

Box 9  
Folder 7  
Item 6 p.1

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT  
WASHINGTON

*act by military*

1943 JUN 8 AM 8:07 JUN 8 1943

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The Honorable  
The Secretary of War  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I wish to thank you for the support which the War Department has given the program of the War Relocation Authority generally. I value the advice and assistance I have received from Assistant Secretary McCloy and other members of your staff. Without the assistance of the War Department our task would be immensely more difficult, if not impossible, to perform. More and more I come to realize that the work of the War Relocation Authority, not merely as it touches the restricted military areas, but in many of its larger aspects, necessarily must lean heavily upon the War Department for assistance and guidance if it is to be successful.

For these reasons, particularly, I am disturbed to learn from your letter of May 10 the view held by the War Department on the related questions of evacuee morale, segregation of evacuees, and the treatment of evacuees believed to be disloyal. I have known for some time that the Western Defense Command held a point of view on these questions somewhat at variance with ours, but I had not realized until I read your letter and was informed of Mr. McCloy's recommendations to the Senate Military Affairs Committee that the point of view of the Western Defense Command on these questions appears to be settled War Department opinion.

To say that "the War Relocation Authority should take immediate steps to screen out from the centers and segregate in close confinement all individuals appearing to have pro-Japanese sympathies" in my judgment is to state the problem in over-simplified terms. To say that "it has been and remains the opinion of the War Department already frequently expressed to you that much trouble could have been avoided if these troublemakers had been removed from the relocation centers and placed in rigorous confinement" implies that the War Department has presented to this Authority a consistent approach to the problem of segregation, and that the War Relocation Authority has consistently ignored or opposed such suggestions.

ASW 014.311 W.D.C. 5  
SEGREGATION  
3-10-8  
(6-8-43)  
8 June 1943



DECLASSIFIED  
Authority NND 740062  
By lm NARA. Date 11/19/91

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION NOT REGRADED  
REVIEW FOR SEC ARMY BY TAG PER 210806

- 2 -

I feel it is only fair to point out that if segregation could have been accomplished by the War Relocation Authority during 1942 and the early part of this year as easily as your letter implies, it could also have been accomplished by the War Department during the evacuation period. Substantially all the information about individual evacuees actually available to the War Relocation Authority prior to registration was available to the Army at the time of evacuation and later. If mass segregation on a fair and individual basis is so simple that the War Relocation Authority is to be criticized for not accomplishing it, it is difficult to see why a wholesale evacuation of all persons of Japanese descent was ever necessary. If the dangerous and potentially dangerous individuals may be so readily determined as your letter implies, it should have been possible to evacuate only the dangerous from the Pacific Coast area.

If military considerations other than the danger from disloyal individuals, such as danger of civil disorder, for example, prompted wholesale evacuation, then I suggest the Army had a second opportunity to effectuate segregation, that is, during the assembly center period when plans for removal to relocation centers were in preparation.

The earliest segregation proposals presented to the War Relocation Authority advocated removing certain broad classes from the evacuee population. The first specific suggestion was made by Lt. Commander K. D. Ringle, a Naval Intelligence officer who served for several weeks with the War Relocation Authority in the early summer of 1942. He suggested segregating Kibei who had resided for a certain number of years in Japan. Their parents and children would also, under Commander Ringle's suggested plan, be segregated. On August 23, 1942, we received the first formal suggestion from the War Department when General DeWitt made a similar recommendation. On September 9, 1942, he proposed that not only the Kibei but also the Issei be segregated and that repatriation be asked for both groups.

The War Relocation Authority, after full consideration, rejected the idea of segregating entire categories of the population. We felt, and still feel, that while we should probably look with particular care at the individuals who fall into certain specific categories, the arbitrary removal of an entire class would be unjust, unwise, and seriously damaging to evacuee morale. The evacuation process itself was such a categorical segregation involving, as has been acknowledged, many injustices to individuals. The evacuation was justified by military urgency, but military necessity could not justify segregation on a categorical basis as proposed to the Authority. The disloyal of the group were now in safe custody under military guard.

- 3 -

Moreover, there were practical considerations. Removal of the Issei en masse would have disrupted the majority of the families. There are in the centers some 40,000 American citizens under 20 years of age, most of whom are sons and daughters of aliens. At the time of evacuation General DeWitt had repeatedly reassured the evacuees that family composition would not be disturbed; in fact, the Western Defense Command put itself to great trouble to unite families during and immediately following evacuation to assembly centers. Removal of the Kibei, likewise, would have penalized many loyal citizens. In this connection it is relevant that a large proportion of the evacuees recruited for the special Army school at Camp Savage, Minnesota, and for the Navy language school at the University of Colorado are Kibei.

On October 5 General DeWitt presented to the Chief of Staff another recommendation, proposing both segregation and the retention of all evacuees in the centers for the purpose of a study to develop data for psychological warfare. This would have meant holding all evacuees in centers. Other recommendations were presented on October 9 and October 30. On December 30, in response to my personal request to Assistant Secretary McCloy, the War Department outlined the following comprehensive plan for segregation:

- "(a) All evacuees who did indicate their desire to accept repatriation or were loyal to Japan.
- "(b) All parolees from detention and internment camps now living in relocation centers.
- "(c) All evacuees having an evaluated internal security police record during assembly or relocation center residence.
- "(d) All evacuees who are listed and evaluated by the intelligence service as potentially dangerous and who are not included in the above mentioned categories.
- "(e) Members of the immediate families of listed segregatees and groups (b) and (c) above where the segregatee is listed as a family head."

In items (c) and (d) of this proposal, the idea of "screening out" individuals, in addition to segregating entire categories, was proposed for the first time.

The War Relocation Authority believes that a plan of segregation based upon the examination of individuals through the customary processes utilized by intelligence agencies, or by hearings or other more or less formal process, represents a sound approach to the problem. Segregation is not, however, a simple procedure. It requires a great deal of background study and work among the population to be dealt with. It requires the building up of police and intelligence records and analysis such as has been proceeding since the registration program was carried out on the centers in February 1943.

Until the registration was effectuated the War Relocation Authority had no adequate basis for conducting a large scale segregation program based upon the examination of individual cases. The Japanese-American population was turned over to the War Relocation Authority progressively from May to November, 1942. No basic records were supplied the Authority by the Army. We were denied the privilege of securing questionnaires from evacuees while they remained in assembly centers. We had no access to the intelligence records of the period prior to evacuation. We had no information about the individuals in our custody except that which was developed during the course of managing the centers. Since we did not have half the population until August 25, 1942 and did not secure all of the remainder until November 1, 1942, we naturally were compelled to move slowly in approaching the problem of screening out the agitators. As a practical matter, we had to wait until the individuals made trouble on the centers. We had to locate them. It was essential that we make certain we had the right people before we moved, and then we did remove them from the centers.

In light of these facts I think the Authority can be accused of nothing more than exercising reasonable caution in dealing with this problem. In December, 1942, following the incident at Manzanar, we established an isolation center for the purpose of segregating troublemakers. We also developed procedures in collaboration with the Justice Department for sending trouble-making aliens to internment camps operated by that Department. Under the procedures thus developed and through the collaboration of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, about 100 aliens and 55 citizens have been removed from the centers and placed in detention camps or the isolation center.

Now, on the basis of the information developed during registration, I feel that for the first time the War Relocation Authority has a reasonably adequate background of information on which to proceed with the process of screening out disloyal or potentially disloyal individuals.

While segregation of evacuees might have been accomplished during the process of evacuation and movement from assembly centers to relocation centers without adding materially to the frustration and insecurity the evacuees were obliged to experience, once they were settled in relocation centers it became evident that the only positive form of segregation is that involved in relocation of loyal individuals outside the centers. It is unfortunate that the outside relocation program has never been widely regarded as a process of segregation, as, of course, it is. In fact, if one looks primarily at the welfare of the Japanese-American population, it is the only process of wholesale segregation which has very much to recommend it.

At this point I should like to consider briefly the general subject of evacuee morale in relocation centers. Again, I regret to say, your comments regarding the situation appear to me to be an over-simplification of the problem. I do not minimize the influence of what you have called the "pro-Japanese minority group" in the centers. When this group has acted in such a way as to provide a basis for removal of individuals to the isolation center, or has justified other such action, we have taken it. But the fact is that many of the ostensibly pro-Japanese, the repatriates, for example, have generally not been a source of trouble in the centers, either by overt act or by agitation among the rest of the community. Agitation by the disloyal element plays a part in the problem but by no means the leading role. We would be making a serious mistake to assume that by taking out the disloyal we will solve the problem of morale among the remainder.

So far as we have been able to determine, morale in the centers generally develops through a series of stages and fluctuates. First, there is the period of initiating work, receiving evacuees, and getting the centers organized. Generally, this period has been characterized by a high degree of cooperation and hopefulness on the part of the evacuees. This period has ordinarily been followed by a period of increasing dissatisfaction and bitterness as the people settled down in their new location and began to contemplate their situation. In three or four centers the second period culminated in some kind of incident, but this was by no means universally the case. Generally, in the centers which started later, we were able, on the basis of the experience gained in the centers which started earlier, to anticipate such incidents. The cycle of development, however, was substantially the same in all centers. To be entirely objective, one must say that morale now and at all times in the past has varied from center to center, depending upon local conditions, in part the ability of the project management and in part on accidents of time and local circumstances. Speaking generally, however, morale in the centers is at the moment better than it has been at any time since the centers were established. This may in part be due to recovery of balance following the emotional strain of the registration.

- 6 -

Because of the importance you have attached to the activities of the disloyal element, I should like to return to that subject. I think it is elementary that the influence of agitators in any group of people depends more upon the receptivity of the group than upon the skill and energy of the agitators. The disloyal group, in my judgment, would have relatively little influence upon the majority of Japanese-American population if they were not already badly demoralized as a result of the treatment they have received. We have definite evidence, for example, that the disloyal people have taunted the loyal and cooperative citizens about their citizenship and about how little it actually means when they can be forcibly removed from their homes and confined in what in physical respects are concentration camps, and in most cases forced to sacrifice property and a chance to earn a livelihood. Now, segregation may remove the subversive ones who do the taunting, but it cannot remove that realization from the loyal population. The real cause of bad evacuee morale is evacuation and all the losses, insecurity, and frustration it entailed, plus the continual "drum drum" of certain harbingers of hate and fear whose expressions appear in the public press or are broadcast over the radio. A segregation program which imposes additional restrictions on the disloyal, without removing the restrictions and reestablishing the rights of the loyal, will not accomplish very much in improvement of morale.

In saying this I do not wish to convey the impression we are unwilling to pursue a program of segregation based upon an appraisal of individual cases. We are willing to do so and are undertaking the necessary planning to launch such an undertaking, but I should not like anyone to overestimate the benefits to the evacuee population which will result from segregation. I agree that, in view of the importance which has been attached to segregation by the War Department and by other agencies and individuals who are guided by the War Department position in this matter, public acceptance of the loyal evacuees will no doubt be facilitated by a program of segregation. For this reason primarily we believe it will be worth the effort and demoralization it will entail.

I think I should point out in this connection that the WRA has never had the surplus center facilities with which to establish a segregation center of any size. Our desire to put relocation ahead of segregation rather than the other way around, as proposed by General DeWitt, arose in part from the desire to vacate living space so that segregation could be accomplished without moving all or nearly all the loyal evacuees in order to make room for the disloyal. In August, 1942, for example, we surveyed the country to find a center for repatriates. We found no facilities available and were given no hope that priorities to construct new facilities could be secured.

Now that relocation has reduced the population of the centers from a maximum of 107,000 to somewhat less than 100,000, with other evacuees leaving regularly on both seasonal and indefinite leave, we can look forward to making shifts which will release one or more centers for segregation purposes. The process will be a disrupting one, nevertheless. It will be virtually impossible, for example to effect wholesale segregation and at the same time meet the agricultural production quotas of the centers this year. Since our budget for food purchase contemplates \$5,000,000 worth of food production, it is vital to the administration of the centers that the agricultural program be interfered with as little as possible. Similarly, our efforts to secure a maximum utilization of evacuees in seasonal agricultural labor outside the center will undoubtedly be delayed, as will the indefinite leave program, and the school program, by the process of segregation. And finally, the constitutional problems inherent in the confinement of American citizens will be sharpened and brought more definitely into question when citizens are confined without leave privileges in segregation centers. I mention these points merely to make clear the fact that segregation has disadvantages. From the point of view purely of the Japanese-American population, the disadvantages appear to outweigh the advantages.

However, if it will help to secure acceptance of the relocation program, we are willing to accept the consequences of segregation in the centers. Our real problem both in maintaining morale in the centers and in securing the relocation of evacuees arises not from the problems which segregation will solve, but from the public attitude often expressed that no Japanese can be trusted, from the point of view which engenders restrictive and discriminatory legislation, which seeks to deprive Japanese-Americans of their citizenship, and to class all of them as enemies no matter what their individual records may be. Perhaps segregation will help us to deal with that point of view more effectively.

We have almost decided to use Tule Lake as the segregation center for a number of reasons -- there are a rather large number of non-registrants and repatriates there now. It has good facilities for subsistence food production, and it lies within the evacuated area where movement in and out of the center requires special permits and escorts which makes it undesirable as a center from which to relocate. Before we make public announcement we would be glad to have your opinion as to the use of this center for this purpose.

Sincerely,

*D. S. Myer*  
Director