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answers to questions pertaining to WRA form 126

memo

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WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY
Tule Lake Project
Nowell, California

*files
May*
February 15, 1943

MEMORANDUM TO: Mr. Harry Mayeda, President
Community Council

Mr. Masahide Yamashita,
Chairman, Planning Board

SUBJECT: Answers to questions pertaining to WRA Form 126-
Revised

The answers to the questions contained on the list you recently supplied Lt. Carroll are set forth below in so far as we are able to answer them and in so far as they apply to the policies of the War Relocation Authority. We presume that the Army representatives will respond to the questions primarily concerning the War Department. In each case, the number opposite the answer coincides with the number of the question as shown on your lists.

Questions pertaining to WRA Form 126-Revised.

Q. Is it true that the application for leave clearance is compulsory on the part of female citizens and aliens?

A. Yes

Q. Has it not been the policy of the WRA that all those wishing to secure such leave clearance mentioned in Item 1, be voluntary on the part of such person?

A. Yes, prior to the inauguration of the present registration program.

Q. What necessitated the WRA to use the same form for the two groups of people who are of two entirely different category--namely, female U. S. citizens and the enemy aliens?

A. The same information apparently is desired by our Washington Office for both groups.

Q. What power and authority if any has the WRA to enforce on the people of Japanese nationality to apply for leave clearances if the WRA 126-Rev. is compulsory as stated in question 1. (Please quote the specific clause in the National and International legal document as to the origin of WRA Authority.)

A. The authority is contained in the Executive Order of the President No. 9102, dated March 18, 1942.

Q. What does the phrase "unqualified allegiance to the United States of America" as stated in question 28 of WRA 126-Rev. mean specifically?

A. It is presumed that an answer to this question is no longer necessary in view of the alternate question which may be substituted for item No. 28 on Form WRA 126 Revised.

Q. Why is it that the name of the Spanish Government which as far as we have been informed, is to be of neutral government, be mentioned in questions 29 and 30?

A. We are not informed as to the reason for this.

Q. Questions pertaining to question 28.

a. What is the definition of the word "loyalty"? (Issei standpoint)

A. a. This is not pertinent apparently to question No. 28. Loyalty from any standpoint, however, has, in my opinion, the same definition. It means being faithful to a person, ideal or institution to which fidelity may be due.

Q. b. What is the reason for the new order of the War Department?

A. b. In so far as I know, no order of the War Department is applicable to this particular question.

(Comment: Evacuees want strict correction on that)

- A. This will be strictly prohibited.
- Q. It was stated by our former Project Director Mr. Shirrell in a question and answer meeting held in late October or November, 1942, was transmitted from Japanese Government to the Government of the United States, saying that the former recognizes all the Japanese alien held in the various centers as the prisoners of war. Please clarify.
- A. The United States does not regard evacuee aliens as prisoners of war.
- Q. Does signing the clearance paper mean that the signee has to go out if and when there is a job on the outside?
- A. No.
- Q. What is the qualification for army nurse and WAAC?
- A. The specific qualifications for these two branches of the service could best be obtained by communicating with them directly.
- Q. If an issei pledge allegiance to Japan or repatriation but wants to go outside, can he go?
- A. Not unless leave clearance is granted. (I question if clearance will be approved for such persons).
- Q. We should get allowance for dependent.
- A. This is not in the form of a question and the exact information desired is not clear.
- Q. If you sign the leave clearance form, does one have to go if later one decides he does not want to go?
- A. No.
- Q. What would be the consequences should question 28 be left unanswered?
- A. This question is probably no longer applicable.
- Q. Is the leave clearance form the same as the form issued at the Placement Bureau?
- A. No.
- Q. If a girl applies for a leave clearance on this form, must she go out if the Government calls her?
- A. Not unless the Government decides to draft womanpower.
- Q. The WRA 126 Rev form specifies that it is for aliens and women over 17 years of age; the selective service is for men (citizens) of 17 years to 38 years; then what form does the Nisei men over 38 years of age sign? Is there a form for them?
- Yes. They sign form DSS 304-A.
 - Will we ever be made to leave this camp against our wishes just because we signed this form WRA 126?
 - No, not so far as we know.
 - Would it be satisfactory to write "undecided at present"?
 - Yes.
 - Could the questionnaire be translated into Japanese?
 - Yes, although we will only accept completed questionnaires in English.

- Q. Issei should not be forced to answer this question 28 since they are not permitted to become naturalized; they would become "men without a country".
- A. This question is no longer applicable.
- Q. Is U. S. Contemplating giving citizenships to the Isseis who answered question 28 "Yes"?
- A. We have no information to that effect.
- Q. Shouldn't the assistants to the registrars have a good command of both Japanese and English?
- A. This is desirable if such persons can be found.
- Q. Does the Geneva Conference Treaty carry provisions about asking such a question of the Issei as the questionnaire?
- A. It will require further investigation to answer this question.
- Q. Is it necessary to enumerate the sports and hobbies of the Isseis?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Are Japanese aliens prisoners of war?
Will they be considered prisoners of war if they should answer "no" to Question 28?
- A. This question is apparently divided into two parts.
- (a) Japanese aliens in relocation centers are not considered prisoners of war.
Japanese alien soldiers captured during battle are considered as prisoners of war.
- (b) No
- Q. Is it still possible for evacuees in this project to make application for repatriation to Japan?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Does the answer "No" for Question 28 mean that we cannot go out when the leave clearance comes?
- A. No longer applicable.
- Q. Does the statement "back to normal" mean that you can go back to where you came from?
- A. Evacuees may not return to restricted military centers at present.
- Q. Do persons who have registered for leave clearance after December 1, 1942 have to fill this clearance paper too?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Will the Japanese-American girls be allowed the same privileges as Caucasian nurses and W. A. A. C.?
- A. Yes, if they have an opportunity to join the Army Nurse Corps or the W. A. A. C.'S.
- Q. What will be our economic security and status, if relocated?
- A. As all other Americans.
- Q. Will we ever be made to leave this camp against our wishes just because we sign this WRA 126 form?
- A. No, not so far as we know.

Q. Must a person who has no intention of going out register for leave clearance?

A. Yes.

Q. In filling references of five people, can they be either Caucasian or Japanese?

A. We presume so. It is desirable to have both.

Q. What would be the penalty for Issei if they refuse the registration?

A. No penalties has been announced as yet.

Q. Due to lack of clear memory, if the registrant should make an error in statement, what penalty will he get?

A. There will be no penalty if it is an unintentional error.

Q. In the event a person is eligible for outside employment by the virtue of being duly "cleared", will he receive financial assistance for re-establishment?

A. There is no provision at present for financial assistance from the Government for this purpose.

Q. Will the "cleared" aliens be given the status of "friendly aliens" or will they be categorically retained in the "enemy alien" classification?

A. We have no information on this point.

Q. Will the Isseis swearing "yes" to question 28 of the form WRA 126 REV be given assurance of American citizenship?

A. We have no information to that effect.

Q. If we sign for the Leave Clearance and the work offered us is not satisfactory, what is the result?

A. There is no obligation to leave the Center at present.

Q. Is compulsory relocation or registration for this purpose or mass relocation one of the purposes of this registration?

A. No.

Q. Why is it that the Niseis are required to re-register?

A. As far as the boys are concerned, it is because the War Department has ordered it.

As far as the girls are concerned, it is to facilitate wholesale clearance.

Q. Why is it that all Niseis in relocation centers singled out to answer special questions in regard to our loyalty?

A. To ascertain their attitude towards the United States.

Q. May we request that the United States Government endeavor as nearly as possible, to re-establish us to our former status previous to evacuation.

A. You may.

Q. If Isseis answer "no" to Questions 27 and 28, will they be treated as internees in Concentration Camps?

1. No (Question 27 concerns very few Issei, as the Nurse Corps and W. A. A. C.'s ordinarily take younger women)
2. If Niseis refuse to answer Questions 27 and 28, will they be treated as enemy aliens?
 1. No.
3. For those who do not want to resettle outside, what difference does it make if the paper is changed from leave clearance to just registration? If it is possible to just strike out the leave clearance part, what's the use of having the registration?
 1. This question is divided into two parts.
 - (a) It makes no difference if the title of the form is changed to Leave Clearance.
 - (b) The registration is required.
4. For those who refuse to register, is it possible to have them treated as those who have applied for repatriation?
 1. Not unless they actually apply for repatriation.
5. What will happen if everybody refuses to register?
 1. I am unable to predict this.

Harvey M. Coverley
Project Director

ESPIONAGE ACT

(As it is applicable for this registration)

Whoever, when the United States is at war, shall willfully obstruct the recruiting or enlistment service of the United States to the injury of the service or of the United States shall be punished by fine of no more than \$10,000, or imprisonment for not more than twenty (20) years, or both.