go into the army. We've got to think of our parents; we Nisei can't just go our own way without consideration for our parents. We should demand that the Government give us an answer on these three points before we register. The Nisei should unite themselves to gain these demands.

Tom Uyeno: Listen, the question is not whether we're going to register or not. We simply have to register; it's compulsory. This is an army order, and it's not something in which we can make up our own minds about it.

Mr. Uyeno: I assume we should do things as democratically as possible. Well, I see nothing more democratic than for the block Nisei as a whole to vote on this question and act as a group. Take a vote and see what the majority opinion is, and then let everyone abide by that opinion.

Tom: Papa, wait a minute. You don't know what you're talking about. (Several hands were waving in the air asking for the floor. I had been asking for the floor for some time, and as I saw the opinion swinging in a direction contrary to my own desire, I decided to stand up and demand the floor. Tom recognized me.)

Myself: (In Japanese) Since I cannot speak with facility in Japanese, I shall beg forgiveness and speak in English.

Kayama: Speak in Japanese. That Japanese is good enough for me.

Myself: Let me speak first in English. My feeling about the present situation is that this is not the time to fight out the issue. The time to fight for our rights was at the evacuation, and before that. We should have been organized and ready to meet any anti-Japanese agitation that might break out with an outbreak of war between Japan and the United States. But if we hesitate too long about this matter of registration, I am sure that we are going to find ourselves without citizenship. This is not a matter over which we can wait. The agency with which we are contending is the War Dept., and they are not a group that waits on ceremony. Note for instance their action with regard to the anthracite coal strikers. The army did not hesitate in that instance to demand unceremoniously that the tens of thousands of coal workers return immediately to their work. If the Army can demand of workers producing the precious coal that they comply with Governmental demands, what do you suppose will be their position with reference to ourselves, a few thousands of Nisei whom they are asking to join the army. If we hesitate for long about registering our allegiance to the United States, we shall certainly find ourselves without the chance to declare ourselves one way or the other. We will automatically forswear our citizenship to the United States. When it comes to a matter of which nation I am to choose for my future home, however, I want to have the freedom to make an individual choice. On the question of making a citizenship choice, I object to having anyone dictate to me what government I am to follow. Since I feel that continued hesitation on our part about registration is bound to lead to the situation in which the question of which side we are on is paramount, and not the question of whether or not we will register, I request that no action be taken which will bind us to an all-block decision. I want sufficient flexibility to decide for myself when I am to register, if I foresee that there is no value in waiting any longer.

Komure (younger): Litzen, we're not afraid of the army. What if they should come in? As long as our fundamental rights aren't recognized, what's the use of registering for the army. Right now our citizenship paper doesn't mean a thing; we might as well tear it up and throw it in the fire. We want to know what we're fighting for before we agree to join the army.

Myself: That's not the point I'm arguing. I'm saying that if we hesitate too long, we won't have a chance to make up our minds which country we're going to declare our allegiance for. I'm not afraid of the army's coming in, although I don't think I'd particularly like it; but our citizenship does mean something as long as we retain it. What I'm arguing is that if we hesitate very much longer, we shall automatically be without citizenship. Under the circumstance, I want the flexibility of condition by which I may make my own choice as to which nation I shall seek my future in. I do not wish to be bound by an all-block decision to act in one way or the other; when it comes to the question of choice of citizenship, I think the question is strictly individual. Of course, we should demand our rights as citizens. I think, for example, that we might ask the President of the United States that he mention, in one of his speeches to the people of the United States, his confidence in the Issei and Nisei. He has done as much for the Germans and Italians, it seems that he should be in a position to make such a statement for us. This is a better way of attacking the problem than by making demands on particular points which I doubt very much we could get. for promises

Ted Komure: When I said our citizenship doesn't mean anything, I didn't mean that it is something to be thrown away. I said that in the heat of argument. But I think we should ask the Government to recognize some of our rights, and we should demand that the President make such a speech as Mr. Miyamoto mentioned.

Mr. Uyeno: But what is the use of declaring your citizenship to the United States when ~~that~~ you don't know what that citizenship means. Why not wait until the trials are over and then you will know what the stand of the Government is concerning your citizenship? I suggest you take a vote of the block to see what the sentiment is on the proposition.

Tom Uyeno: No, I object to any such a vote. The question of choice of citizenship is an individual matter, and we should keep it such. Every person has the right to decide for ~~himself~~

Our block met again at 7:30 this evening to hear the reply from the administration through the Council and the Planning Bd. Tom Uyeno was to be chairman as usual. Some seventy persons, both Issei and Nisei, were present tonight.

May, mother, Michi and I chose a seat in the back which I thought desirable since it might become necessary to walk out of the meeting. I have come to dread these meetings because the necessity might arise at any time when I might again have to defend my minority opinion, but I was resolved not to open my mouth unless an urgent situation appeared. I noticed that Mr. A. and Mr. K. were decidedly quieter tonight than they were this morning. I was glad to see that T. who has been one of the worst hot-heads at our meetings was not present, and wondered if his brother had forced him to stay at home because of his extreme tendencies at these meetings. M. has not been at the meetings ever since he was quizzed by the administration for alleged attempts to influence opinion in favor of non-registration.

Tom started the meeting by explaining what had transpired at the Council meeting of today. The discussion there of course had to do with the release of the boys from block 42 who had been taken by the army last night for refusal to register. Tom explained the refusal of the WRA and the army on all counts of the proposal placed before them by the Council, and the consequent decision of the Council to resign since they had no alternative.

The Council's request consisted of several points. (1) They requested (or demanded, as Tom expressed it tonight) that the 32 boys who had been taken to jail by the army last night be returned unconditionally. This request was refused. (2) The Council demanded that no further incidences of taking boys for not registering be attempted by the WRA or the Army. This too was refused. (3) The Council requested that any further registration be done by sending the questionnaires through the mail and allowing individuals to answer by mail. This, too, was refused. (4) The Council requested that no influence be used by the teachers or the army representatives at the time of registration in attempting to alter the answers given on question 28, or 27. This request was made because of numerous reports that the questioners frequently placed considerable pressure on individuals who answered "No" to question 28, in an effort to change their view to a "Yes." The WRA declared that the policy followed hitherto would be continued. In other words, every request or demand based on the demands of the people in the morning meetings had been rejected, and since these were essentially ultimate demands beyond which no further negotiation could go, the Council was clearly up against a solid barrier.

Tom Uyeno then went on to explain the consequent decision of the Council to resign en masse. At the end of the foregoing question and answer period with the administration, Coverly then turned upon the Council and declared his lack of faith in the organization. From his standpoint, much of the present difficulty arises from the unwillingness of the Council to take a definite stand back-

ing up the registration. The responsibility of the Council is to take leadership in the affairs of the community, especially when they are given information by which they may make their decisions. Since the Council had clearly evaded the leadership demanded of them, the administration had definitely lost faith in both the Council and the Planning Bd. On the other hand, the Council and Planning Bd. had clearly lost the respect and cooperation of the people. The effort of the Council to stabilize the community and bring about an attitude of cooperativeness had produced little result, and the community had come to view both of these organizations with suspicion. It was evident, therefore, that the only alternative was for the Council to resign, not singly, but en masse. A new Council with new views might be able to produce a solution that had not occurred to the previous members. This mass resignation, however, did not mean the dissolution of the council as an organization; it called for a re-election.

The Planning Bd. likewise resigned en masse, except for the seven Planning Bd. directors. Since the city charter still remains, and the Planning Bd. is a creation under the charter, the P.B. might continue as a functioning body. Hence, the resignation was brought about, not as a dissolution of the P.B., but rather for the same reason offered by the Council. Mr. Shigehara likewise spoke explaining briefly the reasons for the resignation of the P.B.

(It should be added that there had been enormous pressure upon the Council and P.B. for the last two weeks. The disposition to resign, therefore, was strong among the members of both organization. In a sense, the immovable barrier presented by the refusal of the administration and the army was an excellent opportunity for these representatives to do exactly what they desired to do--to resign. Indeed, their personal safety had been jeopardized by the necessity of trying to urge upon the people a point of view which was distasteful to them, and nothing pleased these representatives more than to be relieved of the responsibility which rested on them as long as they held office.)

The plan was to re-elect the P.B. member from each block immediately so that a Board meeting might be held tomorrow morning with the new membership. The re-election for the Council would wait a few days until the machinery was again established for such a re-election. The election of the block representative to the P.B. was thus the first topic on the agenda for tonight.

Mr. A. started off by suggesting that Mr. Shigehara retain the position, and implicitly he suggested also that Tom Uyeno remain the councilman for the block. Mr. A. declared that the block appreciated the work done by these men thus far, and that since it would be disadvantageous to change representatives in the middle of a crisis, that it would be better to retain the present representatives. Maekawa, block manager, was now in the chair since Uyeno who usually took that position absolutely refused tonight declaring that his work was now finished, and Mr. Shigehara took the same stand. Immediately after Mr. A. finished talking, Uyeno arose and explained again why it was necessary that the council resign. Mr. Shigehara likewise explained his position and declined

to accept the position for a further term. Mr. A. again rose and said, "It would be unwise to change representatives in the middle of a crisis such as this. While recognizing that yours is a great responsibility, you should for that very reason see this thing through to its completion. I am sure that we, as people of the block, are behind you; for the sake of the block people, we ask that you continue to assume the responsibility which we have placed upon you."

Tom undoubtedly must have been irritated by these remarks, especially since they came from the man who had, with others, been among those who had placed the greatest difficulty in the execution of his task as councilman from the block. Tom pointed out that the decision of mass resignation had not been made without careful consideration of the problems it would create, but it had been decided since there was nothing further the council could do under the circumstance of the impasse that was met. Mr. Shigehara further elaborated his position, and bluntly declined to accept the position.

Mr. K. then arose and requested that Mr. Shigehara resume the responsibilities he had already undertaken. K. was the one who, this morning, had created such a turmoil in the block meeting by making rather extreme statements and asking for extreme demands from the representatives. Tom and Shigehara were adamant in their refusal to further accept the position. (In view of the failure of these very men who were asking Tom and Shigehara to resume their former positions to cooperate in the conduct of past block meetings, I could not help feeling that both the representatives were justified in rejecting their proposals.)

This first phase of discussion about election went on for some time, about three quarter of an hour. Finally convinced that Mr. Shigehara would not return to the post of the P.B., Maekawa then asked for nominations, but none were forthcoming. After a considerable hesitation, Maekawa then suggested that he himself would name the nominees (five in all). This was agreed to, and Maekawa named Mr. Aoki, Mr. Komure, Mr. Imai, Mr. Shinozaki, and someone else. The whole thing was disrupted by Mr. Aoki's immediate refusal to accept the nomination, followed by Mr. Komure and Mr. Imai, each of whom offered his respective excuses for not wishing the positions. These were the very men who had caused the most difficulty in the matter of registration in our block.

It was then decided to take a ballot without nominations, with the person getting the highest number of votes winning the office. Mr. Aoki had 28 votes, Mr. M. Kawasaki had 20, Mr. Ed. Kawasaki about 16, Mr. Komure had 10, and Mr. Shinozaki had 6. Again each of these men declined their nominations in turn. Considerable pressure was placed on Mr. Aoki since he was the logical man for the position, especially in view of his radical pursuit of a policy of non-registration, but he made one excuse after another and finally walked out when his wife came for him and waved him out of the place. Mr. Kawasaki and Mr. Komure declined the office

on grounds of illness---acceptable excuses since these men were both really ill. (Mr. Kawasaki died the next morning of heart failure probably resulting from the excitement of the past week.) However, in view of some of Mr. Komure's rather rash statements of the same morning, to the effect that it made him wrathful to think that people were standing in the way of trying to do something for the 34 Nisei who were taken yesterday when he himself was willing to give his life for the sake of their cause, his meek walk-out of this evening seemed rather inconsistent.

Thus, the meeting dragged on for almost three hours in an effort to find someone for the P.B. An intermission was called about 10:00 to serve sandwiches and tea which the cooks prepared. But even after the intermission, nothing definite was decided.

In the meantime, several Kibei walked noisily into the meeting. They had apparently just finished their session at the 420 messhall, and they seemed to have something important to present to the block people.

With regard to the P.B. representative, it was finally decided to register Mr. Aoki as the official representative, and have Mr. Shinozaki go as the proxy for tomorrow morning's meeting. Mr. S. accepted, though with definite reluctance from his daughters who were present, and he asked what he should inquire about or report to the P.B. tomorrow. Here again nothing concrete came of all the discussion. R.K., a Nisei, who had earlier shouted at the Issei after their long delay about electing a P.B. representative, "What's the matter with you Issei. You've been telling us that we don't have any gumption, that we don't know how to stand up for our rights and fight, and yet you can't even elect a representative to the P.B. in this crisis," now arose again. Said he, "Listen, you can't let those 34 boys who were taken from block forty-two yesterday rot in jail. We've got to do something. If we leave this matter up to the Kibei, I tell you we're going to have blood shed, and we've got to do something about it ourselves. Now, it seems to me that if we got together all the parents of boys who are already in the army, and have their representative leaders go to Mr. Coverly and ask for the release of all the boys that we might get somewhere. These parents have boys in the army already, and the administration should be willing to listen to their plea."

This was the only suggestion forthcoming, and it seemed that the meeting might adjourn on this quiet note. However, at that moment N., a Kibei whom I had previously considered rather intelligent but of whose intelligence I have come to question in the past week, arose and began to shout something about "Those boys who were taken to the jail from block 42. Are you going to let them rot there without doing anything for their sake; let them sacrifice themselves for us without our trying to do something for them!" Other Kibei got up and kept harping on the matter of the "32 boys who were taken into the army by the army and placed in jail." The phrase had become a symbolism for them; I doubt very much that the Kibei fellows were really thinking in terms of the welfare of the boys as such, but rather of the boys as symbolic of the resistance the Japanese should put up against the registration. They had been

sacrificed; this was the view foremost in their minds. As I listened to their frequent repetition of the question, "What are you going to do about the 32 boys from block 42 that have been sacrificed?" I could not help remembering the story of the 47 Ronin who have gone down in Japanese dramatic arts in the "Chiushingura" as symbolic of the sacrificing spirit of the Japanese people. Here was the same sentiment that was being called upon.

This portion of the meeting was broken up without further progress in suggestions or ideas when two Kibei ruffians walked in, or rather swaggered in, with a piece of paper in ~~the~~ hand. I, who is in the minds of the block people a 'professional loafer' and a good-for-nothing who has never commanded the respect of anyone in the block heretofore, walked forward the length of the center aisle with the paper in his hand. While the people sat in silence, I shuffled down the middle aisle, his back slightly rounded and his head sluffed forward as they always are. I had always regarded him as a meaningless small fellow whose weak mouth displayed something of his character, but tonight he looked typically the small-time gangster. The sheet of paper was handed to Tom Uyeno, who read it in silence and then turned it over to Tom Maekawa who was now the chairman. Maekawa finally ~~and~~ read the thing off.

The essence of it was that the people of the project were petitioning for the following points:

1. That the undersigned be treated hereafter as Japanese nationals.
2. That the undersigned be taken at bayonet points just as were the 31 boys who were taken by the army from block 42 and be given the same treatment as they were getting.
3. That the undersigned be granted the privilege of absolute non-registration.

Maekawa was obviously hesitant about placing such a petition before the people to sign. He turned the matter over to one of the Kibei excusing himself on the ground that he could not, in an official capacity, transmit such a petition to the people. The Kibei request was that the thing be signed there at the meeting by anyone wishing to sign, and it applied especially to the Nisei. Maekawa immediately objected that he thought this an improper procedure because it would embarrass those who did not desire to sign the petition. He told the Kibei to take it out to the ironing room after the meeting and sign up anyone interested in placing their names on the list. T. immediately retaliated that it wasn't a question of embarrassment; that it was a matter of spirit. But T's brother again arose, as he had done before to hold down his hot-tempered brother, and said, "I don't think it's a good idea to produce such a thing here. It places Mr. Shinozaki who has declared his willingness to act by proxy tomorrow in an extremely bad spot. You'd better take that out to the ironing room after the meeting." This clinched the matter fortunately, for T. can be restrained only by his brother, and the paper was taken out. The meeting broke up.

I had ~~pi~~ been pleased most of the early part of the evening because the matter of electing the planning board representative had so obstructed the meeting that no heated discussion could take place on the major issue ~~of the people~~. Mother and May considered leaving about the time the sandwiches were served, and I thought of it passingly too, but didn't move. I regretted it later when the Kibei entered and started their usual rumpus, and wished that I had left, for it seemed that I might again have to jeopardize my safety further by having to find some way of backing out of this business of signing the petition. It either meant standing up and talking my way out, or just walking out on their meeting.

As we sat there during the last of the meeting, N. whispered loudly to another fellow behind us, apparently for our benefit, "Tonight we're beating up the inus, I hear. We're tying them up in ~~saxx~~ blankets and then take them out somewhere and give them a sound beating." I heard the Kibei make the remark but hardly took notice of what he said thinking that this fellow, whom I have considered notable for his hair-brained ideas, was talking big again. Yet, I could imagine that there might be something afoot.

The meeting broke up shortly after that, and I think everyone excepting the Kibei left with a sense of relief, that is, they must have been glad the thing concluded without too extreme a proposition being stated. As I went out, several Kibei seemed to parade out behind us, and I watched them out of the corner of my eyes as they headed toward the ironing room. A.K., whose stand on the issue I would not have known except for seeing him at registration last Saturday, was walking near me so I went up and whispered to him, "God-damn these guys. Now that these guys are butting their heads against a stone wall, they think they can put their plans over by the use of force." He murmured agreement. He has been very friendly the last several days.

Michi, May, mother and I went over to Mother's, and we stood around talking in a low tone among ourselves. The ironing room was near by, just around the corner from mother's barrack, and I could feel the nearness of the ruffians. Michi had been obviously more upset by the Kibei's remark about beating up people tonight, as were mother and May. They talked among themselves of the desirability of our sleeping at their place ~~today~~ tonight instead of taking chances with the situation at our own apartment. Michi was especially concerned that K. might have observed us this afternoon when we took all our notes down to the Billigs with Tom and Toni. She must have been more upset than I recognized, for when we finally decided to take our chances at home, Michi went to bed with much of her clothing on in anticipation of our escape if anything should happen. The plan was to jump out of the rear window, if the opportunity permitted, and run across the firebreak toward the Billigs. Frankly, I didn't think much of the idea, however, for the firebreak is wide and dark, and Michi could not run fast enough to stay ahead of any "toughs". I felt that in the event of a real attack, I would have to fight it out, and while I felt some little fear, yet I waited with a little anticipation of a possible fight.

The following resolution appeared in the block 5 men's wash-room on Sunday morning, February 28. It was originally proposed by the Kibei group, but is alleged to have been written by some Nisei lawyer. Some people declare that the writer was Harry Mayeda. Much was made of the fact that this resolution would be sent to Secretary of War, Stimson, on Sunday, and it was felt among most Kibei and sympathetic Nisei that the registration should proceed on the basis of answers to these questions. On Monday, however, both Major Marshall and the administration denied having received or seen a copy of this resolution. Several Nisei who heard that the resolution had not been submitted to the administration seemed quite upset for they had been banking on registering according to the answer received.

.....

TEXT OF RESOLUTION

We, the citizens of the United States of America, residents of the Tule Lake Relocation Project, Newell, California, in order to perform our duties as Loyal citizens of the United States and in order to uphold the principles of Democracy as established in the Constitution of the United States do hereby state that:

Whereas, we the citizens of the United States have been asked by our Government to pledge our unqualified allegiance to this country.

Whereas, we feel that we have given our fullest cooperation to this program of evacuation.

Whereas, the Government through the Federal Reserve Bank has failed to protect the people.

Whereas, we have temporarily surrendered many of the rights and privileges of citizenship which we have heretofore enjoyed.

Whereas, we suffered losses of homes, properties, work, freedom of movement, separation from friends, and all things we felt dear to us without protest.

Whereas, we wish to prevent in the future, the mass evacuation or confining of citizens without trial.

Whereas, we feel that there is only one class of citizenship in this country and a loyal citizen of one race should not be treated any different from another.

Whereas, we believe that some of these things mentioned above constitute a violation of our civil rights.

And whereas, we believe sincerely and honestly in the principles of freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom of the Press, and freedom of Assemblage as embodied in the Constitution and its amendments.

offered
1 story
T. King

Therefore, be it resolved:

1. That we ask Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, that after a thorough investigation by the Military Intelligence and the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other Federal Authorities that persons that are cleared should have absolute freedom of movement and the choice of returning to their homes.

2. That we request President Roosevelt to give us assurance that he will use his good office in an endeavor to secure all constitutional and civil rights as American Citizens.

3. That the security for the Isseis be assured.

4. That we ask President Roosevelt to use his good office to bring favorable impression to the public regarding the loyal citizens.

5. That we ask that those Isseis considered by the Government as being not disloyal to this Government be classified as "friendly aliens".

6. That we have the Government note the advantages of the good publicity to be gained by disbursing Nisei soldiers into the Army at large rather than forming a separate combat team; and that the Government further note that the education of Caucasian soldiers can be made through deep comradeship that grows between soldiers facing a common task and thereby educate the American public.

7. That the Government recognizing that we are fighting for the Four Freedoms as embodied in the Atlantic Charter should apply these democratic principles to us here at home.

8. That we believe that if satisfactory answers can be given by a Government spokesman, preferably the President of the United States to these questions we can go and fight for this, our country without fear or qualms concerning the security of our future rights. If satisfactory answers cannot be given, we believe that the constitutional rights have not been upheld and we see no reason why we should register without due knowledge of our citizenship.

And be it further resolved, that we respectively ask for immediate answers to the questions in this resolution.

(This resolution was posted in handwritten translation in Japanese. On the Japanese translation of the resolution, the following epithets appeared: The God Damned Bastard Who Wrote This Ought to be Shot. The Nisei who wrote this probably couldn't read Japanese and hence didn't understand what was written there. His was then probably a general objection to the effort of the Kibei to restrain the registration program.)

The following pamphlet was posted in each of the washrooms throughout the project by the Kibei organization on the early morning of February 25, 1943. The original copy showed many typographical errors and poor stencil cutting, not to mention innumerable grammatical errors which are preserved in this copy. On the copy posted in the men's washroom, block 5, someone wrote in during the first week of March the following remarks in large pencilled letters: "God Damn Lie" (in the upper left hand corner, "Pro-Japs" (at the bottom of the sheet; and crossed out the whole thing with two bold strokes.

.....
Registration Information

Why you should not Register?

Why you should not decide yourself black or white--yes or no on your statement Form 304 A Selective Service. Do you know that the Politicians and the American Legion are doing their best to enact the new laws or amend the clauses in the Constitution, in order to cancel our citizenship? Do you know that if they procure the written statements as evidence to prove their case in the Supreme Court and in Congress, they could enact the new amendment to revoke your citizenship? Your fathers and mothers came to this country and labored arduously for years, by saving their money they bought the properties and land in your names. I am sure that you are aware of the fact, that it is of no avail to throw away your properties, your lands and your farm equipments. Do you know that Uncle Sam needs your farm equipments, ~~Do you know~~ your money and lands by other means less expensive, if possible? Congressmen and the Army are looking for the evidence which is your statement on Form 304 A, whether it states, "Yes" or "No" to enact the new laws or amend the clause in the Constitution to make it legal domestically or internationally to confiscate your property. They could take all of our statements to Congress immediately. If there are many "No's" and less "Yes's" in our statements, then we will be overruled by the majority "No's". No, means that you are willing to denounce your privileges and rights as an American citizen. Then they could define all of us disloyal, they could cancel our citizenships, thus making us enemy aliens. Our properties will be classified as enemy alien properties, making it legal to confiscate legally our properties. They could confiscate your money, land and farm equipments or use it without your permission. When this happens you will not be able to make any complaints to the Red Cross, the Spanish Consul or to Japan. The written statements of your "Yes's" and "No's" will be used against you. Even after this war you will not have any rights to be able to claim for damages, because of your statements. If Uncle Sam cancels your citizenships and confiscates your land and money without your statements, then the Red Cross, Spanish Consul and Japan could do something about it. Politicians will say that if you do not perform the obligations of a citizen then you should not be entitled to the rights of a citizen in reference to your written statements, whereby making it possible for Congress to enact the law or amend the clause to the Constitution to cancel your citizenship in a legal

way. If Uncle Sam confiscates your lands without your statements then you could complain to the fullest extent about it to the Red Cross, the Spanish Consul and to Japan. If you sign the statement, then Japan, the Red Cross and the Spanish Consul will not be able to do anything for you. In order to enact new laws or to cancel your citizenships, the United States Government needs your written statements as evidences to refer to.

As you know the American Legion is the largest political organization in the United States. They could influence others easily against us, the ~~American~~-Japanese. The American Legion had the resolutions adopted long before Dec. 7th, 1941, to put us in the concentration camps. As to this, the Army used the Legions petition to put us in Relocation Centers. Now, Leon Happell of Stockton, Calif. commander of the American Legion proposed the removal of all Japanese residing in the United States to some small islands in the South Seas, after an American victory in this war, and also opposed enlistment of Japanese in the American Army and Navy and requesting the Army to take over the control of the Relocation Centers. There was a similar resolution passed in the American Legion Post at Hood River, Oregon to deport all Japanese Aliens and citizens alike back to Japan after the war. Their resolutions were proposed to extend to the rest of the American Legion Posts throughout the nation.

The politicians and the Army desire to cancel your citizenship in order to confiscate your lands, your farm equipments, and similar machinery, and your money. They do not wish to pay for your equipments, machineries, and your lands. Beware---of your written statements that will be used against you and to

(The bottom of this sheet was cut off with a knife by someone, but statements in other washrooms were said to have completed the note of caution with the urging that noone register. The sheet was cut off on the same day that it was posted.)

Mayeda

The meeting today was called for the purpose of answering the questions submitted from each of the blocks following the block meetings of last Wednesday night. A meeting was held by the executive group of the Planning Bd. and the Council to decide when the meeting should be held. Mayeda's view was that Monday would be early enough, especially since Coverly and Lieutenant Carroll's replies to the questions would not be ready before then. Shirai for some reason felt that it was urgent to hold a meeting sooner, and resigned forthwith when the others decided against his proposal of meeting on Sunday instead of Monday. However, he must have somehow been reconciled over the week-end for he was in his usual position at today's meeting.

The emergency meeting was called for 1:30 p.m., but by the time I arrived around 1:25, the whole hall was almost packed. All the block managers, councilmen, and planning board representatives, were present almost without exception, and an audience of almost 100 persons gathered besides. To bring order into this jammed hall, Mr. Yamashita of the Planning Board requested that the block managers etc., sit at the first two tables by wards, while the rest of the audience sit in the row furthest back. Only the representatives were to be permitted the floor. The audience was clearly a heterogeneous mixture of Kibei, Nisei and Issei, all with a very somber appearance. Apart from the invited Caucasians, Doug. Cook was the only other Caucasian from the staff, and some of the soldiers of the recruiting team were with him. Mr. Coverly, Mr. Frank Smith, and Lt. Carroll, arrived a little late and took their places at the head table beside Harry Mayeda, chairman, Mr. Yamashita, Planning Board chairman, Mr. ~~Yam~~ Ikeda, Planning Bd., Noboru Shirai, Ex. Secty. of Council, Bob Ota, Chr. of Block Managers, and Rev. "Father" Dai, Planning Board and interpreter. A P.A. system was set up with Father Dai at one phone and Harry Mayeda at the other.

I sat in the back row in a corner, the only seat I could find, but all the discussion could be clearly heard from that point. Several Issei were seated around me discussing the question among themselves before the meeting began. The opinion expressed was, "As far as the Issei are concerned, it's clear where we stand. But the Nisei problem is a more difficult one. However, as I see it, the issue has to be decided individually." The murmured conversation went on. Said someone, "Say, look at the number in the hall. They should charge admission, they'd make a lot." Said another, "Yah, charge maybe \$5.00 to the Caucasians up there, and 10¢ to the rest of us." The remarks were made jokingly in Japanese, but one felt that the remarks reflected their feelings.

Harry Mayeda started by introducing the Caucasian guests, for whom scattering applause was offered, particularly by the Nisei, but Coverly got the most. He then explained the purpose of the meeting as that of answering the questions which had been turned in, and he further requested that discussion be refrained until

the questions had all been answered. Mayeda also announced that block meetings should be held tonight on the basis of the questions answered today, and designated three persons, the block manager, councilman, and planning board representatives, to act jointly as chairmen of their respective block meetings.

(See question and answer sheet from Coverly in mimeographed form for the further discussion that took place.)

The gist of Coverly's answers to the questions submitted may be summarized as follows:

1. It is not necessary to answer most of the questions pertaining to question 28 since a substitute question has been offered and the questions no longer are pertinent.
2. Registration of applicants for leave, both Issei and Nisei, is compulsory.
3. The whole program of leave clearance is to expedite the process of leave clearance by having the army handle the matter all at one time.
4. There is no possibility of answering questions at present pertaining to the problems of returning to former homes on the Pacific Coast, gaining citizenship for the Issei, etc.
5. There is to be no forced relocation if the people do not wish to relocate.
6. It is not possible to answer at present the implications of the Geneva Treaty of 1926 on this matter, as to whether the evacuees are considered "prisoners of war", or again whether the evacuees may be required to answer questions of this type.
7. No definite penalties have been determined as yet for those who fail to answer the questions of form 126 revised (Issei).

There were in all some 60 questions which Mr. Coverly answered but many were concerning detailed problems. Most of them could be answered under the points brought out above. By and large the answers to the questions seemed unsatisfactory in the sense that the fundamental problems troubling the minds of Issei, and the impossibility of removing their fundamental frustration of being unable to return to their former homes under former conditions cannot be met.

Lt. Carroll was then called upon to speak. He read again the statement from the War Dept. under the signature of Secty. Stimson and also the statement from the Dept. pertaining to the recruiting of Nisei for the combat team. His emphasis was on the fact that a careful perusal of this statement would answer almost all the questions raised about the problem of volunteering for the combat team. Carroll ended with the statement, "A failure to comply with the registration of Nisei for selective service is subject to the penalties defined in the Espionage Act of 1917 by which the delinquent may be given a maximum prison sentence of 20 years and a fine of \$10,000, or both." The last statement caused a stir among the Nisei, but the Issei response was inestimable because the statement was not translated.

The discussion started following these statements by Coverly and Carroll.

Oshima: (Nisei) Various programs have been introduced by the WRA in the past in which no adequate preparation has been given. Yet they have been handed over to the block managers and representatives to present to the people, and every time we've taken a beating because of the WRA. We've been placed in a lot of difficult spots because of these mistakes of the WRA, but this one beats them all. May I ask that the administration hereafter give us all the information before we are asked to present anything to the people.

Coverly: (with a grim face) We have given you all the information as fast as we've got it from the proper offices.

Tanemura: The answers given to many questions today have been highly unsatisfactory. As far as today's discussion goes, the answers are so vague in many instances that it would have been just as well if we had had no meeting at all.

Coverly: I have given an answer to every question that was asked on the questionnaire. If you find my answers satisfactory, it's because you haven't asked the questions.

Tanemura: You have said in your replies, "This is a question for the War Dept. and so I cannot answer," or "The WRA policy has not been clarified on the point." How do you expect us to bring answers like that back to the people and expect to keep them quiet? The same questions are going to come back at us and we won't have a chance of trying to prevent any reaction.

Nojima: I have several questions from my block people that I should like to have answered. (See accompanying question-answer sheet).

Miura: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to say a few things. The evacuation has placed the people in a very difficult position. We have all had to give up homes in which, in many cases, we have and ~~te~~ lived for many years. We have given up farms which our fathers worked and improved, sometimes over a period of twenty or thirty years. Some of us have given up property which was valued at thousands of dollars, and often at a tremendous loss. We have done all this without complaining because we felt that by evacuating quietly we might cooperate in the war effort. Now we want to ask the Government and the WRA to stand behind us. Won't you help us to try to regain some of those things which we have lost. We have given our loyalty to the United States; won't you try to help us in getting some of those things we are asking for. Mr. Coverly, if you would try to help us, I am sure the people would be back of you on anything you say.

Coverly: Yes, I will try.

Nimura: I am a member of the planning board and I must report back to my block people tonight. I must explain to them what took place here ~~tonight~~ this afternoon and try to bring them to a point from

which my block people can make some decision about the matter of registration. However, in the discussion today I have ~~found~~ been unable to derive any fundamental principle which I may offer to the people as a means by which they may arrive at some decision. Some underlying principle is wanted so that we can use it as a starting point in our thinking; but for myself I have been unable to find anything in today's discussion that brings out anything clearly in my mind. If there is anyone here who can tell me what fundamental principle for making decisions has been offered, I should like to hear him. I do not care whether that individual is a block manager, a councilman, or a member of the planning board, if anyone can give me this underlying principle of decision, I should like to hear him. (applause)

Coverly: What the gentleman says makes a lot of sense to me. It is certainly desirable to arrive at some fundamental principle of thought in order to decide about this question of the registration. The fundamental principle that may be suggested is that of self interest. The WRA is trying to make the registration for leave clearance now so that the process of enabling leave will be facilitated. If everyone is registered all at once, the matter is greatly simplified for all of us. If you look at the thing strictly from the standpoint of self interest, it would seem clear that there should be no question about the registration.

(Coverly, however, had missed the entire point. In the first place, the Issei have no desire to relocate anywhere else. Furthermore, self interest is essentially an American concept and is scarcely understandable to Japanese who constantly think in terms of mutual or collective action.)

Shirai: I should like to make some comments on the question of the principle to follow with regard to these joint meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to hold frequent discussions of the present question which troubles us all. We can't offer you the answers that will enable you to make a decision, but we are here to discuss the problem so that through this discussion we may arrive at some clearer idea of what it is all about. This, I think, is the principle which we may take back to our blocks. (This reply, while very sensible, received only a very cool response.)

(A fellow who had been sitting next to me, an Issei about sixty years of age with the mien of a farmer and a not especially intelligent face arose, stamped his foot, and asked for the floor. He was not to be permitted the floor according to the original ruling at the start of the meeting, since this fellow was neither a councilman nor planning board member. When Mayeda ignored him because of the other arms in the air, the fellow walked forward into the next aisle, in the middle of the hall, and stood there asking for the floor. Someone pulled him back, however, and made him sit down to quiet him.)

A few more questions were asked but the meeting broke up at 4:30 because the messhall had to start preparations for supper.)

I met Muts, my cousin, on the way home. Said he, "What a hell of

a meeting. I might just as well have stayed home and read a good book. Hell, those guys had nothin' to say. Why don't they send us an officer with a little more brains. That guy just read his talk; but we've read the things already in the papers. All we learned was that we'd get fined and imprisoned if we don't register.