

CHAPTER IV. B

The Inception of the Resegregation Group

This is to be preceded by a brief resume of the genesis of some of the attitudes which developed during this period and which first appeared at the time of the incident

The nucleus of what was later to become known as the Resegregation Group was formed by a comparatively small number of tenacious supporters of the November, 1943, uprising. These persons had been among the strongest adherents of the Negotiating Committee and the status quo, the deadlock or partial strike which prevailed from the entrance of the Army on November 4, 1943, to the referendum vote of January 11, 1944. The entrance of the Army, the arrest of their leaders, the gradual withdrawal of camp support from their anti-administrative stand, the increasing number of arrests, and the referendum vote which brought the status quo to an end, left these individuals smarting with resentment and humiliation over their lost cause. Some of the group, probably many of them, had relatives or friends detained in the stockade for whose release they agitated constantly.

For their defeat this group blamed the Japanese who had not supported them and especially the Coordinating Committee which had replaced the Daihyo Sha Kai as the "representatives of the people." Resentment was focused upon the Coordinating Committee. Its members were called inu and fence-sitters, were accused of being loyal to America and of having remained in Tule Lake because they had important

key positions¹ through which they were profiting by grafting.² The people who had voted against maintaining the status quo, which comprised half the camp, were labeled spineless, weak-kneed, pro-administration, fence-sitters, and, like the Coordinating Committee, were accused of being loyal to America. In truth, the great proportion of the residents of Tule Lake, even many of the more vociferous members of the pressure group, were fence-sitters. Many had come to Tule Lake with no clear-cut intention of going to Japan and some admitted this frankly before the rise of anti-fence-sitting feeling in camp made this expression dangerous. Then it became obligatory to denounce the fence-sitters, the Yes-Yes and anyone who behaved as if he were "loyal to America."³

The subjects of the "fence-sitter" and the enormous gap between political loyalty and lip-service loyalty will be described in detail supra and must be reemphasized infra. Status quo, Yes-Yes will be treated in such detail supra that a reference will probably be sufficient here.

After the defeat of the status quo by the referendum of January 11, this small group of die-hard supporters of the defeated side went underground, maintained contact with each other, and devoted themselves with great energy to discrediting

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1. A key position was a job entailing considerable importance and prestige. The men in Civic Organizations, the Co-op officers, the Head of Housing, the various foremen of divisions are examples.
 2. The greater part of these accusations were quite false. However much of the active part in breaking the status quo was taken by the men in key positions.
 3. Reference infra and supra.

the Coordinating Committee and to obtaining the release of the detainees, particularly the Negotiating Committee. It should be remembered that the Coordinating Committee was also attempting to bring about stockade releases at this time and, consequently, this was another source of conflict and competition.

Stigmatizing their opponents as "loyal to America," "un-Japanese" and administrative collaborators, the pressure group adopted or professed to adopt the entirely opposite attitude. They voiced fanatic loyalty to Japan, stated that they were willing to sacrifice all they had to the service of the Emperor and insisted that they wished to return to Japan as soon as possible to assist her at this time of crisis. Their expressions took on an ever-increasing pro-Japanese nationalistic tone. It should also be noted that they hated Mr. Best bitterly, alleging that he had betrayed the Negotiating Committee and deceived the people. To a varying degree they were joined in this latter attitude by most of the camp residents.

Frustrated through January, February and March of 1944 in their attempt to obtain the release of the Negotiating Committee and reopen the status quo issue, this underground pressure group then conceived the notion that the only way to resolve their difficulties was to separate themselves and all the residents of like opinion from that section of the population whom they could not influence and consequently could not dominate. They suggested to the administration that they and all who thought as they did should be moved into one section of Tule Lake while all other residents should be moved into another.¹ They explained and

1. In December of 1943, the Army fenced off Ward VII from the rest

justified this desire for resegregation on the grounds that they were truly "loyal to Japan" and wished to repatriate at the first opportunity, and therefore could not live with persons who (said the pressure group) were either "loyal to America" or had not made up their minds which country to be loyal to.

Because of its anti-administrative agitating activities, the underground pressure group was subject to the constant threat of arrest and confinement in the stockade. Consequently, it was forced to remain underground and its members carefully concealed their identity from the administration. Activities were carried on with great caution. The group worked either anonymously or used only one person as spokesman, a person whose arrest would not weaken them numerically.

In late March, the pressure group made its first major attempt to initiate resegregation. They received permission from the administration to circulate a petition for the signatures of those persons who wished to repatriate and expatriate immediately with the express provision, however, that "the survey be made without commitment on the part of the administration." The camp was thrown into a turmoil. Although the pressure group claimed 6,500 signatures, general camp opinion was against the movement because the residents, as a whole, did not wish to commit themselves irrevocably to return to Japan under the leadership of an underground group whom they termed "radicals." When the administration became conscious of the disturbance the petition was causing, Mr. Black issued a strong statement denying that the petition had any authority or authenticity. The pressure group, however, proceeded stubbornly to send the names of its

6,500 signees to the Spanish Consul and asked him to inform the Japanese Government that these persons desired immediate expatriation and repatriation. After the statement from the administration, public interest in the petition died down rapidly, although many persons continued to express the opinion that the resegregation issue would continue to be a source of trouble and conflict in camp.

(Case Histories here)

Overt Activities of the Pressure Group-January through March, 1944.

During the first three months of 1944, the pressure group made about a dozen attempts to get the Negotiating Committee out of the stockade and force the Coordinating Committee to step down. For instance, in January, they contacted Mr. Robertson, an Assistant Project Director, and asked him to intercede for them with Mr. Best in an attempt to get the Negotiating Committee out of the stockade. Mr. Robertson spoke to a group of the detainees, among whom was Mr. Kuratomi. The detainees promised that if several members of the Negotiating Committee were released for only a few days they would bring the camp back to order. Robertson took up the matter with Best, but Best would not hear of it. A month later, in mid-February the pressure group made a bolder bid for recognition, sending a letter ^{signed by a certain Uchi} to Mr. Schmidt, Head of Internal Security, requesting that the administration dissolve the Coordinating Committee, let the "minority," as they termed themselves, bring the camp back to a normal state and release the men detained in the stockade. Again the administration took no action.

Anonymous Pamphlet to Propagandize New Arrivals from Manzanar

In late February, when a large contingent of segregees arrived from Manzanar, some part of this underground group produced a long

Contd. of the camp and at one time intended to move the most aggressive
from p. 3. part of the population there.

anonymous pamphlet which was distributed secretly to the new arrivals. The motive, of course, was to win the Manzanites to the side of the pressure group. The pamphlet deplored the indefinite status of the younger transferees and complained that no action had been taken by the American government "as to the legislative action of denouncing citizenship." "Non-clarification of status" it said, "is the root of all the center troubles up to date." The Imperial Government of Japan, the pamphlet alleged, had made a stiff protest at the time of the entrance of the Army into Tule Lake, stipulating that unless the Army withdrew before January 15, "reciprocal retaliation will be made to the American prisoners."¹ The language used toward the administration and toward the Coordinating Committee was vituperative in the extreme. The new arrivals were informed that the Coordinating Committee had conspired with the administration in a "sinister plot" to frustrate the desires of the residents and called the Committee "gamblers, bootleggers, shameless egoists, or the so-called money makers of the Center."

The extreme Japanese nationalistic tone of this pamphlet and its emphasis on status are deceptive. The mainspring of the pressure group's motivations is revealed in the denunciations of their opponents, the Coordinating Committee, who, according to the pressure group, conspired with the administration against the welfare of the residents of Tule Lake. The Coordinating Committee

1. It is most unlikely that the Japanese government made any such statement. This fallacious notion, that the Japanese government was about to take stern measures to assist the residents of Tule Lake was one of the chief comforts of the less realistic evacuees, who, visualizing themselves as persecuted by the United States government, clung to this chimerical hope of assistance from Japan as their last straw.

and its supporters had frustrated the desire of the members of the pressure group to make a place for themselves in Tule Lake.

While status as internees was desirable because it would offer safety for the duration of the war,¹ the exaggerated emphasis put upon it was largely an attempt of the pressure group to assume a set of attitudes and behavior which would set them off as far as possible from the type of activity of which they accused their opponents who had dispossessed them of the opportunity to gain prestige and prominence. Yamaguchi, who had voted against the status quo, stated that if he said too much against the status quo, he would "be the first one to get a two-by-four."² (To "get a two-by-four meant that he would be waylaid and beaten with clubs, for which two-by-fours furnished the best available material). To this fear of appearing to behave in a manner contrary to the accepted camp standard was added the fear of arrest by the Army and detention in the stockade. Arrests were still being made during this period. No one knew when a neighbor might inform on him, should he make a "radical" statement. The residents were in a difficult position. If they made an incautious statement which could be interpreted as pro-administration, general public disapproval awaited them. If they made a statement against the administration or spoke favorably of the Negotiating Committee, some inu might denounce them to the Army and they would be arrested.

1. It should be kept in mind that many of the camp residents did not connect internee status or renunciation of citizenship with ^{incurable} deportation. Though it was necessary to conform with the prevailing attitude and state that one wished to go back to Japan as soon as possible, many looked upon internee status as a certain method of remaining in camp until the end of the war, at which time they would again be allowed to make a choice of going to Japan or remaining in America - cite Wakayama and Nakamura if necessary.

Attitudes of the Camp Residents - January through March, 1944

The attitudes expressed during this period were conditioned by the fact that the residents, individually and as a group, were still torn between two conflicting patterns of behavior. The first pattern was the aggressive, anti-administrative behavior established in the upsurge of October-November, 1943. The second pattern was the abandonment of aggression and the acceptance of defeat entailed in giving up the deadlock or the status quo and returning to work. It should be emphasized that this second pattern, willingness to return to work, did not imply an appreciable lessening of resentment toward the administration. Many, in fact probably most, of the residents whom the administration looked upon as "moderates" and considered on its side were almost as hostile to the administration and the Coordinating Committee as the members of the pressure group. Therefore, the chief difference between the two points of view was that the followers of the first pattern held out for the continuance of overt resistance to the administration and the followers of the second pattern, tired of the strict Army rule, bored by the long period of unemployment and missing their \$16.00 monthly pay checks sorely, wished to abandon overt resistance and return to work.

Moreover, the first pattern, established in October-November, 1943, was still so powerful that many residents were obliged to behave and talk in accordance with it even though they might think differently. If this is not kept clearly in mind, many of the attitudes expressed by informants appear inconsistent and paradoxical.

The residents lived in an atmosphere of fear. If they behaved in any way which could be construed as cooperation with the administration, they were in danger of general public condemnation, and probable violence from the pressure group and its vociferous supporters. Though many residents desired peace and wished to return to work, they did not dare to say so openly. To do so would make them appear to be pro-administration.¹ This is significant evidence that the large group of less aggressive residents still feared and consequently was dominated to some extent by the attitudes of the group which had been ostensibly defeated in the election.

The safe path of behavior was to return to work quietly, gripe about the camp conditions, denounce the dogs or stool pigeons, and the administrative collaborators as personified by the Coordinating Committee, and denounce the fence-sitters and the people "loyal to America." The vituperative tirades in which almost everyone indulged served two purposes. They relieved the sense of humiliation, resentment and frustration and they camouflaged the fact that one had returned to work, i.e., had assisted the administration. If one denounced the "fence-sitters" and people "loyal to America" loudly enough, one could not be accused of belonging in that category.

While the greater number of residents had become definitely unmilitant and desired an end of the hardship and discord of the status quo period, their underlying attitudes of hostility to the administration and the Coordinating Committee, and the necessity

1. As Mrs. Okamoto expressed it: "The people went back to work very quietly. They don't say anything aloud," ibid., p. 3.

of continuing to conform to many of the attitudes which developed in October-November, 1943, were of great assistance to the pressure group.

The Relative Positions of the Pressure Group and the Coordinating Committee

It is apparent that during this period, two comparatively small groups were competing for the control of the camp: (1) the underground pressure group which labored under Army and administrative disapproval; (2) the Coordinating Committee which held its position by the grace of the Army and the administration. The body of the camp's population did not support either of these two small opposing groups in an organized or militant manner. The important point is that most of the residents were hostile to the Coordinating Committee and regarded its members as persons who had betrayed the people to the administration. By this attitude they unconsciously assisted and strengthened the pressure group. The intensity of this hostility was only a matter of degree. The more aggressive persons who voted to maintain the status quo resented the Coordinating Committee greatly and were predisposed to the same attitudes as those held by the pressure group. The less aggressive "pro-status quo" voters did not support the extreme views of the persons they called "radicals" and were of the opinion that there had been enough trouble in camp. Nevertheless, they also resented the Coordinating Committee greatly. Most of the persons who voted "anti-status quo" also looked upon the Coordinating Committee as inu, as persons who had betrayed the people to the administration. In short, almost every

resident, except the small group of the Committee's immediate supporters, regarded the Committee with attitudes which ranged from great hostility to suspicion. Though ~~the great number of people~~ ^{most of the residents} were indisposed to any overt anti-administrative activity, they were extremely negativistic to any pro-administrative activity and were ready to fall back on passive resistance to any proposal springing from the administration. This attitude also was of great assistance to the pressure group.

Disillusionment, Apathy and Fear

Many residents were heartily sick of the presence of the Army, the strict rule, the curfew, and especially of the economic hardships of the period of status quo. Attitudes like that of Mr. Fujimoto, who stated that all he wanted was peace and to be left alone, were common.

Fujimoto's brother stated:

"Let us roam around here and feed us three times a day. Nobody likes trouble. If they (the administration) treat us like human beings and not like dogs, nobody starts kicking."¹

Mr. Okamoto said:

"I'm sure that they (the people) had a good experience (learned a lesson) in the last three months and don't want any trouble."²

Many of the residents were discouraged and believed that nothing could be done to reconcile the conflicting opinions in camp or improve the situation. Mr. Yamaguchi bewailed the extreme factionalism in camp, stating that there were people for the status quo and against the status quo, that there were people who just

1. Ibid., February 1, 1944, p. 14; March, 1944, p. 8.

2. Ibid., March, 1944, p. 36.

didn't like the Coordinating Committee and did not care about the status quo one way or another, and then there were the gangsters, by whom he meant the strong-arm hoodlums.¹

The disillusionment and apathy expressed by many informants did not inhibit their sense of grievance or their complaints. Gripes about the food, the poorly equipped latrines, the graft purported to be indulged in by the administrative personnel and by the high-ranking members of the Co-op, were heard very frequently. The conservative block manager, Mr. Okamoto, stated that the central Block Manager meetings consisted of nothing but complaints about grievances which the people wished the Block Managers to take up with the WRA.²

It should be emphasized that during this period, the residents were living in a state of great tension and fear. The fear of behaving in a manner which would cause one to be regarded as pro-administration or as "loyal to America" was very strong. This would result in social ostracism or, in a strong status-quo block, in violence.

Widespread Denunciation of the Coordinating Committee, the Inu, the Yes-Yes and Persons "Loyal to America."

Of great assistance to the pressure group was the widespread antipathy to the Coordinating Committee and an equally widespread compulsion to denounce an ill-defined group of residents whose behavior was supposed to be similar to that of the Coordinating Committee, e.g., the inu or stool-pigeons, the Yes-Yes, the fence-sitters, and persons alleged to be "loyal to America." These

1. Ibid., p. 56.

2. Ibid., p. 35.

denunciations were usually followed by the statement, "The inu, the Yes-Yes and the "loyal" people have to get out of camp."

While it is obvious why the people wanted to get rid of the inu, the attitude toward the fence-sitters is paradoxical because most of the people expressing it were fence-sitters themselves, and certainly did not wish to be forced to leave Tule Lake. When it is understood, however, that this expression was a defense mechanism, a means of showing that one was not a fence-sitter, and a compliance with a behavior pattern in which almost everyone was participating, it is not inconsistent. ^{In short} [The composition of this group, which everyone denounced, varied according to the individual viewpoint. To the most orthodox ^{followers of the group} member of the pressure

adherent of group (1) attitude,

^{those in group (2)} group anyone who did not wish to return to Japan immediately was "loyal to America." A person who did not wish to return to Japan immediately, however, would denounce the "loyals" almost as furiously but might refer to them as the people who remained in Tule Lake just because they did not wish to move. An Old Tulean, ^{(of group (2))} certain of course that he was not "loyal to America" would denounce those persons in Tule Lake who had answered "Yes-Yes" on their military questionnaire. In short, everybody denounced the people who were supposed to be "loyal to America" but no one could be found in the entire camp who would admit that he himself belonged ⁱⁿ this group.] The concept of who the inu were also varied. Inu, (dog)

it will be remembered, was the term applied to stool-pigeons or informers, Japanese who informed on their fellow residents to the administration or the Army. Certain men like Mr. Akituski, chairman of the Coordinating Committee, or Mr. Yamatani, who had stepped

from the ostensibly modest position of manager of the Co-op's ~~fish~~ fish market, to membership on the Coordinating Committee and the Police Commission, were regarded as inu by almost everyone but the small group of their immediate supporters and friends. Yamatani, incidentally, was widely reputed to have been a "big shot" in the Co-op, masking his influence behind his comparatively inconsequential position. He was also reputed to control gambling houses. Mr. Takahashi, who had run the gamut from a leader of the Daihyo Sha to advisor to the Coordinating Committee, was also ranked as one of the camp's worst inu. A group of about six to a dozen men were therefore regarded as dogs of undoubted authenticity, and were known in camp parlance as "number one inu." Some of these men, like Yamatani, who denounced the leaders of the Negotiating Committee to the FBI, were stool-pigeons. Most, however, were not. [A larger ~~group~~ ^{shot} of men, the composition of which varied with each individual resident, was suspected of inu-like activities, but since they did not hold such prominent positions or were more circumspect in their behavior, they did not incur such widespread hatred. ~~Then,~~ ^A Anyone who made an incautious statement which could be interpreted as pro-administration in tone, or who criticized the "agitators," might come under suspicion of being a "dog" in his immediate circle or in his block. So great was the fear and suspicion under which the people lived that no one could be sure whom he could trust. Most of the residents believed that a casual joking remark made before a stranger in the latrine or in the mess hall might be reported to the administration or to the Army and might result in imprisonment in the stockade. ~~三~~

not The ~~pressure~~ *underground* group made ~~great~~ *effective* use of this fear. Any individual ~~or group~~ who crossed them was immediately branded inu.¹ Since very few residents questioned the rumors, a man's reputation could be ruined in short order by a few whispered remarks.]

The Fujimoto family was strongly against the "radicals" and had voted against the status quo. Fujimoto himself declared himself loyal to America in September of 1944 and relocated. When only his family was present, however, Fujimoto's brother, who shared his views, denounced the Coordinating Committee and its chairman, Mr. Akitsuki with great bitterness:

"That bunch is a bunch of inus and Akitsuki is the biggest inu of them all. He'll probably get his brains beat out one of these days."²

Fujimoto himself accused the Coordinating Committee of being loyal to America:

"One hundred percent of the inu are the 'loyal' bunch. I wouldn't be surprised if Akitsuki and all that bunch are loyal."³

He also ranted against the Coordinating Committee and "the men behind it" as a clique of politicians, cooperating with the administration "who had always been here," i.e., were old residents of Tule Lake.⁴ Like many of the residents, he made disparaging and insulting remarks about Mr. Best.

Mr. Oishi, who gave no support to the Negotiating Committee, expressed similar attitudes. Stressing that the "loyal" people were inu and that they must be gotten out of camp, he stated:

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1. See controversy with Tsuda, p.
 2. R. Hankey, Notes, March, 1944, p. 8.
 3. Ibid., p. 40.
 4. Ibid., p. 40.

"It is known throughout the camp that the inu gave away the Negotiating Committee."

Of the Coordinating Committee, he said:

"Among those seven are several people whose record is so black that I even flatly refuse to talk to them."

He also denounced the officers of the Co-op as administrative collaborators:

"The administration is making use of the people in the Co-op. They are very much hand-in-hand with the administration now."¹

Almost unanimously, the opinion was expressed that the Yes-Yes and the "loyal to America" people should be forced to leave Tule Lake. Everyone, in short, wanted the amorphous "loyal to America" people to get out, but no one could be found who admitted that they belonged in this group. Mr. Okamoto, who voted against the status quo, did not want any more trouble in camp and consequently would be classed as "loyal" by the pressure group and the pro-status quo people, was quietly certain that he belonged in the "disloyal to America" group. He stated:

"I'm sure the removal of the Yes-Yes would be a good thing."²

A group of Co-op officers, who were widely accused by both pro and anti-status quo residents as being "loyal to America" and Yes-Yes denounced the group to which they were commonly alleged to belong:

"The mixture of No-No's and Loyals in here is one of the main causes for trouble. This policy of the WRA was trouble from the beginning. The loyal people are troublesome."

1. Ibid., pp. 14-15.

2. Ibid., p. 36.

"I think they just think they are not one of us."
"We don't speak the same language."
"We call them weather watchers."¹

Mrs. Okamoto also echoed the "be Japanese" thesis, so strongly emphasized by the pressure group:

"The people (in Tule Lake) are forgetting the United States now. They say, 'We are Japanese.'"²

Mr. Akitsuki also stated that the Yes-Yes should be removed from camp.

Synthesis of General Camp Attitudes - January-March, 1944.

It is apparent that from January through March, 1944, the great number of camp residents either were sympathetic to some of the attitudes of the underground pressure group or that they gave them lip-service. This does not imply, however, that they gave the pressure group overt support.

The pressure group aimed at:

- (1) Bringing back the Negotiating Committee, by which they hoped to regain the dominant position the group held in November, 1943.
- (2) Bringing about the downfall of the Coordinating Committee. To accomplish this they pointed out that its members were inu, "loyal to America," Yes-Yes, money-makers.
- (3) Segregation of those who sincerely wished to repatriate from those who did not.

As justification for its activities, the pressure group painted itself and its followers as "true Japanese," and labeled its opposers "loyal to America." The members emphasized their

1. Ibid., pp. 20-21.
2. Ibid., February, 1944, p. 9.

desire to behave like Japanese and their need for a separate place of residence so that they might pursue "true Japanese" behavior unhampered by the presence of persons "loyal to America"; in actuality, anyone who opposed them or differed from them in opinion.

The general camp residents shared some of these attitudes and pretended to share many of them. It does not appear that this was a matter of indoctrination by the pressure group. The half of the camp's population which had voted to maintain the status quo was predisposed to emotional denunciation of the Coordinating Committee; some of them, no doubt, still felt loyalty to the Negotiating Committee. However, it is doubtful if even they were particularly disposed to segregation or that they would welcome it. The remaining half of the population which had deserted the cause of the status quo was less inclined to welcome the return of the Negotiating Committee as camp leaders, but sympathized with them because of their detention. Though few of them were militantly anti-status quo, they appear to have fallen in completely with the concept of the Coordinating Committee as a scapegoat, and energetically denounced the Committee and an ill-defined group in camp as "loyal to America," inu, or fence-sitters. The Coordinating Committee served as a focus for this hostility. The strength of this attitude among non-status quo supporters, and the increasing momentum it was to gain in later months, indicates that it was not expressed entirely because of fear of incurring the hostility of the strong status quo supporters, but because it was the prevailing

attitude. As for segregation, however, this unmilitant group shared almost none of the enthusiasm of the pressure group. They all were willing to say that the ill-defined "Yes-Yes" group should get out of camp, but they did not want to move themselves. They preferred to be let alone.

The Coordinating Committee was conscious of its extremely precarious position, not only with its strong opponents, but in the eyes of the general public. This is indicated by their frequent attempts to resign. Miss Iwohara said on February 1, "The people say that we're inu."¹

Group Strengthened by Addition of Experienced Agitators

In March, this comparatively small group of extremely disgruntled persons was augmented and greatly strengthened by the addition of a number of men who entered the camp with the Manzanar segregees and by a number of parolees released from Santa Fe.² One of these men was Mr. Yamashita, a parolee from Santa Fe, who is reputed to have introduced into the group a clique of segregees from Poston who had assisted Yamashita in his agitating activities in that center. Another leader, who, however, kept himself well in the background was Mr. Kira from Manzanar.

Give Yamashita
case history
here.

Give Kira case
history here.

1. Ibid., p. 25.

pp. 20-21
missing

Mr. Kira took a very active part in stirring up the violence during the Manzanar riot which culminated in the shooting and death of two (?) evacuees by the military. His complicity in this agitation never became known to the authorities. An excellent informant stated that Kira had been leader of a gang of toughs in Terminal Island before evacuation and that he had maintained a similar gang in Manzanar. There are numerous implications that he established the same type of terroristic organization in Tule Lake.

These new leaders of the underground group may be termed experienced agitators. In the Assembly Centers and Relocation Centers, where these men had previously resided, they had become noted for their violent anti-American sentiments and for their consummate ability to involve themselves in any agitating movement. They were welcomed with open arms by the pressure group and soon assumed a powerful behind-the-scenes leadership which they attempted to conceal from the administration and, to a lesser extent, from the Japanese residents.

The Akashi Petition for Resegregation

In late March the pressure group made its first attempt to gain resegregation.¹ A letter was sent to Attorney General

1. In late January, Mr. Best received an anonymous letter which very probably came from a member of this group. This letter proposed that "the administration devise a plan whereby the camp be divided in two, in order to avoid possible flare-up or conflict and to preserve order." Mr. Best paid no attention to this letter, regarding it as springing from a radical status-quo supporter or supporters. This letter is the first expression of the idea that the camp be divided into two groups, (a) pro-status quo residents; (b) anti-status quo residents.

(1) The present discord in camp was a disgrace to true "Japanese subjects" at Tule Lake who were being observed by Japan's enemies and should be done away with; (2) The present conditions in Tule Lake made it impossible for them to educate their children for life in Japan; (3) The cooperative and harmonious action of those residents who sincerely desired repatriation and expatriation would expedite the chances of another exchange ship. They ~~statement~~ ^{also} ~~held~~ that ~~the~~ WRA ~~administration~~ had sanctioned the circulation of the petition. ¹ ~~1~~

① On April 24, the leaders of the group sent a petition to the Spanish Consul, requesting him to contact "the Japanese Imperial Government immediately for the purpose of" conveying their desire for "immediate repatriation." They also stressed their alleged deep devotion to Japan, stating that "all the petitioners have decided to give up everything, materials and manpower, to the country we love so dearly at this time of national emergency." On May 30, they sent the Consul a much longer statement, appending the names of 6,500 signers of the

1. The flowery "Japanesy" language of the English translation of this statement is difficult for the unpracticed reader to understand. The sections transposed above follow:

"1. We are observed by all the enemy subjects, and, because our every act shall really affect the greatest influence to our father country, we should always have to act carefully so that honor of Japanese subjects shall not be ashamed. Accordingly, we have to keep away from such a disgraceful behaviors as to fight each other among brother, and we have to sweep away the present discord.

2. Though it is very important for us and our children to be disciplined in proportion to the organization of our father country, it is impossible to expect such an education under these conditions as in the mingle with objectionable elements.

3. The cooperation and harmonization of those who applied for repatriation or expatriation and who desire earnestly to catch

re-
petition, / stating their reasons for desiring resegregation.
They stated that their sole intent was "to be included in the
priority on the next exchange vessel to Japan. . . . Further,
we wish to resegregate whereby we Japanese with same thoughts and
ideals of mutual understanding can prepare and wait for said order
of repatriation." Both of these communications to the Consul were
signed by Mr. Akashi, Mr. Matsuda, Mr. Ono, Mr. Miyamoto and Mr.
Shishido. *The Resegregation Committee.*

At beginning of chapter give
histories of Ono Miyamoto and
Shishido. Matsuda and Akashi
already noted.

Reaction of the Residents to the Petition

This petition threw the camp into a great state of turmoil
and confusion. To begin with, the people were not certain whether
the petition had authority or not, whether resegregation would be
carried out or not or who was behind the petition. Many inform-
ants, however, guessed that it sprang from an underground pro-
status quo group. In some quarters, the rumor spread that those
who did not sign might not be allowed to return to Japan. Argu-
ment for and against the petition raged. Beatings were reported.

The reason for this turmoil and conflict was that the
underground
~~Resegregation~~ group held that only those willing to expatriate or
repatriate immediately were worthy of resegregation and that

the first chance of the exchange ship will be a help to recover
smoothly the exchange ship which is brought to a standstill at
present.

Fortunately, WRA is in advocate for our earnest petition."

He added, however:

"I think it's better if the loyal group go out so that we could stay here peacefully. Otherwise, we don't get settled down."¹

A moderate, intelligent Nisei girl expressed almost identical sentiments:

"We came here for the same reason. . . . I don't think there is any point in separating No-No's and repatriates. . . . I think the Yes-Yes should be taken out of camp That's what everybody is saying."²

Fujimoto voiced the suspicion that the petition was a "radical goon-squad business." They are just a minority who feel that they have to make a name for themselves so they'll be ^{when} honored/they get back to the old country." He stated that he had ignored the petition because it had no official approval. He added, however:

"The only segregation the colonists are in favor of is the segregation of the Yes-Yes from the No-Nos. The majority don't care if there's any distinction made at all between the No-Nos and the repatriates."³

M. a nisei, who had taken an active part as member of the Daihyo Sha Kai, disapproved strongly of the group which put forward the petition. He felt they were showing off and causing trouble just when conditions in camp were beginning to improve.

"They put a thing like that out and they are putting people against each other. They just mix the people up. . . . Why not get organized."⁴

A young Nisei girl expressed the wish that the instigators of the petition would stop, because she didn't want any more trouble or demonstrations in camp.⁵

1. Ibid., p. 22;
3. Ibid., p. 29;
5. Ibid., p. 17.

2. Ibid., p. 16.
4. Ibid., p. 24.

Yamaguchi, an ex-internee from Leupp, stated that the petition was reviving the status quo issue.

"Naturally, the status quo is still underground. . . . If this kind of petition is allowed, thousands of petitions will come out in the future. We'll never have any peace. Some wards didn't get any names. Some wards tore it down."

He pointed out that if the group loyal to America got out of camp, it would help a great deal, "but only half way." On the other hand, if an exchange ship would come, the people would have hope and the restlessness in camp might stop. Yamaguchi had a very low opinion of the motives of Mr. Akashi:

"He (Akashi) thinks this is the best time to segregate the Japanese on the first or second boat. . . . He thinks if he tries to segregate two or three Japanese in this center, that make him very popular in Japan.

"A friend of mine went to see him and asked him, 'If you do this petition, what will be the result?' He (Okashi) answered, 'I'll do it anyway. I don't care about the result.'"¹

Mr. Oishi, a sincere ^{ex}repatriate, disapproved very strongly of the petition, chiefly because of the leaders behind it and the manner in which it was presented to the people:

"I objected to the petition. I couldn't sign it. I disapproved because I see their doings are from a very . . . narrow viewpoint They're trying to ~~narrow it~~ ^{limit} repatriation ~~down~~ to only those who have signed the petition. . . . Their minds are too narrow.

"Another point I objected ^{to} because ^{it was} when (the petition) was brought up, no clear-cut explanation was made. It was given to the people in a haphazard manner. . . . I would not sign my name to anything unless I know thoroughly what it means."

"Many now regret signing the petition. They may have been afraid. . . . I think they should have explained it so thoroughly that even a child could understand it. Their attitude was, 'Take it or leave it.' It was too much of a high-pressure group."

1. Ibid., pp. 15-16.

pp. 29-30.
missing

Mr. Oishi, however, stressed that further segregation was imperative. If this were not done, the trouble "will come to a head. The only other way is to have the Army continually patrol the camp." He was also against segregating No-Nos from the repatriates:

"Whoever said No must be considered as Japanese the only thing we ask is that those who openly said Yes be removed from the camp. It may split the families. A son may have said No and a father Yes Regardless of whether it splits the family or not, we want them (the Yes-Yes) out." ¹

Mrs. Matsuda, one of the active members of the pressure group denounced the "loyal" to America and accused them of coming to Tule Lake to escape the draft. She repeated the martyr-like aims of the group to which the general population of the camp was so unreceptive:

"Since we came here we call ourselves the real expatriates and repatriates seeking to go back to Japan and be with her in everything, win or lose, as her subjects We don't care which wins or loses. We're going to Japan.

"We can't act like true Japanese subjects because there are so many elements here."

When asked how her group planned to distinguish between those who truly wished to repatriate and those who did not, Mrs. Matsuda ignored the question and said with great emotion:

"We might be given a bad place to live. We say (to the people) 'would you go?' They say, 'Yes, we'll die there as Japanese.'"

"The guys who won't say Yes to this are the guys who are going to stay here!"

"It's not our business to worry about the other people They didn't stick up for us in the crisis" (the November difficulties and the status quo vote).²

1. Ibid., pp. 3, 18-19.

2. Ibid., pp. 9-11.

formal organization, however. Merely signing the petition made one a member of the group.

It is interesting that for many months after the circulation of the petition the pressure group and its supporters were commonly called pro-status quo people. It was not until four months later, in early August, that the expression "pro-status quo" ^{began to be} ~~was virtually~~ dropped from the camp vocabulary and Resegregation Group was substituted. ~~By that time nobody was referring to "anti-status quo" people any more.~~ The issue had come to be between the Resegregation Group and its strong supporters, who numbered less than 3,000 people, and the remaining inhabitants of the camp, who had no organization whatever.

L. ADDITIONAL DATA

The group of five men who signed this petition and the later letter to the Consul called themselves "~~residents~~^{representatives} for the applicants (for resegregation) residing in this center" and also the "Resegregation Committee." They were Sanai Akashi, Gentaro Ono, Shigeru Matsuda, Yaichiro Miyamoto and Shunichi Shishido. All were issei and they appear to have been men willing to stick out their necks for the good of the cause.

I believe they also addressed the letter to Myer written early in July, ~~and~~ asking for consideration for the Resegregationists. In any case, four of them, Ono, Miyamoto, Shishido and Matsuda signed the letter which the Resegregationists sent to Myer on Sept. 4, pointing out the ~~maximal~~ laxity of the local administration in not giving the Resegregation Group Myer's answer to the July letter until late August. (Hankey, Notes, Sept. 15, 1944, p. 1)

Akashi, after his prominence in the March-April petition became one of the minor ~~members~~^{leaders} of the Resegregation Group, Ono, one of the alleged members of the Poston Clique remained an important advisor, Matsuda was very active as advisor to the Young Men's Organization and ~~editor~~ of the organizer of the group's newspaper, Miyamoto was secretary to the adult Resegregation Group. I don't know what Shishido did or what happened to him.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY
Tule Lake Center
Newell, California

August 31
1944

Community Analysis Section

Note:

The attached document was referred to at length in the meeting of August 30 which dealt with the question of resegregation. The gist of this meeting has been reported by Mr. Black, Assistant Project Director, who functioned as Chairman. Among those present were the signers of the attached document and, in addition to the Chairman, Messrs. Wells, Campbell and the Analyst. The document indicates some of the desires and arguments of the group with whom they met. It does not, however, cover their rationalizations and motivations, which of course are not herein stated. An analysis of the latter topics is being attempted at the present time.

TEMPORARY APPENDIX TO IV ~~B~~ - A

TO BE RETURNED TO SECOND DRAFT Chapter III

cannot ideally harmonize with" and gave three reasons for the application for resegregation: (1) As Japanese subjects they must "sweep away the present discord; (2) Their children could not receive a proper education in camp and "mingle with the objectionable elements"; (3) "Cooperation and harmonization of those who applied for repatriation or expatriation" would assist in speeding the arrival of the exchange ship. This statement also said that "WRA is in advocate for our earnest petition."

On May 30, Akashi, and five other members who called themselves the Resegregation Committee sent a long letter to Francisco de Amat, the Spanish Consul stating their aims and desires as resegregationists and appending the names of the 6,500 persons who had signed the petition. They stated their sole intention was "to be included in the priority on the next exchange vessel to Japan. . . . Further, we wish to resegregate whereby we Japanese with same thoughts and ideals of mutual understanding can prepare and wait for said order of repatriation. They listed the reasons for desiring segregation as follows:

1

We, the applicants who were mostly and have been transferred from other centers had come with a hope that this was one and true segregated camp. However, it has come to our attention that there are hundreds of residents in this center whose status are still uncertain, such as: loyal citizens of the United States who should enter the Army or relocate outside to help the Government; loyal citizens who came here merely by family ties who do not desire repatriation or expatriation; persons who are taking advantage of this center as more or less for safety--one in their beliefs to

evade draft calls; persons who do not wish to return to Japan until the war is over, etc.

2

Whereas we are observed and considered by American Authority as the enemy subjects, and, because our every act shall really affect the greatest influences to our mother country, our actions must always be so that the honor of Japanese subjects shall not be disgraced. Accordingly, we must keep away from such shameful behaviors that of fighting among brothers, and to bring about mutual understanding.

3

Thereby, with mixtures of such people living in one center together, will be the fundamental cause for disturbance and restlessness in a long period, which add another accusation to WRA policy by Dies Committee, Race-baiting politicians and professional patriotic organizations.

4

Whereas, it is very important for us and our children to be disciplined in accordance to the organizations of our mother country. The education of our children and their problems of the future is utmost important. It is impossible to expect such education under present conditions.

5

The Re-segreges, if granted to live in a separately established area, will guarantee full cooperation with center officials in keeping peace and harmony within that area.

6

The Re-segregation will tend to lessen the burdens of Center Officials for the maintenance of peace and harmony within and also, shall be easier to deal with in all daily problems.

7

Our request for immediate repatriation and our re-segregation might bring one step forward to convince the Japanese Government to reconsider the exchange of nationals which has been brought to a standstill at present.

NOW THEREFORE, we wish to forward the complete lists of said applicants with stated reasons mentioned above.

Respectfully submitted for your special considerations, We:

Representatives:

Sanzo Akashi

Gentaro Ono

Shigeru Matsuda

Yaichiro Miyamoto

Shunichi Shishido

zt

The camp was thrown into a turmoil. In some quarters the rumor spread that those who did not sign might not be allowed to return to Japan. Some persons, believing it would influence exchange signed the names of their dependents, so the 6,500 signatures should not be regarded as all adults. Argument for and against signing the petition raged. Beatings were reported. The administration became extremely alarmed. Mr. Best was contacted but gave no help. Mr. Black, feeling that the petitioners had betrayed him by "going ahead ~~with~~ on their own initiative and starting this "return to Japan rumpus"¹ issued the following

1. Ibid., p.