

Tanforan Politics

- I. Pre-evacuation political bodies and personalities
- II. The fight for prestige jobs
- III. The position of House Managers
- IV. Temporary Council --how chosen, by whom and for what purpose
who were they, why position wasn't so good
changes in personalities, attitudes of
members.
- V. Council Elections
 - A. why so late
 - B. how precincts were divided
 - C. why and how were campaign rules set
 - D. position of Y.D. club --put forward election rules *how arrived at & why*
 - E. election committee --how selected --uniformity of regulations
- VI. Nominations:
 - A. rules and qualifications of candidates and voters
 - B. situation in precinct #2
 - C. strategy followed by Y.D. --how their candidate was chosen
 - D. nomination strategy ---tried to influence press --Y.D.
 - E. reluctance of women to sign nomination blanks
 - F. Japanese custom of introduction
- VII. Race in Precinct #2
 - A. Issei-Nisei conflict ---position of Kibel
 - B. formation of Issei council --why and who were on it
 - C. nature of precinct
 - D. candidates --personalities and background
 - E. position of incumbant ---general dissatisfaction
 - F. election rally --who were present --1st rally
 - 1. strategy of Y.D. club
 - 2. nature of speeches
 - G. electioneering
 - 1. posters ---kind and number --both in Eng & Jap
what was emphasized --intensity
 - 2. door-to-door campaign --cards
 - 3. badges --mess hall workers
 - H. parade
 - 1. signs --who made them --what kind --costumes
 - 2. size and nature of Y.D. group --adult --both sexes
 - I. red-baiting --question why anti-fascist received support
answer of Y.D. club --war issue
 - J. position on ballot --influenced posters
 - K. situation of write-in candidate --no. of votes received
 - 1. complications at ballot box
 - 2. passing out pencils
 - 3. why write-in candidate didn't support Y.D. candidate
 - L. Confusion at ballot box
 - 1. secret ballot --Australian system --election booths
 - 2. voters didn't know what to do once they received
ballot
 - 3. signs in Jap. for directions
 - 4. how voting was checked
 - 5. discarded ballots

- M. withdrawal of candidate in favor of Y.D. man
- N. Tunout --80%

- 1. who won and why

- O. personalities of campaign leaders

- 1. Y.D. members

- 2. Kibei

- 3. Uyama, Ikeda, Iseyama, Nishimura

VIII. Race in other districts

- A. who won and why

- B. personalities and issues

- C. influence of church

- D. influence of JACL

- E. influence of preevacuation localities

- IX. New council inducted

- A. meeting with management --- introduction etc.

- X. Constitutional Convention

- A. advice of management

- B. position of old council

- C. proposal of Y.D. candidate

- D. how delegates chosen --why meetings not attended

- E. issues involved in convention

- 1. qualification of candidates

- 2. age of voters

- 3. reaction of new army regulations (influence)

- 4. formation of legislative body

- 5. formation of judicial body

- F. drafting committee selected

- G. ~~constitution~~ constitution ratified and o.k.ed by management

- H. both Eng. and Jap. spoken

- I. use of parliamentary procedure

TANFORAN POLITICS

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(+ 2 others)

The struggle for prestige positions was on when the first bus load of evacuees was dumped into Tanforan. It was first come first serve without any regard for previous experience, training or education. Jobs were in the offering which have never been open to the Japanese because of general discrimination. People with engineering, agriculture, history, political science and commerce degrees and many of them phibetes who had been employed in local Japanese firms who were famous for retaining the working conditions of the depression years gutted the employment office for prestige jobs. This situation exemplifies to some extent the importance of position in the Japanese community because the residents at that time were not sure that they would receive any compensation.

Since the first problem facing the evacuees was to settle themselves in one of the stalls or apts, the house managers who were in charge of looking after the physical facilities rose to positions of prominence, not because they were particularly intelligent or had ability to become leaders, but simply because they were in a position to bring the grievances of the people to the attention of the administration. If a house manager was a good trouble shooter and produced immediate results as far as physical comforts were concerned, he could have been mayor of Tanforan as far as the people were concerned. During the initial stage of the resettlement, the house managers constituted the only organized body in the center. In their daily meetings they discussed almost every aspect of center activity, physical facilities, food, labor problems, morale, education, recreation, housing, dissemination of information, guest visits, morals, center store and many more such problems.

Naturally then when the administration needed resident advisors to help formulate policy and disseminate information they approached the house managers. Mr. Lawson, then the camp manager and who was subsequently replaced by Mr. Davis wanted four men each representing a specific area in the center chosen from the house managers and by them to advise him. The four representatives ~~who~~ were elected by an informal voice vote of the house managers from their respective precincts. These precincts were determined by Mr. Lawson on the basis of population. The temporary council consisted of Tad Fujita, Henry Takahashi, Michio Nakajima and Aki Moriwaki representing precincts one to four respectively.

As additional evacuees filled the remaining barracks Kenji Fujii was elected councilman from precinct five in the same manner as the other councilmen were elected. During the first month or so the council acted in the capacity of a liaison body between the house managers and the administration. The council members attended the housemanagers meeting every morning and brought to the attention of the center manager the matters which were discussed. The house manager's meetings was the focal point of all the camp gripes. During this period the council men met with the center manager almost every morning.

Once the word got around that there was in existence a temporary council some of the more alert residents were piqued because the councilmen were not elected by the residents themselves. Later on the house managers were dissatisfied because the councilmen were not getting results on their recommendations which they thought were necessary for the welfare of the entire center. After a short time two of the councilmen ^(Nakajima & Moriwaki) resigned because the situation was getting too hot to handle. The isseis were dissatisfied because they didn't have a voice in the council.

* The Council was on the receiving end of all of the camp gripes & since they couldn't do very much to alleviate the situation, two of the leaders resigned.

Soon after the temporary council was elected, the center manager requested the council to work out plans for the election of permanent councilmen. The nature of the self governing body and the manner by which the members of the body ^{were} to be elected ~~were~~ left up to the council to devise. But the members of the council were not in a position to plan a governing body ^{since} ~~noe~~ ^{none} of the councilmen had any experience or training in administrative government and furthermore none of them were conscious of the major problems facing the Japanese people in America.

meaning
 JACC
 or some
 Davis

 Laboring under these handicaps the councilmen became aware that they would have to consult some other people. The self appointed chairman of the council, Henry Takahashi, was careful to consult only the "right" people. ^(i.e. the JACC group) He made no attempt to approach the liberals or the leaders of the Oakland Young Democratic group. Meanwhile the residents were becoming impatient about the delay in the election of permanent councilmen. As life in the center began to assume a more or less routine character, the administration wasn't too interested in the immediate formation of a ^{permanent} self governing body. About this time the center manager, Lawson went to Washington for a week or so and was subsequently removed being replaced by Davis, then the assistant manager. These factors contributed to the postponement of the election until the latter part of June.

The liberals sensed that the council was trying to shove the elections through without consulting all of the pre-evacuation groups. The former members of the Oakland Young Democratic club and their circle of acquaintances were anxious to see the elections get under way. With the council dilly dallying around, ~~and~~ the election rules and regulations up in the air and the liberals being ignored, a caucus of progressives was called, the nucleus being the Young Democratic club, to draw up for presentation by a representative committee

Who organized the caucus? Who organized the group?

suggestions which they thought should be incorporated in the election rules. This caucus, *organized by & composed mostly of the Oakland Y.D. group*, was attended by some 25 people. After Ken Fujii, the only councilman who lent an ear to the liberals, described the confusion and the petty bickering that existed in the council over election procedure the caucus drafted an outline of election regulations. With this outline the liberals approached 15 residents *** whom they thought would constitute a wide representative group and this committee was to approach the camp manager and present to him the drafted outline. The manager refused to see the committee, the excuse being that he was too busy.

Can you give a list of the names of the group?

Some of the more important points included in the outline for election procedure as drawn up by the liberal caucus included the following:

1. set an age limit of 23 for eligibility of councilman, but lowered the age limit to 18 for voting privileges. The voting age was lowered because the group desired to give the majority of the nisei franchise rights. It recognized that the average age of the nisei was below 21.
2. Under the recommendations of the caucus anyone, issei included, over 23 was eligible to be a candidate regardless of whether he had citizenship. But to forestall any pro-fascist from becoming elected the group recommended that the candidate be required to take a strongly worded oath of alligence to the United States.
3. The caucus called for the establishment of a representative committee by the temporary council to set up election procedure and to facilitate an immediate election.
4. The outline also recommended the secret ballot as well as most of the basic rules of election procedure which were in

effect on the outside

** Among them were Ernest Iiyama (Y.D.) Anne Kunitani (Y.D.) Rev. Kumata (Buddhist), Rev. Tsukamoto (Christian), Alice Seta (Y.D.) Rev. John Yamashita (Oakland M.E.) and Katsuyama (Editor) Guy Iiyama (Issei)*

The final nomination, election and campaign rules as well as the precincts were drawn up by the council and the administration. The Center was divided into five precincts, the fifth having almost twice the population of the others which were about the same. This was done because the fifth precinct constituted an easily recognizable geographical unit, i.e., it included everything in the infield. The councilman in each precinct appointed an election chairman to handle the details of the election. The rules set forth allowed anyone who was 21 or over to vote, but a candidate had to be at least 25 years old and a citizen. To be nominated, a candidate had to have fifty signatures of qualified voters in his particular precinct. No restrictions were placed on methods of campaigning. Both English and Japanese signs and placards were permitted.

At this point it should be pointed out that the form of the self governing body was never questioned, but everyone assumed that the permanent governing body would be a council elected to succeed the temporary council. Never was a suggestion made to elect a mayor or a chief executive. This might be taken as an indication that the Japanese people never have confidence nor place trust in an individual Japanese to represent the group. To what extent the form of the governing body, the council of five, had to conform to administrative rulings of the WCCA I do not know. I recall that during the first few days of my stay at Tanforan some of the members of the staff mentioned the fact that such and such barrack would constitute a ward and that there would be four wards in camp. I believe that this was done for administrative purposes.

PRECINCT #2

The situation in precinct #2 was interesting because the campaign was conducted on the basis of issues rather than on the basis of personalities as it was in the other precincts. It so happened that

Details? Henry Takahashi, self-appointed chairman of the temporary council, resided ~~xx~~ in this precinct. Mr. Takahashi's activities prior to his evacuation and his actions as councilman placed him in an unfavorable light in the eyes of the residents not only in his own precinct, but in the whole center ---both issei and nisei. He had placed himself in such a position that the residents began to take out everything that went wrong on him whether it was justified or not. Since it was known that he was going to run for the position of councilman the question in everyone's mind in precinct#2 was how can we keep him out?

Precinct #2 comprised barracks 13-22 inclusive. Most of the people residing in this district came from the East Bay--Alameda, Berkeley and Oakland with the exception of barrack #14 which housed approximately 300 bachelors mostly issei and kibe. Now within this territory there were four groups which had some semblance of a nucleus for political action. They were the Young Democratic crowd(the progressive element), the Oakland M.E. church group(a Christian group which was associated with the Oakland M.E. church), the former Berkeley people who were predominantly Christian and the independent issei and kibe element which occupied barrack #14. There was considerable overlapping within these four groups, but they were distinct enough to be recognized. The Young Democratic group though weak in numbers was the most articulate and ^{best} ~~xxxx~~ organized of the pressure groups. The independent issei and kibe group was the only ~~xxxx~~ body which didn't have former ties. The only things which it had in common were the facts that the majority was pro-Japan and that they were bachelors. Most of them were not very highly regarded by the other Japanese because they hadn't contributed anything to the Japanese communities.

With nominations in order and the incumbant Henry Takahashi in the race, the opposition was not organized. One afternoon John Yamashita former nisei pastor of the Oakland M.E. church and house manager of barrack #20 which was in precinct #2 stopped me on the way home with the remark, "Hey, what do you know about politics?" I knew John Yamashita because he would drop in occasxionally to the Young Democratic meetings which were held sometimes at his church in Oakland. He is one of the more liberal-minded young church leaders. I replied, "we have to get Takahashi out". He grinned and enthusiastically said, "hell, yes" so I immediately realized that he sound-ed me out with an idea of forming a popular front against Takahashi.

I invited him over to our apt. to talk things over. During the course of the conversation he informed us (Anne and me) that he had heard of two possible candidates, first Shinji Yamamoto, a Berkeley chap who was an archiitect and a popular nisei in the East Bay and the other, Hachiro Iwasa, another architect who was a substantial figure in East Bay nisei Christian circles to run against Takahashi. I didn't know either of the two men, but Anne knew Shinji slightly. Both John and Anne throught Hachiro was the ablest of the two and when I heard that Hachiro was a member of the Oakland Co-op associa-tion and subscribed to the People's World, I was sold on him.

During the course of the conversation I never suggested a prospec-tive candidate since the only element that I knew who resided in the precinct was the Young Democratic crowd and I was positive that any-one from the Y.D. club didn't have a ghost of a chance because the club had a red stigma. On top of that I wasn't in touch with the fellow traveler crowd since the evacuation because we disagreed so violently over the question of evacuation. Since at that time I hadn't heard of any candidates either put forward or endorsed by the left-wing, I told John that there was a damn good chance that they

would get behind Hachiro because of his fairly liberal background. I saw some basis of an emergence of a popular front.

The only hitch in the plans of backing Hachiro, related John was that he was reluctant to run because he had a responsible job at the hospital where he was in the process of straightening out a mess and his wife was expecting a child. On top of that since he was a good friend of Shinji's he didn't want to run against him. But John thought that Hachiro would consent to be a candidate if enough pressure was brought to bear upon him and if Shinji were induced to pull out in his favor. The conversation ended with plans for Anne and me to sound out the left-wing on Hachiro, try to induce Hachiro to be a candidate and find out how much Shinji support existed and to meet again.

That same evening before dinner we went to see George Kondo, a very close friend of Shinji's and house manager of barrack #13 to sound him out. He thought that Hachiro was the better man of the two, but he didn't want to tell Shinji to drop out in Hachiro's favor since he was too close to Shinji. The next day Anne ran into Mary Ikeda who was close to the left-wing group and broached her on the subject of the elections. Mary mentioned that Ernest Iiyama, who was the president of the Oakland Y.D. club and a fellow traveler might run, but she thought that it might be better to get behind a man who was sure of replacing Mr. Takahashi. When Anne mentioned the possibility of Hachiro Iwasa as a candidate, Mary thought he would be a good man and seemed to be very enthusiastic. That afternoon the Y.D. crowd took the initiative of calling a caucus on the next day to select a candidate to back.

On the evening of the day the caucus was to be held we visited Hachiro and tried to induce him to run. He put forward the same arguments which John Yamashita related to us in our conversation, but we sensed that he could be drafted if we worked on him a little more, so

we closed the meeting with plans of meeting again.

John Yamashita and his crowd were invited to the caucus, but they failed to show up. The meeting ~~was~~ attended by some 26 people who were mostly Y.D. members, some of whom were close to the M.E. church crowd. The thought of defeating Takahashi was uppermost in everyone's as the meeting was called to order. The members discussed the merits of the various possible candidates and the political situation as it existed in ^{the} precinct. The names of possible candidates included Ernest Iiyama, Hachiro Iwasa and Shinji Yamamoto. Shinji's name was discarded early in the meeting because most of the members thought that he didn't have the experience and background for holding such a position as councilman. The mention of Iiyama's name received a ~~rather~~ surprisingly cool reception considering the fact that the brain trust of the left-wing was present. Everyone was of the opinion that Iiyama's past associations (Y.D. club, union organizer) would rule him out. Iwasa's name ~~was~~ received warmly. His fairly liberal background won over the left-wing. Just as the caucus was going to decide to adjourn and convene again tomorrow night in popped Ichiro Akiya who was already circulating nomination petitions for Iiyama among the bachelor's ^{such} quarters. He gave a convincing argument substantiated with figures that Iiyama could be elected that the caucus almost unanimously endorsed Iiyama. Right then and there the Y.D. crowd began to organize a campaign.

The outbreak of the war, evacuation and circumstances peculiar to life in a concentration camp tended to break old ties and shatter former affiliations, loyalties and prejudices. As a result of the pre-war issei leaders having been interned, there was a rearrangement of groups with new leaders, many of them progressives coming to the fore. Most of us were not cognizant of these changes and if we were we didn't think that these new associations would hold under pressure. What

were the circumstances which gave birth to these shifts in relations? The first and most important of all was the initial housing of all the single men together in one ~~xxxx~~ dormitory. Approximately 500 men, most of them old isseis, were assigned beds in a huge room under the grandstand where the pari-mutuel clerks once sold their \$2 tickets. The necessity for living together in one room gave them a sense of solidarity which was carried over to apartments in barrack #14. This sense of solidarity was strengthened too by their strong nationalistic feeling towards their native land. Since the recreation program was oriented to the nisei and failed to include the issei and the kibeis, they resorted to card playing and eventually to gambling. When eight men were picked up in the men's dorm for gambling and sent to the San Mateo County Jail, the administration began to clamp down on all forms of card playing. Immediately rumors began flying around that the administration would also forbid Goh and shogi (chess). This got the issei hopping mad because these games were not conducive to gambling. Meanwhile the administration was continually discriminating against the issei--wouldn't allow them to run for elective offices, forbade a Japanese section in the press, listened only to the nisei because the issei couldn't speak English, wouldn't allow meetings to be held in Japanese.

All in all the issei and kibeis were frustrated and angry. They were confused because the administration and the nisei leaders were not able to interpret the policies and rulings which were being handed out each day. They were infuriated because they were not given equal privileges with the citizen nisei. All of these facts ~~xxxxxx~~ created a tendency for the issei-kibeis group to stick together and exert their influence via one large group. When Ichiro Akiya addressed the caucus he pointed out some of the above facts. The fact that Ernest Iiyama was himself a kibeis and could understand Japanese, Akiya

said would assure him a big block of votes, the votes of approximately 300 single isseis and kibeis who were residing in barrack #14. He added that Iiyama's left-wing activities would not affect him too much. It was known that in precinct #2 there were about 800 eligible votes. Anyone was eligible to vote who was 21 or over with no restrictions on citizenship. It was estimated by the caucus that only 500-600 out of the eligible 800 would vote since many of the voters were old issei men and women who never had the privilege of franchise and would not exercise their right. So the caucus felt that if Iiyama had 300 votes in the bag before he started campaigning that it would be a walk away and therefore it chose to support Iiyama without any hesitation. Iiyama himself was not at the caucus, but it was known that he would abide by the decision of the group whether it endorsed him or not.

Akiya further added that a lot of ground work had already been laid in getting the bachelors to back Iiyama. He also stated that nearly all the bachelors were against Takahashi and wanted to see him defeated. That evening the Y.D. group formed a campaign committee. A committee to work for the issei votes and another for the nisei was organized. The next day additional nomination blanks were circulated around by the campaign committee. Most of our energies were directed to the issei rather than to the nisei. Our angle was something like this: "Iiyama is a conscientious boy who was reared in Japan, a kibeis he can speak both English and Japanese with equal facility. By virtue of his training in Japan he understands your feelings and can if elected bring those to the attention of the administration much better than can a nisei. He has had a great deal of experience in politics and government (didn't specify his activities) He is able to speak to the staff without any hesitency since he has had much contact with caucasians, infact he was working as a civil servant etc." (The main point was that he could speak Japanese as well as English)

to the nisei the line went like this: "He's a better guy than Takahashi, right? O.K. Iiyama not only believes and stands for democracy, equality of rights, but practices it. He has had plenty of experience in politics and government and is very outspoken in his beliefs. He will give the people more opportunity to be heard via weekly precinct meetings, moreover he's not out for himself etc." Anyone who was a citizen and 25 years old and who solicited 50 names of eligible voters in his precinct qualified himself as a candidate for councilman.

The Y.D. group with the aid of a few progressive issei's went to work immediately to gather as many signatures as possible. Since for many of the issei this accepted election procedure was their first experience and was foreign to them, many of them hesitated to sign. Many thought that his signature on the nomination blank would mean that he voted for the candidate and therefore asked detailed questions. Some were embarrassed to sign because they had a difficult time writing their name and if they signed their writing would be illegible, and a few were suspicious and didn't want to sign their names to anything. (In Japan penmanship is considered as an indicator of one's breeding and therefore you see their reluctance to sign their names in English)

Realizing that most of the isseis would vote for the man whose nomination blank he signed the Y.D. group worked fast and furiously contacting the isseis before the other prospective candidates had a chance of reaching them. In securing the signatures it was discovered that the issei women were very reluctant to sign. In most cases they remarked that the signature of the husband was sufficient for the both of them and only in a few cases did the wife differ from the husband. I believe this is a good indication of the degree of dependence of the woman to the man in the Japanese family in matters of politics. Another interesting Japanese custom was introduced during

this election and that was the custom of introducing the candidate. In America personal contact between the candidate and the voter is seldom achieved, but in the Japanese community it was almost a necessity. All of the candidates in precinct #2 visited each family unit in tow of his campaign manager who introduced him to the prospective voter and extolled his virtues.

The isseis on the whole looked upon the elections as a spectator would look upon a circus; it was a novelty and it was fun. At the outset nomination petitions for the incumbant Takahashi and Iiyama were the only ones circulating in precinct #2. Later on another candidate Kanehara, a kibeï who was associated with the independent Japanese Berkeley Methodist church had petitions out. In the meantime the Oakland M.E. group and the Berkeley christians who disliked Takahashi, but could not back Iiyama because he in their eyes was not "respectable" and who did not associate with the independent Berkeley Methodist crowd got organized and began to circulate petitions for Hachiro Iwasa. They began securing signatures about two days before the deadline when all petitions had to be in. All of the candidates had their nomination blanks with fifty or more signatures in the center manager's office a good many hours before the deadline with the exception of Iwasa. He missed the deadline by half an hour. The center manager and the other candidates in precinct #2 declared Iwasa's that they would overlook the tardiness and would ~~xxx~~ include his name on the ballot, but Iwasa's campaign committee in true christian fashion chose to comply with the literal interpretation of the rules and announced martyrdom that Iwasa would be a write-in candidate in precinct #2. The Y.D. group was willing to overlook the late filing because the entrance of Iwasa would help split the votes and would take votes away from Takahashi and would help pave the way for a Iiyama victory.

The signatures on Iiyama's petitions numbered 258, the next highest being a little over eighty-five in precinct #2. When this fact was discovered the Y.D's. tried to influence the editor of the paper Taro Katayama to print the number of signatures obtained beside the name of the candidates because they thought that the number 258 would look very impressive compared to 85 and 59 and when the residents saw that in the paper more of them would vote for Iiyama when the elections came around. But the editor although a staunch Iiyama supporter himself refused and said that it would not be in the spirit of the election rule.

December 7th, FBI raids, curfew, travel regulations and the subsequent evacuation put the non citizen issei on the defensive and placed a hollow premium on citizenship. The only fact which kept Tanforan from becoming a transplanted Japanese community pre Dec. 7 was the presence of caucasian administrators. If the issei had citizenship and were able to speak English and understand it, they would have had complete control of the affairs of the center. The issei had begun to develop since the outbreak of the war a negativistic philosophy, but they were not defeatist. They showed amazing psychological recuperative powers. At the outset of the resettlement program they were kept busy setting up their new living quarters and trying to make their new homes as comfortable as possible. But as time went on the isseis began to take interest in the affairs of the center, at first as individuals and later in groups. They slowly gathered their forces which were depleted of leadership material, because so many of the former leaders were interned, and began to exert pressure. Most of this organization was ~~underground~~ carried on underground and was manifested in ideas and attitudes.

Since the administration was caucasian and most of the isseis were not able to speak English fluently they were not able to take an active

part in the operations of the center. The suspicious eye of the army and its regulations prohibiting the non citizens from holding elective offices did not help the issei cause. All things Japanese were frowned upon by the administration and the isseis were getting angry and wanted to do something to forestall the complete abolishment of Japanese activities.

With the issei held in check by the administration the nisei naturally took over the leadership of the center. Since things Japanese were unpopular the nisei went out whole hog for things American. They became 200% flag waving "Americans" which raised the ire of the issei. There was some feeling among the nisei that the isseis were to blame for the evacuation. They ~~xxxxxxxx~~, the nisei argued that if the issei were more observant they would have been able to realize the future consequences of the establishment of Japanese language schools, Tokyo orientation etc. and would have discouraged the customs and ideas of their native land. With a caucasian administration and the nisei partially in the saddle it was inevitable that the activities in the center took on an outward American appearance. Bread and potatoes in place of rice, forks instead of chopsticks, corny nisei talent shows instead of shibais (Japanese drama), showers instead of baths, English instead of Japanese. The isseis couldn't ~~xxxxxx~~ understand it and couldn't take it. It was foreign to them. This feeling was aggravated since they had no choice --it was take it or leave it. They only took a little.

Now many of the issei misinterpreted all of this. A number of them believed that the nisei were instrumental in the issuance of new regulations and orders discriminating against the issei. They believed that the nisei were trying to take advantage of their new positions and at the same time entrench themselves more firmly with the staff. I believe that there is little foundation for such accusations. If

the nisei group as such discriminated against the issei they didn't do it consciously and they didn't do it directly. In so far as I was able to observe I did not detect any group of nisei attempt underhanded or otherwise better their position at the expense of the issei. An important reason why the nisei would not attempt such a move is that most of them still have parents living and they would not jepordize them.

When the issei and kibeI bachelors moved from the grandstand dorm-to barrack #14 which was in precinct #2 there was quite a bit of resentment from the residents of that area especially from the nisei. The women were afraid to pass by #14 at night unescorted because news began to spread that some of the men had accosted girls. The people associated filth, greed and low breeding with the bachelors and the mess hall crew in mess #8 thought they would complicate matters in the dining room, but on the whole the bachelors were very cooperative. In this struggle between the nisei and issei, the kibeis, who were mostly bachelors, sided with the issei element.

[About the time the nomination petitions began to circulate around the center, the issei element] began to take interest. They began to talk about the relative merits of the various candidates in their own precinct. [ince they could not qualify for the position they wanted to back a man who would look after their interests. When the nomination blanks were all in, the more articulate isseis in the center got together and formed an issei council which met and endorsed one candidate in each precinct and mapped out campaign strategy. Before this overall council was formed there were in existence a few local issei councils but these were merged into the overall council.

It is interesting to note some of the reasons which motivated some some of the men to form an issei pressure group. Some men like Mr.

Obata lost their position in the community since citizens were favored and were trying to regain their prestige and position which they enjoyed before Dec. 7th. Some were agitators who thought that any additional confusion that they might create would help Japan win the war. Others were interested to get men elected who would sincerely represent the interests of the issei. The progressive isseis joined the council because a democratic principle was involved, the principle of equality. They saw no reason why the issei should be denied the right to hold elective offices. "Why were not the citizen nisei evacuated as well as the non citizen issei?" Are we not all members of the community" Most of the men in the council agreed that if the issei were able to hold elective offices in all probability none of them would run because of the language barrier, but they were indignant because the administration forbade them. A principle was involved and the nisei didn't do anything about it.

The issei council pushed the idea of creating an issei "advisory" board in each precinct to assist the councilman. What they actually had in mind was that the status of the councilman should be that of a puppet of the issei body. Now the leaders of this overall issei council were surprisingly enough the progressive isseis. They dominated the council because they were the most articulate and vociferous members. They understood democratic procedure and some of the progressive isseis were citizens by virtue of their participation in World War I. The issei progressives were old time anarchists and socialists, some of whom were political refugees from Japan and they seemed to be concentrated in precinct #2. It should be added that the whole issei council and its activities were kept underground. The pressure exerted by the issei council was most keenly felt in precinct #2 because of the activities of the progressive members. The council backed Iiyama, but later some members notably Obata withdrew his

their support in favor of Iwasa.

Ernest Iiyama

Iiyama is a kibeï fellow traveler who had been, previous to his evacuation, president of the Oakland Mounf Democratic club. He was a well known resident in Oakland, but he was a marked man. His parents and kin folk are all in Japan. He attended the Univ. of California for approx. two years majoring in engineering but dropped out of school. His associations with the left-wing movement started in the years between 1937-38. He was instrumental in the organizing of the Oakland Young Democratic club in 1939. First it was an Olson campaign organization and later it affiliated itself with the Young Democrats of California Inc. The change in the party line in 1939 split the Young Democrats into two groups at their 1949 convention. The Oakland nisei Y.D. club largely through the hard efforts of Iiyama went with the "imperialist war" group. The members of the club were ignorant of the meaning of party line etc., but when the line changed again when Russia was invaded by the Nazis they realized what it was all about.

Dec. 7th and the talk of evacuation stirred up the members of the club. The communist party line in America was "unity", but it did not have a policy for evacuation. When evacuation talk became more popular during Feb. 1942, the nisei members of the C.P. came out for voluntary evacuation of all Japanese. In all likelihood they received their instructions from some Party chiefs in San Francisco, probably John Pittman, political writer for the People's World. Iiyama approached the club in early March and asked the members to come out for voluntary evacuation, reason -- "unity". But this time the members knew what the score was and turned him down completely. Though he was repudiated the feeling among the members was not strained a bit so it was not difficult to reorganize in the Tanforan elections.

After he dropped out of school he did a lot of odd jobs in and

around the bay area. Once he attempted to organize the Japanese dry cleaning workers in Oakland, but he didn't get very far. Just prior to his evacuation he was a temporary clerk in the Alameda County clerk's office. He was a member of the Oakland JACL, but was always in the minority.

Kanehara

Mr. Kanehara was house manager of barrack #16 northside. He too was a kibeï, but unlike Iiyama had ideas of an issei. His command of English was poor and he didn't have much color as a candidate. Previous to his evacuation he was an operator of a dry cleaning establishment in Berkeley. He was drafted to run by one of the members of the independent Methodist church and he didn't have much support. He later withdrew from the race and threw his support to Iiyama/

Hachiro Iwasa

Iwasa was the write-in candidate and the only one in the whole election. He was a former resident of Oakland, married and a grad from the Univ. of Calif. in architecture. From what I can gather he was not too active in the Japanese community in Oakland. It seems that his only association with the community was via the Oakland M.E. church. Prior to his evacuation he was an architect. I believe he did some work for the ~~XXX~~ FHA. He was a member of the Oakland Co-op association and a reader of the People's World. Christian socialist type.

Henry Takahashi

second

Henry is the oldest son of the famous Takahashi clan of Berkeley. He is married has two children and resided in Berkeley. A graduate of Univ. of Calif. in optometry. I believe he enjoyed a fairly good practice in the Japanese community in San Francisco. During his younger days, I understand, he was the charging white knight in the Japanese

Christian circles in California. He was the motivating force in the founding and building of the Berkeley United church. I do not know whether he was an active member of the JACL or not, but I do know that he wasn't very active in the JACL during the trying days prior to the evacuation. Since I have not been a resident of the Bay area for a long time and had not associated myself with the Japanese community, I am ignorant of the community gossip, but I hear that Mr. Takahashi was falling out of favor with the Japanese community during the past few years. The most common charge was that Takahashi was out for himself and only himself. To what extent the conduct of his very aggressive mother which helped to put the Takahashi name in bad with the community affected Henry I do not know. Anyway, it seemed, when the elections came around, that everyone but his immediate family and a few stooges disliked him. The bachelors in #14 would make vituperative remarks about him and many said that they would attack him if he ever showed his face around barrack #14. Poor man!

When the nomination blanks were all in, the progressive element in Precinct 2 urged the Chairman of the election committee of the precinct to call an election rally at which the various candidates could present their platforms. The race was already heated in the district before the rally was held. On the eve of the rally, Iiyama's strategy committee met to map out plans for the meeting. We expected some mud slinging and red baiting, especially from the Takahashi crowd and were prepared for it. We knew that besides Kanehara Iiyama was the only one who could speak Japanese fluently, in fact, Iiyama was the only candidate in the entire camp who could speak both languages fluently. Since we were not worried about Kanehara's chances, we prepared a long list of questions in Japanese, which were difficult to understand, and were prepared to shoot them at Takahashi

and Iwasa to embarrass them. We were also prepared to give Takahashi a rousing cheer ^{when} ~~he~~ he got up to speak and maintain a chilling silence when he got through. The rally in Precinct 2 created quite a furore since it was the first to be held in the center and the race was so keen. It was understood by all of the candidates that after they were through speaking they would be asked questions by the audience. The Iiyama strategy committee asked that the speeches be very short so that the question period could be long.

The recreation hall where the rally was held was packed with some 300 people. The crowd consisted mostly of Issei men with a sprinkling of Nisei and people from other districts who were interested in seeing what kind of showing Takahashi would make. The meeting went along fine with Takahashi being introduced by a man who had said earlier in the campaign that he would back Iiyama. Takahashi proceeded to half read a speech in Japanese which, some people said, was probably written by his mother. Iwasa also made a poor showing as far as appealing for Issei votes was concerned. After all the candidates were introduced and had finished speaking, the progressives who were present wanted to ask questions. By the time all the speakers were through, it was ten minutes to nine, and nine o'clock was the deadline for all meetings in the center. For some unknown reason, the Chairman of the rally, Art Kariya, who was appointed by Takahashi and who, by some coincidence lived next door to Takahashi, decided to adjourn the meeting before the time was up.

The progressives started to raise a howl. Immediately, Hoko Ikeda, one of the progressive Isseis who did not live in the precinct and who has a rapier-like tongue, began to lash out at Kariya. Mr. Ikeda looks like a typical radical agitator as depicted by the Hearst

press. He has a commanding voice and manner and if he were able to speak English, he would put Harry Bridges to shame.

As the crowd began to file out, Mr. Ikeda dramatically jumped on the stairs outside of the building and began to talk in Japanese. The crowd lingered to listen to him. The Isseis were furious to the point where they wanted to assault Kariya because he had adjourned the meeting ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ without allowing a question period. Some of the Niseis in the crowd were afraid that the internal police might show up and that dire consequences would follow since soap ~~box~~ box meetings in Japanese were forbidden. After Mr. Ikeda talked for about three minutes, Iiyama who was still in the building rushed out and jumped up on the stairs and stopped Ikeda's harangue. Iiyama addressed the crowd and told them in a calm voice and in Japanese that this kind of demonstration wasn't conducive to anything but drawing more restrictions from the administration. He told the people to go home and was given a rousing cheer from the crowd. Ikeda said a few more words and finally yelled "Iiyama banzai" whereupon the crowd returned the call and began to disperse. No other rally in the center had the dramatic quality of the rally in precinct #2.

The election rally gave great impetus to the campaign in #2. Soon signs and posters appeared on walls of latrines and other buildings. The first posters to appear were the Iiyama posters. Iiyama's campaign committee also had the first Japanese posters as well. As election day drew closer the signs became more numerous. The Takahashi posters emphasized the incumbant position and the fact that he was a married man and had two children and therefore was a more substantial man. Since Iwasa was a write-in candidate his posters always played up the write-in angle. Kanehara's campaign committee consisted of only one man so he didn't do very much. Iiyama's posters emphasized the fact that he would represent all interests equally whether they be Issei

or Nisei. His campaign signs also pointed out his position on the ballot -- the first name -- mark your cross in the first square. As the intensity of the poster battle increased, Iiyama's campaign committee began to comment on the posters of the other candidates. Some of them they put into writing and placed them next to those to which they referred. For example, Takahashi had a poster which went something like this, "Don't switch horses in mid-stream." Iiyama's group put up a sign with the retort, "Why vote for a horse? Vote for a man -- Iiyama."

Many of Iiyama's supporters worked as waiters in one of the mess halls in the precinct. One day, they all blossomed out with placards and lapel signs bearing "Vote for Iiyama" slogans. The mess manager laid down the rule the next day that mess hall workers would not be permitted to campaign in the mess hall. The Iiyama campaign committee then decided to give out paper napkins to everyone going into the mess halls of the precinct with "Vote for Iiyama" signs on them but couldn't get them printed in time. The committee also had intentions of pulling some gags in the mess hall but decided against it. One that was suggested was having a man fall dramatically to the floor in a faint and while being carried out on a stretcher, mumbling, "Vote for Iiyama." ALL OF Iiyama's supporters wore lapel badges.

In the midst of the campaign, one of the members of the Iiyama strategy committee contacted the Kanehara campaign manager and induced him to ask Kanehara to withdraw from the race, since he didn't have a chance, and throw his support to Iiyama since their pledges were more or less the same. Kanehara agreed, and the next day he made huge signs in Japanese announcing his withdrawal from the race and requesting that his supporters cast their votes for Iiyama. In the meantime, the Iiyama campaign committee surreptitiously secured a list of the

names of all the eligible voters in the precinct and proceeded to divide the precinct into wards, assigning an Issei and a Nisei to contact every family unit with calling cards asking them to vote for Iiyama.

As election day drew near, it was decided by all of the Chairmen of the election committees throughout the center to hold a mass parade on the eve of election. On the day of the parade the various campaign committees worked feverishly to prepare for the grand event. The parade which was to start at Precinct #1 at 6:30 P.M., lead by the drum and bugle corps of the Boy Scouts, actually got under way at 7:00. It was prearranged that as the parade wound its way through the various precincts from #1 to #5, that each precinct would add its various candidates and the entire group finally stage a mass demonstration in front of the grandstand.

The parade was very colorful and drew a big crowd. Approximately 800 people participated in the parade itself. The event was interesting because it had both American and Japanese influences. I believe it was the first time in America that the Japanese, Issei, Nisei and Kibei, participated either singly or together in a political demonstration. Nearly all of the candidates marched in front of their delegation. It is interesting to note that the participants in the parade were almost exclusively young boys, many of the ineligible to vote. The Iiyama delegation was the only group in which Nisei of both sexes and Kibei and Issei were represented. It was also the only wholly adult group. Signs and placards, both in English and Japanese, vied with each other for recognition. Some of the participants rigged up funny costumes and in most of the delegations members had collected the tops of garbage cans, tubs, buckets, etc., and went to town.

After the demonstration in front of the grandstand, the parade broke up and some of the groups marched back to their own precincts, continuing to parade around the home area until nightfall. Of the three candidates in Precinct 2, Iiyama's campaign committee put on the best show. His delegation had three huge signs made from bed sheets donated by enthusiastic supporters. Two of these signs were in Japanese, one in English. All of the participants who didn't ~~have~~ don costumes or who weren't banging on cans or tubs, carried penants and distributed Iiyama literature. There were approximately 35-40 members in the Iiyama delegation. Of the three candidates in Precinct 2, the Takahashi group was the ~~daddest~~ daddest. His delegation numbered seven people, two of whom were members of his family and one, Ben Iijima, whom I learned later with satisfaction, was only an interested observer.

During the course of the campaign, members of the Iiyama committee were continually asked by other people why Iiyama, an out-and-out anti-fascist (always implying a Communist) received the support of the most ~~pro-fascist~~ pro-nationalist element in camp, the Issei bachelors. The stock answer of the Iiyama group was that Iiyama always stood for democracy and equality of rights and privileges long before evacuation so the Isseis trusted him to keep his word. The fact that he was a Kibei and was able to speak Japanese fluently was so important to the Issei that the redbaiting that was carried on did not deter them from supporting him.

On election day the banners which were carried in the parade the night before were placed in conspicuous places near the polling booths. All the signs had to be 100 feet away from the polls. The administration built three booths in each of the polls and furnished a ballot box. There was quite a bit of confusion at the polls in Precinct 2 because procedure was not very well organized. The Australian ballot was foreign to the Issei and the existence of a write-

in candidate added to the confusion. Since the ballots were printed in English, the Isseis did not know what to do once they received their ballot. Iiyama's campaign managers immediately made some signs in Japanese, giving instructions on how to mark the ballot and placed one in each booth. Those who wished to vote for Iwasa, the write-in candidate, were bewildered. The Iwasa people immediately went home and gathered ordinary lead pencils and started to pass them out at the polling station. but the Iiyama campaign managers protested, saying that the name should be written either in indelible pencil or in ink. The election chairman ruled likewise and each booth was furnished with an indelible pencil. The Iiyama campaign committee also demanded that the name of the ~~w~~rite-in candidate be written in English and not Japanese, and it was so ordered.

Anyone over 21 years of age, regardless of citizenship, was eligible to vote. As each voter came into the polling station to cast his vote, his name was checked against the register that had been compiled by the employment office. In doubtful cases, voters were requested to show some identification before they received their ballots. The ballots were then marked and put into the box. There was a very good turnout in Precinct 2 as in all of the other districts. Approximately 80% of the eligible voters of the center exercised their right of franchise.

The polls were open from 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. and the results announced at 9:00 that evening. Ernest Iiyama was elected Councilman from Precinct 2, garnering 392 votes, Iwasa made a surprisingly good showing by netting 188 votes, and Takahashi, the incumbent, was thoroughly repudiated with 124 votes, 64 votes less than the write-in candidate.

When the results were announced, the Iiyama forces decided to hold a victory party that night. The Kibeis who supported Iiyama had already prepared rice balls that afternoon for the party since they were so sure that Iiyama was going to win. In the midst of the party, a heated controversy arose as to the manner of celebrating victory in the community. The Kibeis wanted to hold a parade the next day with banners and posters and at the end of the demonstration thanking the people for their support. They contended that in Japan that was the custom and they wanted to conform to it. The Niseis protested, saying that such a demonstration would do more harm than good from the point of view of goodwill and unity. They maintained that the other candidates and their friends would feel as though we were rubbing it in and in view of the circumstances surrounding the contest in Precinct 2, where the contest was so sharp, it was inadvisable to hold such a demonstration. The Kibei element said that they would abide by whatever decision Iiyama chose to make. The latter clinched the matter by deciding against the demonstration.

Campaign personalities

Guy Uyama --- Mr. Uyama was one of the outstanding personalities in the center as well as in the campaign for Iiyama. An issei but a citizen by virtue of his participation in the last war, he was very active in the civic affairs in the San Francisco Japanese community prior to the evacuation. He was the commander of the Japanese American Legion post in San Francisco and was instrumental in securing passage of the Nye bill which gave the Japanese aliens who participated in the world war citizenship status. Besides his Legion activities he was involved in Boy Scout work and helped organize the drum and bugle corps in San Francisco and continued his activities in this work in the center.

About 55 years old now, he came from Japan when he was 19 years

old as a political refugee. He had anarchistic leanings and made many soap-box orations before he came to America. I believe he had some association with the Wobblies before America entered the war in 1917. He has engaged in quite of bit of muckraking and pamphleteering in the Japanese community in and around the bay area. His acquaintance with many people and his ability to speak both English and Japanese plus being an issei citizen made him an invaluable man in the Iiyama campaign committee. He was the unofficial chairman of the issei council and his knowledge of parliamentary and convention procedure which he picked up during his lobbying days in Washington and Legion meetings qualified him to be unanimously elected chairman of the constitutional Tanforan ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ convention.

Hoko Ikeda

Mr. Ikeda was perhaps the most dynamic man in the center once he opened his mouth and perhaps the most pictureque figure in the whole campaign with his Lenin like appearance with gotee and all. Prior to his evacuation he was a resident of Redwood City and a frequent contributor to "Doho" the organ of the Japanese Communist Party of America. He was a progressive but not a member of the C.P. His political leanings were more to the second international than anything else.

When the federal government asked the residents to submit their names for repatriation purposes Mr. Ikeda complied. Asked by his friends why? , he replied, once he got to Japan he would go to China and fight the Japs. He was an issei and though he could not speak English very well he understood it and he was well acquainted with democratic procedure. I believe he was a reader of the Peoples World.

Mr. Iseyama

Mr. Iseyama was one of the "respectable" isseis who was an active

supporter of Iiyama. He was a resident of Berkeley and I believe an active leader in Berkeley Japanese Christian circles. He was extremely valuable in securing votes among the Berkeley people since he was a well standing man in the community.

Mr. Nishimura

Mr. Nishimura was an old time socialist and was a marked man as far as the Japanese in California was concerned. He was the editor and publisher of a liberal Japanese paper in Sacramento about five years ago.

Ichiro Akiya

Mr. Akiya was perhaps the most ~~instrumental~~ instrumental figure in electing Iiyama. He was a kibe and was single and lived with the bachelors in the dorm and later moved with them to barrack #14. He spoke English and Japanese with equal facility. Unlike most kibeis Akiya was an ardent antifascist. He was a graduate of a Japanese university and was active in the student movement in his undergraduate days. He came to America during the early 30's and belongs to that group of kibeis who were infused with Marxist philosophy in Japan.

Marxism was very popular among the intellectuals in Japan in the 20's and early 30's and many kibeis who were active in the student movement and who returned to America during the early 30's continued their activities in America. Many of them joined the C.P., infact, they constitute the backbone of the Japanese C.P. in America. The kibeis who returned to America after 1935 are the most rabid pro fascist element in the Japanese community, so in the kibe we find both extremes of political thought. Prior to his evacuation Akiya was employed by the Sumitomo bank in San Francisco. This is suprising in that Akiya was fairly active in the Japanese C.P. circles in San Francisco. Hewas a fairly well known resident in the S.F. Japanese Community.