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WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

Washington

October 23, 1943

To Project Directors:

The experience we have had in administering the segregation program and bringing it to a successful conclusion is something which we must apply in solving the remaining problems which the War Relocation Authority and the evacuees face. This report summarizes some of the most important lessons to be learned from our experience with segregation. It points out the difference in our handling of the registration and the segregation programs, and shows that we learned much from the former which we were able to apply in the latter. One of the important points made is that the participation of representative evacuee groups in the segregation program played a major part in its smooth and successful execution. This ought not to be forgotten. I believe that this brief analysis will be helpful in our thinking and planning for problems, such as resettlement, which lie ahead.

*L. T. Myer*  
Director

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY  
Community Analysis Section

Community Analysis Report No. 7  
October 16, 1943

AN ANALYSIS OF THE SEGREGATION PROGRAM

(Note: This paper is based on reports by Community Analysts from the ten centers. It does not pretend to be a complete analysis of the segregation program at all centers, but rather is an attempt to highlight some of the most significant developments. It intentionally sets aside the special case of the Tule Lake Center, which had during segregation and will continue to have in the future its own distinct set of problems. An analysis of the unique conditions at Tule Lake at the close of segregation is in preparation.)

The segregation program has been completed practically on schedule, with few misunderstandings of policy and purpose, with no organized resistance, with no residue of wholly unexpected major problems, and with little, if any, backwash of bad feeling and strained relations on the projects. Measured against the earlier program of registration — which had a comparable major policy significance — segregation has moved smoothly to a successful conclusion.

The success of the segregation program calls for an analysis to determine (1) those features of it which were most closely related to its satisfactory execution, and (2) the new picture which the centers present, particularly in regard to the attitudes and outlook of the people on the projects, at the close of segregation. An analysis with these aims should provide implementation for future programs, in the same way that analysis of registration experience aided the formulation of segregation procedure and policy.

I. Analysis of Segregation Procedure.

The unsatisfactory character of the registration program was tied up with at least three things: (a) insufficient careful planning, (b) poor communication between Washington and the projects, and (c) inadequate understanding of evacuee attitudes and problems. Awareness of these deficiencies and their relation to the failures of registration resulted in efforts to avoid them in segregation. It can be said that there was detailed planning, good communication, and adequate recognition of evacuee attitudes in setting up the segregation program. In addition a fourth principle of procedure was adopted and must be regarded as an important element making for success, namely, evacuee participation.

Over-all Planning. The planning in Washington which preceded segregation aimed at uniformity for all projects in respect to the interpretation of policy and the execution of specific procedures. To this end

the Segregation Manual was prepared which set forth in detail a uniform conception of the purposes and processes of segregation. However, considerable freedom was allowed project directors in the organization of the work. In this way the procedure was adjusted to the special circumstances, personalities, and administrative history of the various projects. At six projects a new organization, almost comparable to a "Segregation Division", was created. In two, the project directors assigned and coordinated the work themselves. In the others it was coordinated through the Community Management Division. Thus the principle followed was one of uniformity in essential detail, latitude in project organization.

Communication. The variations in procedure and interpretation which characterized registration were in large part due to the failure of communication between Washington and the projects. In contrast, segregation was initiated only after steps had been taken to insure adequate informing of project directors. This was accomplished not only through distribution of the Segregation Manual, but also through the conference of project directors at Denver, where the whole program was thoroughly discussed on the eve of putting it into execution.

It was not only inadequate communication between Washington and the projects which produced breakdowns in the registration program. Communication was equally poor within the projects — between evacuees and staff, and also among staff members. The segregation procedure took into consideration the need for both a well-informed staff and a well-informed resident population. Following the Denver conference project directors, on their return to their projects, not only held staff meetings but also met almost immediately with some recognized evacuee group and informed them fully of the nature of the program. This was true at all projects of which we have record.

These initial moves to inform evacuees were followed up in various ways at the different projects. In all there was continued emphasis on channeling of information about all details of segregation out into the blocks. Information offices were established in the blocks in some projects. Project newspapers were utilized, often devoting special attention to checking rumors. At every project evacuees were brought into the business of disseminating information.

Evacuee Participation. The suggestion was made in the Segregation Manual that evacuee leadership be utilized in carrying out the program. Committees of evacuees were established at every center. They varied in their composition and in their functions, but in general, it may be said that they acted in an advisory capacity to the appointed staff as well as to evacuees. Usually they met at regular times for consultation with the staff on current needs and reactions in the community. In most projects the committees had the important function of disseminating information back to evacuees. At three centers the Community Council was the active evacuee participating body. At the others some form of representative body was utilized, either based on some old organization

or growing up at the moment to meet the need. At a number of centers, though apparently not all, evacuee representation was carried to the point of including segregants in the committees. At two centers evacuees were appointed as observers of the Hearing Board interviews. Thus, although evacuees were not included in the planning of the program they were brought in in an advisory capacity during its execution.

Recognition of Evacuee Attitudes and Problems. Efforts were made to estimate evacuee reactions to the program. Washington planning, for example, took into consideration the need for preparing evacuees some time in advance. There were preliminary announcements in all centers, and the process of segregation was begun only after evacuees had lived for some weeks with the definite knowledge that it was to take place. The suddenness of registration with its evil effects was thus avoided. Also it was recognized that the circumstances of registration were such that "no" answers to question 23 could not always be taken at their face value. This situation was taken into account and re-hearings of persons who had answered were conducted. The importance of family ties and influence for the evacuees was also recognized as a factor in decisions on loyalty and repatriation. In addition, the conception of loyalty to Japan as something right and natural in many cases was admitted, and the general policy of segregation as a non-punitive measure was laid down.

The more immediate problems arising out of the process of segregation itself were also taken into consideration. Plans were carried out in all centers which permitted friends and neighbors to move out together, crating of household goods was carefully taken care of, work terminations were timed to permit the winding up of personal affairs, and the need for farewell ceremonies and the observance of departure customs was recognized. Details about the nature of Tule Lake were disseminated. Attention to such small matters eliminated the possibility of resentments growing up around small issues.

Other Factors. Segregation moved to completion with a smoothness which had been hoped for but not generally expected. The four elements just described undoubtedly played an important part in this smoothness, and help to explain the contrast with the registration program. It would be a mistake to assume that they were the sole causes of success. The long expectation of segregation on the part of the evacuees, the considerable support given the program by many evacuees themselves, the months of experience of the staffs with evacuees, the smallness of the groups directly affected in all centers except Tule Lake, and the fact that many centers had already during registration or other periods found release for accumulated tensions were all factors. It can only be said that these favorable circumstances were enhanced rather than altered for the worse by the procedure adopted.

## II. Staff and Evacuee Attitudes.

The meaning of segregation to the people on the projects may be



discovered through an examination of their reactions during the process. It meant different things to different groups at different times. How they reacted to this program gives important clues to their general feeling about WRA policy, about their jobs, and about their conception of what the relocation centers will be from now on. It is important to know these things because of their bearing on future programs, such as relocation.

Staff Viewpoints. The official position taken by project directors and staffs followed very closely the interpretation given at the Denver conference. It was stated at all, and emphasized at most, centers that segregation did not imply punishment. This emphasis was particularly strong at Topaz where the project director refused to use the word, segregation, in any official statements and constantly referred to the program as one of "Transfer".

The element of national loyalty was given varying emphasis. It was stressed at a few centers and played down at others. In general, the emphasis was about as suggested at Denver, namely, on separating those who wanted "to be American" from those who wanted "to be Japanese".

However, it is also clear that staff members at various projects regarded segregation as a means to weeding out potentially dangerous people, trouble-makers and agitators. This attitude was especially apparent at three centers. Coupled with this was the view that centers other than Tule Lake would operate more smoothly after segregation. At the centers where staff members expressed this view, there was also a general feeling at the beginning that there would be considerable trouble and perhaps incidents in connection with segregation.

As segregation progressed, staff members began to distinguish between different types of segregants. In a few centers, there was still the feeling that Kibei were most dangerous, although in most there was little tendency to single out Kibei. There were expressions of respect for evacuees who frankly stated their loyalty to Japan. A sympathetic feeling for Nisei who apparently were forced to go to Tule Lake with their parents seemed universal among staff members, and attempts are recorded of efforts on the part of some staff members to assist Nisei in breaking off from their families. The departure of individuals who had been regarded by staff members as both bad and good tended to spread the feeling that segregation was not a simple process which was ridding the center of any one type of person.

A view point expressed at one center probably characterizes that of a segment of appointed personnel at all centers. A staff member, on observing most of the loyal evacuees out to see off the first train and wave farewells to the group going to Tule Lake, said, "This proves that they are all alike; they are all Japanese at heart." At any rate, the conviction as to clear-cut results in terms of loyalty or sorting good from bad declined among the staff as segregation proceeded.

Evacuee Attitudes. Segregation had various shades of meaning for evacuees

from center to center and from time to time within the ten centers. Basic attitudes probably characteristic at the beginning of the process are indicated in a survey made at Jerome. Here 30 out of 76 Issei and Nisei (including repatriates, expatriates, and Kibei) interviewed felt very much as did most of the staff, that segregation would be a good thing and would have the good result of making center life more harmonious in the future. An almost equal number (26), however, felt that segregation had little significance. Most of these felt that it would make no difference in center life and that it would be a waste of money. Some were opposed definitely on the ground of disruption of families and friends, because "the Nisei who will segregate will lose touch with America", and for other reasons. Twenty of the 76 interviewed could not make up their minds as to whether segregation was good or bad. There are indications from this survey as well as other data that those evacuees who favored segregation were for the most part the extremists of both the loyal and the repatriate groups.

The view which the great majority of evacuees at all the centers took of segregation was that it was an inescapable move which would have to be complied with. There was never any organized resistance to it, although it must be emphasized that there were resistances of various types at a few centers. Decisions to go to Tule Lake or to stay in relocation centers were made for the most part with reference to questions of security rather than political allegiance. For the majority of segregants who made their decisions during the segregation period at least, there were two dominant considerations in connection with future security. One was the need for clinging to the family group as the last remaining source of help and status. The other was a practical weighing of chances for making a living. For some this also was tied up with family, that is, relatives in Japan who could be counted on to help. Many, both Issei and Nisei, regarded their present situation as demonstrating finally that there was no chance in America. For a small proportion, defiance and hatred of America were motivating factors. In all cases probably Tule Lake was regarded as a place of definite immediate security, where further decisions would not have to be made for the duration.

While Tule Lake thus came to be regarded as a place where certain definite securities might be found, it is evident that the relocation centers came to be regarded as places of somewhat less security than before. The rumors which circulated through the centers during the segregation period indicate the swirl of anxieties in which the non-segregant evacuees were living and will continue to live. Doubts and anxieties as to what "the government" intends to do next with the people are indicated in the rumors that all Issei non-segregants were to be given hearings, that all Kibei would be sent to Tule Lake, that Nisei were to be drafted immediately after segregation, that Nisei already in the army had been presented with question 28. Finally there was the whole series of rumors connected with the concept of "forced relocation", ranging from that of the immediate closing of three centers to the one that all refusing to relocate would henceforth be sent to

Tule Lake.

The anxieties as revealed in these rumors are probably indicative of a general state of mind in the centers at present. Segregation was generally interpreted as a major preliminary to furthering the relocation program. By many it is welcomed as such. By others, it is regarded with foreboding. The fact that "forced" is prefixed to relocation indicates a widespread sentiment that relocation is regarded as against rather than in the interest of the evacuees.

#### Summary

This preliminary analysis of the segregation program is based chiefly on Community Analysis reports. It seeks to outline some of the points, significant for administrative policy generally, which the experience with segregation has made clear. They may be summarized as follows:

1. Successful execution of the program was closely connected with:
  - (a) Detailed over-all planning of procedure which allowed, however, for latitude in project organization,
  - (b) Careful attention to maintaining communication channels from Washington to projects and among staff and evacuees on the projects,
  - (c) Organized participation of evacuee representative bodies,
  - (d) Adjustment of procedure to evacuee viewpoints, customs, and problems.
2. The program shed some light on how the people of the projects, both staff and evacuee, are thinking:
  - (a) Attitudes of staff members became more favorable towards evacuees as a result of segregation through closer cooperation and greater familiarity with their viewpoints.
  - (b) Many staff members do not believe that segregation has resulted in as clear-cut or significant changes in the character of the relocation center populations as they had at first thought it would.
  - (c) The program was carried through in much smoother fashion than most staff members expected that it could be, a situation which is being attributed to some or all of the points of procedure mentioned above.

- (d) The evacuees showed a readiness to comply without resistance with a large-scale movement policy at least equal to the readiness with which they complied with evacuation itself.
- (e) Evacuees are making decisions chiefly in terms of a short view of economic and family security.
- (f) There is a general expectation that actions to promote relocation will now be taken swiftly and drastically.

The expectation of relocation is probably as clear-cut a result of segregation as the expectation of segregation was following registration. It should not be concluded from this that evacuees are ready to embrace an accelerated relocation program. An expectation of coercion is also involved which can crystallize readily into resistance. Any program of resettlement must be conceived with as much respect for evacuee viewpoints and problems as was segregation. Otherwise it would be easy to repeat the experience of registration.