

Jamie Tsuchiyama

- 1 -

AFTERMATH OF THE STRIKE

Wednesday, November 25, 1942

In the final negotiations with the administration on Tuesday, November 24, I mentioned in my report on the strike that the Executive Committee of the Emergency Council presented the following three proposals as a guarantee of a better Poston in the future:

1. Establish a Public Relations Committee to mediate with and settle all problems affecting personal reputations and damages out of court.

2. The Poston residents be given the right to select and appoint all evacuee personnel in the administrative and important positions.

3. Establish a City Planning Board based upon the Emergency Committee within the framework of the WRA which shall create the necessary administrative, legislative and economic organizations.

In accordance with this on the following evening each of the 36 blocks in Camp I held a block meeting to elect one Nisei and one Issei representative to the City Planning Board to set up the machinery for self-government in Poston.

Thursday, Nov. 26, 1942

The first meeting of the City Planning Board was called to order about 11:00 A.M. in Sumo Headquarters in block 27 by Andy Sugimoto, vice-chairman of the Emergency Council, in the absence of the chairman, Omori, who had not been reelected. At that time each delegate presented his credential which was an affidavit

signed by the residents of his block assuring him full support and confidence in his representation.

Sugimoto opened the meeting by calling for an election of a chairman and vice-chairman of an Executive Committee upon whose shoulders would rest the real task of formulating a self-governing body in Poston taking into consideration all elements instrumental in the strike just ended. At that time Nagai was elected chairman; Sugimoto, vice-chairman, Matsubara, Japanese secretary; and Amano, English secretary. It was decided to have twelve members in this committee -- six Nisei and six Issei to be selected by their respective groups. The Issei elected were Matsumoto, Takahashi, Mitani, Okamoto, Nakamura and Niiseki; and the Nisei were Kawashima, Ogawa, Ishimaru, Nomura and Yahiro.

Friday, Nov. 27, 1942

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the City Planning Board was held in the morning in Sumo Headquarters at which time various plans submitted by Mitani, Matsumoto, Sugimoto and Yahiro were discussed. The differences in plans are reported to have been very slight and with minor changes that submitted by Sugimoto was adopted. This plan called for no alterations in the former council setup but provided for the creation of three new bodies: a Central Executive Committee, an Honor Court and a Labor Relations Board. The Central Executive Committee was to be chosen from the Executive Committee elected the day before and was to have final decisive powers pertaining to ^{the} internal order and welfare of the community. All members of this committee had to be

qualified by the Honor Court and might be recalled by a two-thirds majority vote of their respective councils. This body was to work closely with the project director at all times. The Labor Relations Board was created to work hand in hand with the Employment Office and was specifically charged to pass judgment on the ability of all applicants for key positions. The Honor Court was to be a people's honor court unaffiliated with any political or labor organization.

Saturday, Nov. 28, 1942

The principal event of the morning session of the City Planning Board in Sumo Headquarters was the address delivered by W. Wade Head, project director, which I have already quoted in my report on the strike as illustrative of the types of fear harbored by the administration at that time but which for the sake of completeness I shall reproduce here:

Head: I am glad to see you. I consider this group as representative. I consider you as representing a block, two of you from each one. I know that you will take back to the people what I am going to talk about. I have just two points to make. The point I have been trying to make all along is this. Poston is a part of the United States. It is a part of the state of Arizona. You must never forget that the F.B.I. come in whenever it wants. I do not call them. I have nothing to do with calling them. You must remember that and see that it gets back to the people. The F.B.I. has complete authority over all of us. We have to cooperate with that and all other law-enforcing agencies.

But I want to point out the community responsibility. We don't want any more unfair attacks, no more beatings. We're holding this committee responsible, this committee that has been set up here. We are holding you responsible to look into these matters. We are ready to help you. We are ready to arrange for the transfer of undesirables, or whatever other steps may be necessary.

Now I want to say something about what this had done to public opinion on the outside. I don't know whether you are aware of it or not. I have to say that it will take a year to overcome what has been done. We want to overcome that. Let's do

all in our power to prove that this thing couldn't be helped. That it had to work out this way.

There is another thing. Mr. Kennedy has urged all people to reapply for jobs as soon as possible. You must remember that this will delay the payroll and the colthing allowances and many other things for at least two weeks. You're responsible for seeing that all this gets going in the right way, that we get together on a better basis than ever.

I hope that one thing develops -- a closer association between you and a close friendship between the administration and the people. I don't want you to think that when a man comes to ask for a couple of bars of soap, that he is to be put down as an informer. We don't want informers around here, we want people who are working for the good of the community. We don't want people who don't feel free to help the community. We want to have only one group in Poston, that is, the administration and the people as one.

Let's get together. I don't want to come around investigating people. People have the idea that we are hiring informers. I want to tell you that as long as I am here, there will be no one on the payroll informing anybody. If I can get your backing I want ~~xxxxxxx~~ it to enforce law and order. I don't want to have you calling anyone an informer or a dog. I don't believe there is one in Poston. I don't believe it. If we have people being afraid that is no good. It is a bad thing to frighten people into things. Let's not have intimidation. If the Central Committee upholds its promises to me, it must name a committee to see that these things don't happen. Let's not have any more talk about somebody being agitators and let's not have talk about informers. A year from now or six months from now, let's be able to say that we didn't have any agitators and informers.

We've got to make Poston a decent place to live in. We've got to have the best community in the U.S. I was talking to a mother the other day. She had a 17 year old son and when she said something to him, he bawled her out. That shouldn't happen. It is up to you to see that the young people are kept busy.

Now the two points that I want to make are: (1) The project director does not have the authority over the F.B.I. They can come in; (2) The responsibility of this group -- protection of the people and to get word to the block people on an equal basis status. Get rid of the idea, that people who talk to us are informers. Please don't accuse people falsely. It is up to your community.

As soon as Rev. Mitani ceased translating his speech Head stood up and said: "Mr. Chairman, I wonder if Mr. Haas (the project attorney) could talk with this group on WRA. Would they meet with him on the WRA angles of the council organization? We've

got to keep within that. Then another thing. I would like to get the names and addresses of these people here so that we can talk with you and become better acquainted". Hidemi Ogawa, vice-chairman of the pre-strike City Council, and many others looked curiously at Head as he said that. Whispers of "Head doesn't trust us", "Head thinks we were the gang leaders in the strike", could be heard in certain sections of the room.

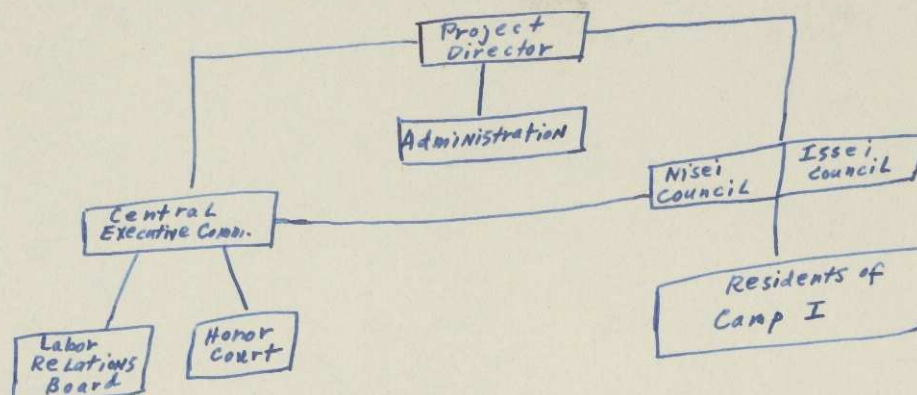
Nagai, chairman of the Executive Committee, then spoke in Japanese acknowledging Head's speech which Mitani translated as follows:

Trust and confidence make better people. It is the foundation of an ethical society. There can be no good society when there is suspicion between people. If we can act on a basis of trust and confidence that is the beginning of civilization. If any country can build on that it will be the most civilized. We ask you to have full confidence in us and we will have full trust and confidence in you. In all the points which you mentioned we will cooperate one hundred per cent.

In the afternoon session after much discussion the seventy-two delegates approved the creation of the three new boards. The Central Executive Committee consisting of four Issei and four Nisei was then elected by the Executive Committee from its own members, the Issei elected being Nagai, Okamoto, Nakamura, and Niiseki; and the Nisei, Sugimoto, Yahiro, Ogawa and Katow. The Labor Relations Board also consisting of four Issei and four Nisei was next appointed by the Central Executive Committee from the rest of the delegation. The Issei members selected were Kadowaki, Mitani, K. Matsumoto and Nakachi; the Nisei, Ono, Yanai, Fukuyama and Nakai. The formation of the Honor Court was left to the following nine delegates, each representing a quad: Ishimaru (quad 1), Tazawa (2), Mitani (3), Ishikawa (4),

Nakamura (5), Takahashi (6), Yahiro (7), Kawabe (8) and Masukane (9).

The political set-up envisaged by the City Planning Board on November 28, 1942, may be graphically summarized thus:



Wednesday, December 2, 1942

Mizushima, Issei representative from block 45, visited X in the evening and consulted him at great length on the political future of Poston. He informed X that there was much dissatisfaction among certain delegates in the City Planning Board based on political jealousy. About ten of them including Tsukamoto, Matsumoto (not to be mistaken with K. Matsumoto of L.R.B.), Kato and himself were planning to stage a coup d'etat in the next City Planning Board meeting to overthrow the Central Executive Committee. X replied that eventually the Issei Advisory Board and the Nisei Community Council would return and his participation in the coup d'etat might result in political suicide for him. Mizushima finally decided to remain insignificant and say nothing at the next meeting. At that time he was also greatly concerned with the future of judo, sumo, shibai, flower arrangement classes, etc. and wished to know if the cut in their staffs was due to a change in administrative policy or conformance with fundamental

WRA policy. X intimated that it was in all probability revenge on the part of certain administrative officials, especially John Powell, director of Community Welfare and Activities, who was reported during the strike to be greatly incensed at the "rough" treatment of his "ultra-liberal" group.

Thursday, Dec. 3, 1942

A meeting of the City Planning Board was scheduled for the morning but only a few appeared so it was postponed until the following day. It was reported at the time that the coup d'etat group had intimidated a number of the delegates into not coming.

Friday, Dec. 4, 1942

The main feature of the City Planning Board meeting held in Ward 7 of the Hospital in the afternoon was the cross-examination of the Labor Relations Board by the coup d'etat group. Hamagiwa, the Issei delegate from block 28, started the fireworks by inquiring of the L.R.B. if the administrative policy was to decrease the number of people employed in the project. There was every indication toward such a move so he desired to know the attitude of the L.R.B. concerning this -- more specifically did the L.R.B. favor the decrease in personnel of judo, sumo, shibai, flower arrangement classes, etc.? K. Matsumoto of the L.R.B. stood up in its defense and claimed that its stand was to reshuffle jobs so that there would be a more equitable distribution of jobs as far as ability was concerned. He proceeded to explain that in his Goh Department there was a number of incapable instructors who had to be weeded out. Nakachi, chairman of the L.R.B., then rose to continue its defense but Matsumoto of block 35, one of

the coup d'etat group, interrupted and began accusing the L.R. B. of assuming dictatorial powers. Another Issei stood up and maintained that it was not a democratic way of doing business -- that the L.R.B. was not representative of the people. At that point Rev. Mitani, executive secretary of the L.R.B. and the guiding power behind it, indignantly claimed that the L.R.B. was a democratic organization since the Central Executive Committee which had appointed them had been elected by the Executive Committee who in turn had been elected by the 72 delegates who themselves had been elected by the block residents. The L.R.B. members furthermore had been appointed by the Central Executive Committee from the remainder of the 72 delegates and were themselves representatives of their respective blocks. Accusations flew back and forth for several hours in fiery Japanese (meanwhile the Nisei delegates were huddled in their corner not daring to interrupt) until the L.R. B. members in disgust offered to hand in their resignation. The C.E.C. then felt that since it was responsible for their appointment its integrity was being challenged and decided to resign with them.

At that point a ten minute caucus of Nisei delegates was called. Dr. Saito, former city councilman and leading Nisei figure at the meeting demanded that everything be translated into English because he feared that the Issei were taking advantage of their language disability to pull a fast one over them. He maintained that after all no one could do business in three days and a frequent change of delegates might have unfavorable repercussions on the administrative side. The Nisei thus decided to support the existing organizations. When the meeting reconvened a strong vote of confidence was given to the L.R.B. and

C.E.C. by the Nisei and many of the Issei delegates. At that time the members promised to support and cooperate in every undertaking of the C.E.C.

Monday, Dec. 7, 1942

The City Planning Board dissolved in the afternoon after empowering the 36 Nisei delegates in that body to constitute a sort of temporary Temporary Community Council to bridge the gap between the City Planning Board and the more permanent Temporary Community Council, which was to be elected shortly. In blocks where the Nisei representatives to the City Planning Board were former City councilmen it was reported that reelection was unnecessary since Head had never formally accepted the resignation of the City Council on November 18 (Evans accepted the resignation verbally -- therefore not strictly legal.) but where the delegates had changed a new election in their blocks was held essential. On this day the Issei members of the City Planning Board became the Issei Council.

Tuesday, Dec. 15, 1942

The second election of delegates to the Temporary Community Council was held in every block in the evening. At that time the following were elected (checks denote reelection):

Block 2: Elmer Tanigoshi

3: Frank Fukuda

4: Masaki M. Nakayama

5: John Yakura

6: Paul Higashi

Block 11: Teruo Kasuga

12: Ray Furuta

13: Motoi Murai

✓ 14: Robert Nakamura

✓ 15: Dr. T.G. Ishimaru

16: Richard Nishimoto

17: George Fukushima

✓ 18: George Hiura

19: Masao Konya

21: Dr. Frank Saito (declined)

n22: Franklyn Sugiyama

26: Ernest M. Kozuma

27: Not reported

✓ 28: George Fujii

30: Sumi Okubo

31: Ted T. Hata

32: Not reported

35: James Ito

✓ 36: Hiroshi Amano

37: George Sakamoto

38: Not reported.

✓ 39: Frank Kuwahara

42: Jimmy Eno

43: Jack Kohama

✓ 44: Yukito Murakami

✓ 45: Seiji Nomura

✓ 46: Frank T. Tanaka

47: Dr. R.H. Iwata

53: Harry Kumagai

54: Arthur Takemoto

✓ 59: Bob Uragami

60: Akira Aizawa

It is interesting to note that of the former 36 councilmen only ten were returned to office. This is partly traceable to the fact that many of them became so disgusted during the strike with "dirty politics" and refused to run or incurred the distrust of their blocks by their passive participation in the strike and were consequently not reelected. Furthermore, the more prominent ones had been absorbed by the three newly created boards -- Andy Sugimoto, Hidemi Ogawa, and Smoot Katow by the Central

Executive Committee, and Ray Ono and Joe Nakai by the Labor Relations Board.

Wednesday, Dec. 16, 1942

The first meeting of the Temporary Community Council after the strike was held in the Conference Room of Ad. Bldg. 3 at 1:30 P.M. Since I consider this meeting rather significant in clarifying certain issues I am giving a detailed description. Head's brief opening address, for one thing, settles rather definitely the relationship of the Central Executive Committee and the Community Council to the administration. For another, the meeting exposes a change in administrative reins. Kennedy, one of the most active representatives of the WRA faction in the administration initiates a "new era" in Poston, while the Indian Service clique which had dominated the council up to the time of the strike sits back and assumes a "waiting to see what happens" attitude. The meeting also portrays the reluctance of Nisei delegates in holding responsible jobs (in this case the chairmanship of the city council) which will be the butt of abuse in case of crises.

Minutes of the Meeting

The meeting was called to order in the Conference Room with Dr. Ishimaru, former chairman of the Temporary Community Council, as temporary chairman. All of the newly elected Nisei councilmen were present and about fifteen Issei representatives could be seen sitting in the back of the room. The Caucasians present were Head, Evans, Kennedy and Spicer. Ishimaru called the roll of Nisei councilmen, then asked them to stand in front

of the room to be sworn in by Head. No roll of the Issei was taken and there was no ceremony for swearing them in. Ishimaru asked Head to address the group after they had been sworn in.

Head: I didn't know I was going to make a speech and I still don't know what I am going to say. Let me say this, that you are now in politics and that carries with it the responsibility. There is in Poston now a Central Executive Committee which is going to serve as an advisory body to you. It is going to work closely with the project director and the council. Now, you are a legislative body. You will make laws for the welfare of the community. The Central Executive Committee are not lawmakers. They are going to act as a liaison group between the administration and the community. We want to have very close relationships. We have also a Labor Relations Board which is going to work as an advisory group with us. Now, let me say something about a third thing. Many people are talking about informers, but we don't want to have any informers. We will not have them. We only want cooperation in the community and it's your responsibility to help this along.

Ishimaru: I believe that nominations for chairman are now in order.

F. Tanaka: I nominate Dr. Saito.

F. Kuwahara: I nominate ^Dr. Ishimaru.

-----: Nominates Hiroshi Amano.

Amano: I I wish to decline. I am too busy. I have too many things to do.

Ishimaru: We will see about that. I believe, Frank, that Dr. Saito has declined to be on the council. I will explain in regard to my own plan later on. Let me say right here my name will be dropped from the nominations.

-----: I nominate Teruo Kasuga.

Kasuga: I'm declined.

Ishimaru: Why do you decline?

Kasuga: I think I am too busy.

Ishimaru: We are all too busy. I think the council wants you to serve its responsibility to the community. Now I would like to say about myself. I can't under any circumstances be chairman of the council or chairman of any committee.

I am at the crossroads of misunderstanding. There have been things said and I think you all know what I refer to. I am in no position to take an office until this misunderstanding has been cleared up. (Ishimaru has come around from behind the table to the front and stands speaking with a great deal of force and emotion).

Kuwahara: Well, I believe there has been a gross misunderstanding. That misunderstanding should be cleared up. I think you are outspoken, but you know what to do. I think that you ought to serve as chairman if you are elected.

Ishimaru: I appreciate that, ^{rank}, but as long as this misunderstanding exists I will not accept any office. That is plain. (There are murmurs throughout the council -- "But somebody's got to take it", "Who's going to take this anyway?", "Can't let everybody decline", etc.)

Ishimaru: The nominations are still open. (George Fujii is nominated and immediately declines. Frank Sugiyama is nominated and promptly declines and says is not capable. Nomura is nominated and declines. Hiroshi Amano is nominated and declines.)

The council is going to decide whether any of you is capable. You have to have a good reason to decline. (Somebody moves that the nominations be closed. Ishimaru closes the nominations and secret ballot is taken with the result that Sugiyama is elected for the chairmanship. Nominations for vice-chairman are made and the following nominated: Amano, Frank Tanaka, Kozuma and Mimura. Secret ballot results in the election of Amano as vice-chairman. Nominations for secretary are George Fujii and T. Kasuga, Fujii winning the election. Sugiyama takes the chair and reads from a few notes he has jotted down during the elections).

Sugiyama: You elected me to this and I will do what I can. We are ready for a new era in Poston. We must have faith in the community and in the administration. I don't think I am capable, but I will do it if I can. Mr. Kennedy, I believe you have something to say.

Kennedy: NEWLY ELECTED COUNCILMEN AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE OF POSTON:
On your shoulders rests a tremendous responsibility, a responsibility to faithfully and honestly represent the people of your blocks who elected you, a responsibility of keeping them at all times informed of your acts and deliberations, your hopes and aspirations, a responsibility to bring the needs of your people to this council for their consideration and to the Project Administration for action.

I am deeply honored that the representative of the Labor Division has been asked to speak to you today, and yet

I think it only proper and fitting.

A great fighter for democracy and a great American, Abraham Lincoln, said that Labor is the foundation of society, that Labor is greater than and superior to Capital, that without Labor capital or civilization could never have existed.

The dignity of labor in Poston must be raised to the high position it deserves.

I understand your deep hurt, I understand your feeling of frustration and insecurity, but sympathy will not help the situation. The future of a race of people is in your hands. Regardless of the outcome of the present struggle, for the great majority of you, your home is in America. America is the land of your destiny and the destiny of your children and your families. I have known the Japanese people for many years. They are a proud, capable and a resourceful race. Your fathers and mothers made California bloom under the most adverse circumstances. I know that you will not let them down. Any attitude of defeatism must be conquered.

There are many who seem to think that discrimination started with Pearl Harbor. That is not true. You have always encountered instances of discrimination. You have felt the discrimination that exists against minority groups throughout the world. America is not a perfect nation. We are a long ways from a true democracy, but we are further along the road than any nation on earth. American and the American ideals of democracy and racial equality are the hope and the salvation of the civilized world. Those ideals are worth fighting for. We who love democracy must fight for them.

Our president said: "We are fighting today for security, for progress, and for peace, not only for ourselves, but for all men, not only for one generation, but for all generations. We are fighting for the Four Freedoms:

1. Freedom of Speech.
2. Freedom of Religion.
3. Freedom from Want.
4. Freedom from Fear.

These freedoms are the rights of men of every creed and every race, wherever they live. This is their heritage, long withheld."

What can we do?

Here we are in Poston, shoved off in a corner of the desert, maligned, oppressed and ignored.

We can do this: We can show the world that we are not down, that it can't lick us. We can show the spirit that our fathers have shown. If an injustice has been done, we can show the nation (when it settles down) that the people of Japanese blood have kept the faith, kept their ideals and kept their chins up.

All is not lost because we're in Poston.

Many of you will have the opportunity to go out in America. It won't be easy, but if you have the guts, you can make it. Most of us will probably be in Poston for the duration, which may be many years away.

What is your future?

I say your future is what you will make it.

Here in Poston, in spite of physical handicaps, we can produce, we can make things, we can grow crops, we can learn, we can raise our standard of living -- and more important, we can develop a truly democratic community.

This center is for you, not for the administration. This is your community -- make of it what you will -- a happy, healthy, self-governed productive settlement -- or a shambles, rife with distrust, suspicion, and hate. The choice is yours.

There are those who do not understand, who would discourage us and steer us from our path.

I can only say to you -- educate them, teach them through work and example. Patiently explain, and if there are still those who will not understand -- deal firmly with them.

We have a chance here for one of the world's greatest experiments in Democracy. We have 17,000 people of many ages, many faiths, and many backgrounds. We have farmers and farm laborers, we have merchants, artists, teachers, and professional people, all reduced to a common level. All of these people congregate together three times a day -- I refer to the mess halls. What an opportunity for discussion, for education, for understanding, for leadership. What an opportunity for forums and for you who are the representatives of the people to take back to the people your problems, actions, plans, and deliberations to counsel and advise. The rolls of the administration in Poston is the protection of life and property and the supplying of technicians and teachers to help you to a fuller life. The government of Poston, the kind of life you will lead is up to you.

I have at times been shocked at your willingness to be governed and at the ease with which you are ready to give up. I know that there have been impractical administrative instructions issued. I know that there has been no clear economic base established. Hasn't a great deal of it been our fault? How many proposals have we sent to Washington?

We must have one Poston. We must have understanding between the first and second generation. We must have clear and constructive thinking, plans, and proposals. We must have happy industrious and productive people. We must have a strong democratic government headed by intelligent, courageous leaders. There are many immediate problems facing you. Poston and the future of the Japanese race in America is in your hands.

We must not fail.

You will not fail.

(Kennedy's speech is interrupted by the arrival of Andy Sugimoto who talks to Sugiyama in a loud whisper. When Kennedy finishes, there is considerable applause and when it dies down, Sugiyama announces abruptly that the remainder of the council meeting will take place in Ward 7 of the Hospital. I later learned that the place had been changed because a number of Issei representatives who had gathered outside the administration building because of lack of chairs in the Conference Room had asked Sugimoto to request the chairman to change the place of meeting to Ward 7 so that all the Issei and some members of the Central Executive Committee could be accommodated.

The meeting reassembles in Ward 7 where there are present Jim Yahiro and Andy Sugimoto of the Central Executive Committee. Miss Kinoshita, head of Housing Dept. is present and delivers a talk on what she calls the "crisis in housing in Camp I." She mentions that there are 500 families in Poston I who are living with other families. Sixteen of these are living in four family groups. There are 21 families in unpartitioned apartments

etc. She concludes: "We have been waiting for seven months for something to be done about housing. It is up to you to get something done". Amano asks what Miss Kinoshita thinks should be done about this.)

Kinoshita: There have been many suggestions. One is to make single men move out, so that families would live in their apartments. The partitions would be necessary to make those usable. (The chairman interrupts to say that he is glad that Miss Kinoshita has presented the problem but that at present the Council has no machinery to act in terms of the solution and that the thing will have to be taken care of by the various committees which would be appointed today. He then announces that Dr. Cary is going to speak on "School Problems".

Cary: I was notified a few minutes before this meeting so what I say might not be systematic. There are two matters which I want to bring up. First, the problem of school buildings in Poston I and second, the problem of teaching. In connection with the first problem, I want to say that the high school in Poston I has suffered because it was so greatly spread out. It produced discouragement among the pupils. They have to walk too far and it breaks up the routine, which they have been used to in connection with school. Their habits have been upset and the children feel strange. Now, how can we solve this problem? There are few possibilities. One is to clear a whole block. Move people to camps II and III. For my own part I doubt whether this can be done. Second, we might shift community activities to the fringe of town. This would be difficult, but it is one way to bring the classes into the center. Third, we can finish one of our school buildings. If we could finish the elementary school that would take care of the high school classes. Roy Anderson has told me that there has been enough materials, but we need more workers for cementing and carpentering. It appears that if we could get workers the elementary plant would move right ahead. We would have space for the high school in a few months. I know that the place for schools if there had been a place, it would have kept the people's feelings up. It would have kept their spirits raised. I have worked hard to do this. I have worked very hard. I have stayed up nights, but I don't want sympathy. I want workers to go ahead on this.

The second problem is teaching. When the middle-aged group starts to move out, they will include a lot of the evacuee teachers. Now, you know as well as I that you can't train teachers overnight. I am going to make a plea to them that they stay on the job, that they stay with us Caucasians until we are not needed here. I am going to make a plea that they stay on their job through the year.

Amano: I think perhaps that if payment was made the same as for Caucasian teachers that that would lead them to stay. Then the problem would be solved.

Cary: I have two answers to that. In the first place, I am not the one to say what they are going to be paid. That is done by Washington.

Amano: But can't we recommend that such an arrangement be made to WRA? I think you know that the people lost confidence in the administration during the summer and one thing was that they asked them to make adobe. They went out and worked hard, but the schools were not completed. Can it be that the necessary materials are here if they go out to work? I am just saying what the people think.

Cary: The other thing I wanted to say is that some of the children are the brothers and sisters of the evacuee teachers. From the standpoint of the children the evacuee teachers should be just as interested as I am. If you put it on a money basis, that puts it pretty low, doesn't it?

Amano: Yes, it does, but it gives the incentive.

Cary: Let me say this. Many of you lost a great deal, but many of you received higher salaries than I have received all my life. I am a school teacher. Now, let me say this. When I took this job I had to pay my way here. I came at a great sacrifice. I'll have to pay my way back. I took a loss in salary. If I am willing to make a sacrifice as I have done, you'd think that they would be willing to make a few sacrifices.

-----: You say that the lack of schools was due to lack of workers, but it was planned that the schools would go up. The people turned out and produced more adobe than anyone had ever seen produced before. There's no question about getting them to work if there is good faith. Let me tell you that if you ask cooperation you will get it. (Cary receives a note and says that he has to go immediately. He leaves amidst loud applause.)

Sugiyama: I have a memorandum here from the Central Executive Committee. They say that we are to decide on which plan is to be used on the camouflage net project. They suggest that it be done in the following way (reads memo):

- (1) That the regular wages be paid to the individuals who work and \$20 be deducted for their subsistence by WRA.
- (2) A quota of 15% be gotten from each block to work on the project.
- (3) The larger families be given first consideration and in cases where the man is not able to work or is in

an internment camp, the older one be given the job.
(4) If there's more than a quota from any block the workers be rotated in groups on a monthly basis.
(5) Each worker in the project donate a small sum to his block for various purposes. Are any members of the Central Executive Committee here? We could cross examine these people for our satisfaction to find out why they make this suggestion.

Amano: This is so important a matter that I don't think it can be decided here. I move that we take the whole question back to our blocks.

Sugiyama: Is there any discussion on this point? (There is silence until Kennedy rises and asks if he can have about four minutes of the time of the council. He goes to the front of the council and addresses it).

Kennedy: I have a little proposal to make. There's a great danger in taking this back to the block when the people don't know what the issues are. I propose that Camp I set up a committee who would meet with Camps II and III find out the facts, issues, and arguments and list them all. If you do that you will cut down the confusion. This has to be done in an efficient manner in conjunction with the other two units. If this isn't done the units may arrive at different conclusions and this will result in complete confusion.

Sugiyama: Mr. Kennedy has given a good solution. We will make a committee. Are there any nominations for the camouflage committee?

Kuwahara: I move that the chairman appoint a committee to collaborate with II and III and get information and refer it to the council.

Sugiyama: How many members are in the committee?

Kuwahara: I leave that to the chairman.

Sugiyama: I will appoint five members then right now. (Calls Fujii and Amano up to the council table and they confer. They call Kennedy up and asks him if there's any time limit on the decision. He says that there is not and as he leaves the table Jim Yahiro comes up. As Kennedy returns to his seat in the room he turns to Spicer and me and says: "I know why Yahiro is up there. He is going to tell them that this should be in the hands of the Labor Relations Board and not in the hands of the Council Committee." While the chairman is conferring with Amano and Fujii, the Issei begin a discussion which is carried on entirely in Japanese. The gist of the discussion is: "Should the Issei meet separately from the Nisei council?" There are many speeches by Issei

in Japanese but nothing is said by any Nisei councilman. It is apparently decided by the Isséi that they prefer to meet separately from the Nisei council in Sumo Headquarters in block 27.)

Amano: We are going to make up the regular committees of the council who will work in conjunction with the Issei representatives and others. I am going to pass out a list of the committees. You should check on committees you would want to be on and tomorrow the committees will be made up.

During the Japanese talk mentioned above Kennedy gets an idea. ^He turns to us and says that the way to get around the language difficulty in the Nisei-Issei council would be to have a two chamber system like the U.^S. House of Representatives and the ^Senate. Each body could initiate bills and any bill will have to pass both houses before being presented to the Project Director as a recommendation. If there was disagreement between the two houses then the defeated bill could be brought up in joint committee meetings, rediscussed and compromises arrived at.

The council meeting broke up in considerable confusion with no formal adjourn^Yment. Many councilmen appeared greatly disturbed in regard to the relationship of the council to the Central ~~E~~xecutive Committee. ^They wondered what ^Head meant in the short talk in this connection and felt that there would have to be clarification. ^Kennedy also seemed annoyed. He claimed that he had purposely avoided mentioning the C.^E.C. in his speech - that he preferred to ignore it and that he hoped the council would start out with a clean slate in no way tied up with the C.^E.^C.

Tuesday, Dec. 22, 1942

Head issued the following statement in the Press Bulletin clarifying the status of the Central Executive Committee and

the Temporary Community Council:

TO THE RESIDENTS OF POSTON AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:

The election of the Temporary Community Council of Unit 1 affords the opportunity to clarify some misunderstandings which have arisen regarding evacuee government:

(1) Only one official body is recognized by the administration under the War Relocation Authority rules. That body is the duly elected Community Council which is authorized to adopt and transmit directly to the project director for his action recommendations in matters affecting the welfare of the residents of Poston.

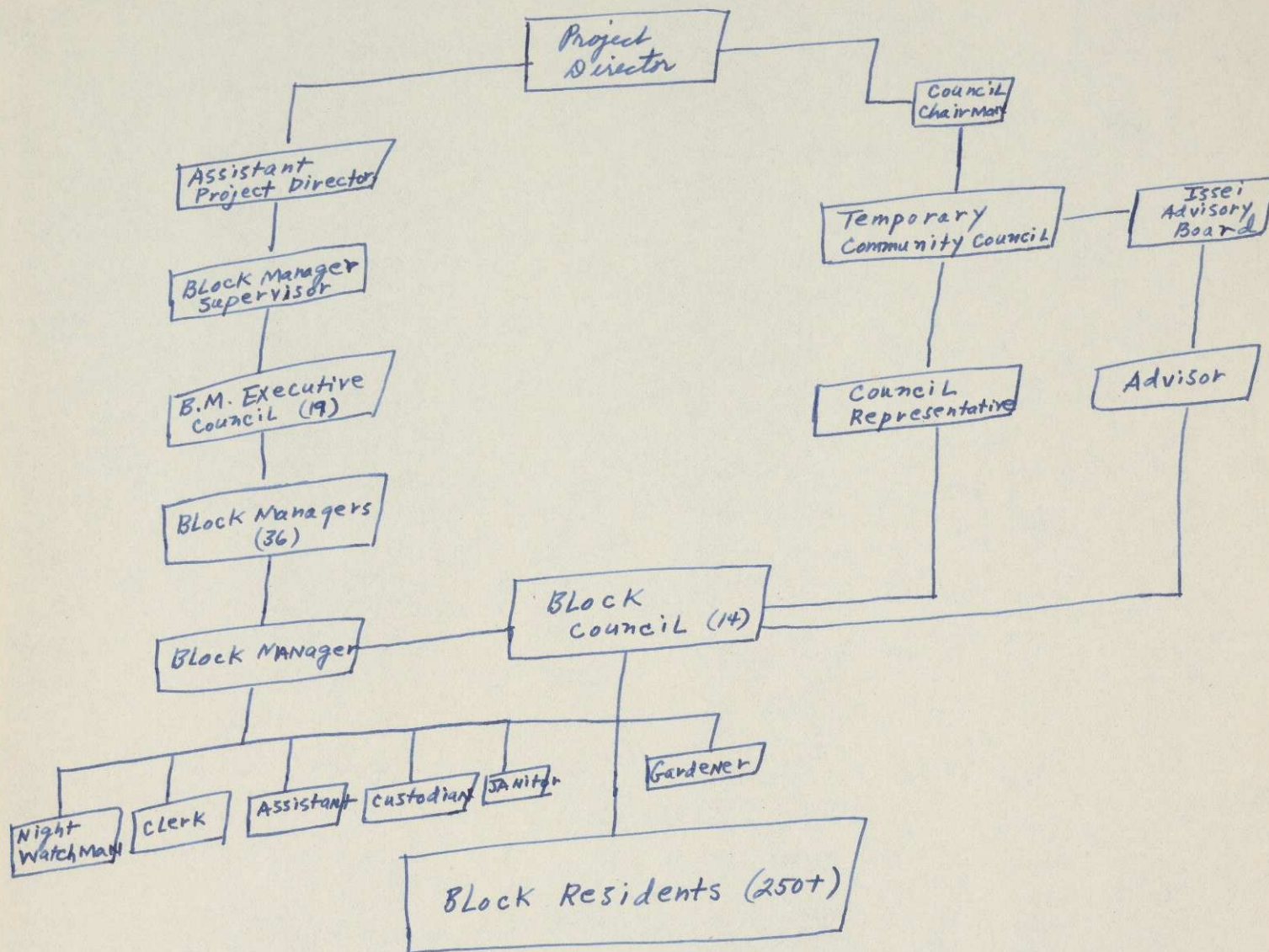
(2) On December 17, the Community Council of Unit I decided that the 36 Issei members of the Temporary Civic Planning Board would be continued as the Issei advisors to the Community Council, except in cases where a written complaint is filed with the council by residents of the block.

(3) The Central Executive Committee has been retained by me as personal advisors in matters affecting Unit I and will continue to serve in that capacity.

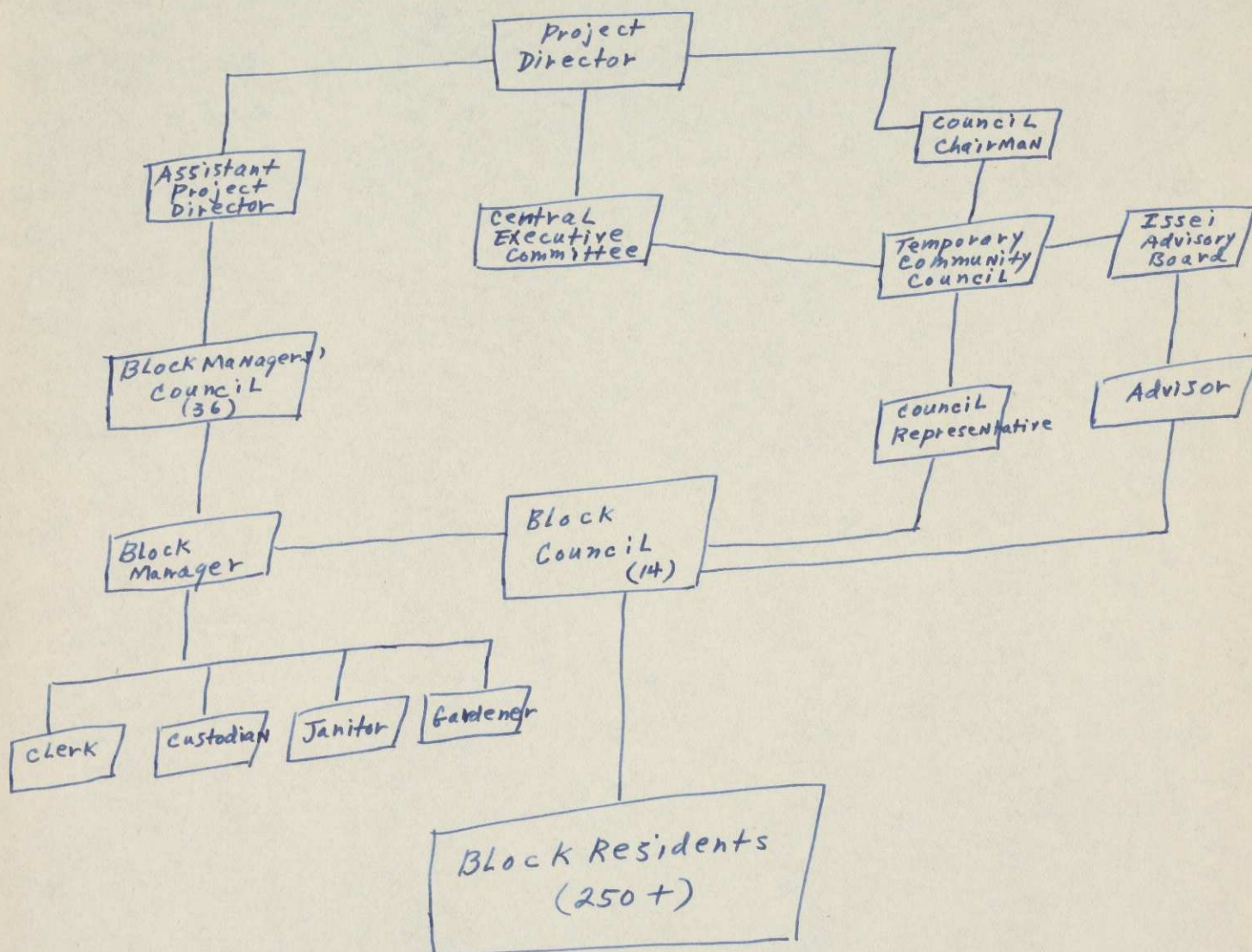
W. Wade Head,
Project Director.

The political structure of Camp I after the election of the second Temporary Community Council on December 15 did not differ markedly from that in force in the pre-strike period. Except for the addition of the Central Executive Committee as an advisory body to the project director and a decrease in the staff of the block manager's office (e.g. the absence of the assistant block manager and the shifting of the night watchman to the Internal Security Department) there has been no noticeable change. With the proposed inauguration of the Permanent Community Council on February first it is rumored that the block manager's staff will be cut down to two and there is a possibility that the Central Executive Committee may be abolished.

Pre-Strike Political Structure



Post-strike Political Structure



Robert Spencer

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ADDENDA

to the Tsuchiyama Description of the Poston Incident.

The following information was obtained from several sources at Gila. The Poston strike was the first event of this kind which took place in a Relocation Center and for this reason perhaps interest at Gila among the evacuee population was very keen. Upon my return from Poston a number of people came to me asking for details about the incident there. I told them just what had happened, without going into any of the reasons as I understood them. Mr. Landward, head of the Welfare Department at this time, received a good deal of information regarding the Poston incident from various people with whom he had dealings and the statements he made to me were corroborated in conversations with Ken Tashiro, the editor of the paper and Mr. Miura, Insurance Advisor, who in the pre-evacuation days had had a good many dealings with the Orange County people. I submit the following information for what it is worth as back-ground to the Poston strike incident. Kay Nishimura, Larry Kurasaki, and a man mentioned by Miss Tsuchiyama as Mr. Momita were three individuals against whom the group sentiment was directed and indeed the strike came about over the arrest of the assailants of Kay Nishimure, Fujii Uchida.

The background of the Poston strike is to be traced to pre-evacuation disagreements and arises out of ^{the} ill-feeling of the Orange County and Imperial Valley communities against the three individuals named above, particularly Nishimure and Kurasaki.

With the outbreak of the war, December 7, 1941 there was a group in Los Angeles in the J. A. C. L. who felt very dissatisfied over the stand taken by the J. A. C. L. in relation to expressions of patriotism and the promise of the loyalty of the Japanese. It was felt that Saburo Kido, Nobu Kawai of Pasadena and others who were leaders in the

Page 2.

J. A. C. L. were not being sufficiently active in assuring the Government ~~of~~ and the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the staunch loyalties of the Japanese residents of Southern California. It was felt too that stronger expression should be made. Kurasaki broke away from the Los Angeles chapter of the J.A.C.L. and founded an organization which he called the Anti-Axis League. I do not know where Kay Nishimura was living at this time. It may possibly be that he was living in Imperial Valley. At any rate, Nishimura sided with Kurasaki in the formation of the League and they ~~are~~ were able to swing a small membership from J.A.C.L. partisans. The movement got under way in Los Angeles but spread through Orange County and Imperial Valley. The purpose of the organization was to express openly the loyalty of the Japanese and to report to the F.B.I. such Japanese who were not pro-American in their war sentiment. Thus Kay Nishimura and Kurasaki set up an organization which ~~reveled~~ revealed in Southern California, for a month or two after the war started and prior to evacuation, the J.A.C.L.. The result was a definite split in the Southern California area just prior to evacuation in the Nisei and particularly J.A.C.L. partisan ranks. The two founders of the Anti-Axis League were regarded by most as upstarts, but they did have a few partisans. In fact ~~it~~ is said that they enlisted many members by threatening to report those who were unwilling to join to the F.B.I. as pro-Japan. The result was unfortunate all around. There seems little doubt that many Issei and Nisei alike regarded the formation of such a League as very poor psychology, the organization having taken place after December 7.

The incident mentioned by Miss Txuchiyama where Nishimura forced people to buy war stamps and bonds is apparently fairly typical. The head of the Japanese Farmers Association, on learning of evacuation

advised the farmers not to plant any more crops but to simply prepare for harvesting those which they had and to arrange their homes and property so as to be prepared for evacuation. Kurasaki had apparently heard of this and in his all-out effort to prove himself loyal denounced the head of the Farmers Association to the F. B. I., saying that he was spreading sabotage and hindering the war effort by asking that no further crops be planted. Accordingly the man was picked up and sent to an internment camp as a dangerous alien. His wife and family were sent to Gila and the wife made application for financial relief while at Gila. The story reached Mr. Landward in this way.

It is said that both Nishimura and Kurasaki, aided by Momita, reported to the F. B. I. any number of Issei against whom they had some grievance or whose pro-American sentiments they had reason to doubt. The Anti-Axis League simply turned out to be an organization designed to denounce this person and that. Apparently the three founders, and there were probably more whose names I do not know, thought that by doing this they might escape evacuation. It is said that Kurasaki and Nishimura at Poston had received numerous threats and had always been very circumspect in dealing with the people and in appearing alone at night in the wash rooms and other places. It seemed inevitable that Nishimura, who seemed particularly unpopular, should be the first marked for assault. The reason for the beating, therefore, if my informants are correct, is one that goes back to the period just prior to evacuation. With such strong feeling against the Anti-Axis League and against Nishimura, himself, there seems little doubt that the sympathies of the community as a whole were all for the assailants. At Gila the Issei who discussed the situation with me were virtually unanimous in expressing their approval of such high-handed methods in dealing with such a "rat" as Nishimura is purported to be. A good many Nisei, in fact, believe

that Nishimura got what was coming to him even though some admitted that they could not condone lawlessness of this kind under any circumstances.

There are some members of the Anti-Axis League at Gila and they two have received threatening letters and been marked for assault. Further investigation regarding the formation of the Anti-Axis League, its place in the pre-evacuation pattern and the Relocation Center, should be done.