

WESTERN DEFENSE COMMAND AND FOURTH ARMY

Office of Assistant Chief of Staff, Civil Affairs Division

WARTIME CIVIL CONTROL ADMINISTRATION

1231 MARKET STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
Telephone KLONDIKE 2-2611

June 5, 1942

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, War Relocation Authority

SUBJECT: Situation at Manzanar regarding military police.

Pursuant to your request, the following consolidated confidential report of investigation of relations between military police and others at Manzanar, is submitted to you for information:

"1. The Relationship Between the Military Authorities and the Interior Police. This relationship is satisfactory; close cooperation being maintained by both groups. The relationship between the Center Manager and the military authorities seems to be strained from the Center Management side. I have attached to this report a notice dated Tuesday, May 19, 1942, from Mr. Roy Nash, Project Director, which was placed on the bulletin boards throughout the Center by the manager. Also a copy of the Manzanar Free Press, dated May 19, 1942, in which is included a write-up of a speech made by the Center Manager, the occasion being a Sunday afternoon audience in commemoration of "I Am an American Day." This bulletin, as well as the Free Press write-up, seems to leave the burden of discipline completely to the Army, while the Center Manager is desirous of allowing total freedom to the evacuees. I could not find during this investigation any semblance of friction between Army personnel and the Center Management that was initiated by the Army personnel.

2. The Relationship Between the Army Personnel and the Evacuees. Since the shooting of the evacuee by the Military Police, the evacuees have enclosed their feelings in a shell. They are resigned to the fact that the military authorities are in charge and that they will be punished or shot if they venture across the sentry lines. There is, however, the feeling that, though the evacuee who was shot was wrong in being beyond the sentry line, even though given permission by the sentry, after he had been shot and no punishment directed towards the patrolman, at least the patrolman should not be allowed the freedom of the county in which to brag about the shooting. This came from an evacuee in the center who had not been outside and his information must have been open to the evacuees in the center. Other than this there is no difference apparent between the military authorities and the evacuees.

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By: DR, NARS Date 6/14/74

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3. The Relationship Between the Center Manager and the Evacuees. This information was gathered from contacts with the Chief of Interior Police Kenneth Horton and Assistant Chief L. F. Day and an evacuee that I am sure can be depended upon for truthfulness, Tokutaro N. Slocum. Slocum, being an evacuee and commonly known as Tokie Slocum, served in the last world war as Sergeant-Major of an outfit overseas. This man was educated in this country, adopted by an American family by the name of Slocum.

a. There is at present as Director of Information, one Akira Itami, who has as his right-hand man and as one of the block leaders, one Carl Yoneda. Carl Yoneda, according to information in our files has a very definite communistic tendency, being the husband of a Russian Jewess, who is of the rabid soap-box type communist. Akira Itami, in turn, is the head of the Kebei group, and brought the first thousand evacuees to this center. Itami, working directly under Kidwell, Service Manager, is responsible for the placing of all evacuees in the leading positions. The election of block leaders is conducted by having the members of each block select three members of the block, submit these to Kidwell and one of the three is chosen by him as the leader. The impression received by the Police Chief, Assistant Chief of Police and Slocum is that only the man that Itami chooses is selected by Kidwell as being block leader. Frasure, who has charge of assigning the evacuees to jobs, has under him Oko Murata, who is heartily disliked by the evacuees and who has on occasion met busses as they entered with new arrivals and called out to some of these that she had good jobs picked for them. They in turn received the better positions. Itami, since the center has been filling, has assumed an imperialistic attitude toward all of the evacuees, even among his own lieutenants. Between the offices of Kidwell and Frasure there seems to be thrown throughout the center an attitude of favoritism and politics that must be played through either Itami or Murata. This seems to be a follow-through of the attitude that originated under the former set-up, that of operating under the lines of the WPA project and allowing politics to fill the key positions.

b. While talking with Slocum, I was impressed by the straightforward discussion of the various problems, his Americanism and utter lack of any bitterness toward the government or any agency causing him to be placed there. I was also impressed by his knowledge of what seemed to be taking place out

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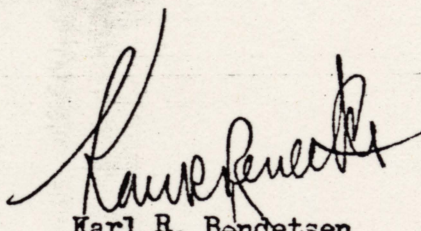
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at the center. One bit of information that he gave, I am passing on for what it might be worth; parts of it are true in my opinion, parts I was unable to verify. He says that the Catholic religion had this hold on the camp: They have made promises to those that attended the church that if any of their friends or relatives were in a detention camp in Montana, if the names were furnished, the Catholic Church would see that they were released and sent to the center at Manzanar. This he was unable to verify. However, the fact that the center management and the Clergy of the Catholic Church met and visited socially among themselves outside of the center was common knowledge.

c. This information was passed on by Slocum, that the first group of one thousand that entered the center consisted of three distinct groups. (1) The first was a group that came to the center fearing to stay on the outside because of the activity of the F.B.I., and fearing that if they would stay outside they would be picked up by them. (2) The second group consisted of evacuees that did not have a job on the outside and were glad to be placed somewhere so that they might be fed and housed. (3) The third group consisted of the politicians, or the group headed by Akira Itami, who entered early so that they might worm their way into the confidences of the Center Management, obtain the key positions and be able to place men of their own choice into other positions when they entered."


Karl R. Bendetsen
Colonel, G. S. C.
Assistant Chief of Staff
Civil Affairs Division

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