

*M. Shimada*

REPORT OF THE INFORMAL MEETING OF THE STOCKADE INTERNEES AND THE CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE OF THE TULE LAKE CENTER

February 5, 1944

DATE: February 5, 1944 PLACE: Ad. Building Room 5 TIME: 2:35 p.m.

Attendance: Stockade Internees. Kozuma and Shimizu  
Co-ordinating Committee: M. Shimada, K. Okamoto, J. Nakao, J. Maydo, I. Namekawa, G. Yamatani, and B. Akitsuki  
Others: B. Mayeda and F. Furukawa

Shimizu: The reason why we asked for this meeting was because we heard many true stories and actual reports of the center's existing condition at the present time, by many men who recently came into the stockade. We heard about you people who were working so hard for the benefit of the colony and how straightforwardly the Committee had been working in attempting to get the stockade people released.

When you people called us out last time, we just had to take such a step and say such things because the atmosphere at that time was such that we couldn't very well express ourselves truthfully. Yes, I said things which weren't my true feelings. I've often wondered, if you had only called us in a smaller group or as individuals, things might have worked more smooth and better.

Since Komiya came in, we were able to get a thorough picture of the conditions outside of this stockade and everything became more clear, especially the work of the Committee. We also were convinced of the fact that more and more people were inclining to your side. As we noticed how conditions within and without the stockade had changed so, we figured that there's no use dragging along as we have and so, we came to this conclusion to meet the Committee again by requesting Lt. Shaner.

After many people were released from the stockade, people in there became very happy.

After seeing you people working so hard for our benefit, I think it is only right and just for us to, at least, cooperate with you. If the WRA or the Army ask for our assurance that we do not meddle in politics again, we will, in every respects, cooperate.

There are cases like this -- some young boys have even said that they're willing to take the chance of getting beaten up twice or thrice, if they could only get out into the Center. The reason why their attitude changed even to that extent is because of Komiya. I think his report was very fair.

Among the six men whom you people interviewed last time, only three are left now, Morri, Inouye, and I. At that meeting, I wanted to say more but unfortunately I didn't know what was in Inouye's mind or the other persons' minds that I hesitated from expressing myself too frankly. But as I became more intimate with Mr. Inouye, I was amazed to find that our ideas and feelings were in common. Mr. Morri -- just after

the meeting was asked by Mr. Shimada whether his statements were sincere -- Mr. Morri told me later that he just couldn't find an answer to his question. Since that meeting, we wanted to meet again with the Committee but we thought it was no use because sometimes 30, 50 would be released in a day. However, recently we noticed that some were still being picked up, so we decided that we should meet with you people again. Mr. Kimura, Mr. Kozuma and many others believed that it was just of no use being so stubborn -- there's no limit to it. Army's attitude toward the Negotiating Committee hasn't changed a bit since their December 4th statement. We felt that there's no hope in relying on those Negotiating Committee. At that time we had strong convictions, but since we failed once, we have no intentions of being block representatives again. Many of those men have this same opinion. Some even went on to say that they felt so sorry toward the block residents whom they represent. But - any way out or any channel within the stockade to convey our present attitude to the Army or to the colonists.

Kozuma: There were some boys in Barrack A who were rather intimate with me and talked freely. As we exchanged our ideas, I found that their thoughts were no different from mine. Why couldn't we work hand in hand with that certain group who are working so hard, we thought. So we brought this story up and talked to Mr. Shimizu and others and came to this conclusion to meet with you again.

Yamatani: We named eight on the list, for instance, Kimura, Morri, Inouye, Yoshida, Shimizu, Yamamoto, Kozuma, and Yamanaka, but the Army permitted only you two. They warned us that since we made such a blunder last time don't repeat the same mistake, so they permitted us to meet you two first and if proved successful, meet the others later -- this was their suggestion.

We are also informed of the fact that you six men did not call a meeting with the other stockade detainees as you told us at the second interview. Naturally, we were puzzled when we heard that and didn't know to what extent we could believe or trust your words. Army questioned today's meeting because they knew that our last interview was a bungle.

Shimizu: You see, we have been in the stockade for almost three months. We see each other every morning and night. We can't do things as we wish.

After that interview, I asked the Army if they wouldn't stand watch because we wanted to hold a meeting that day during the mess hour. For some reasons it came about that we should, instead of holding a mass meeting, go around to the barracks and report it to them personally. As a result, we held no meeting. Only meeting we had was just among ourselves that is the six of us.

Shimada: We sincerely understand you. Even though we feared that result of the chance we were taking at that time lest the colonists divide in two and aim at each other, the result was, however, more effective than we anticipated. The people who were released stood up for us, more than we thought. Those people are very brave. In fact they are so bold and so out-spoken that sometimes, we feel as if we should suppress them. We are certainly grateful to them.

(At this time, Mr. Shimada presented a letter written by Mr. Kozuma to G. Kuratomi, when Kozuma was still active in the Negotiating Committee.)

Shimada: In getting your release, such letters as this might prove as an evidence or grounds upon which you might not be justified for a release. However, as far as we're concerned, we understand your honest feeling and likewise, we'll do our best. By the way, did you send this letter to Kuratomi?

Kozuma: Yes, but I don't even remember what I wrote in that letter.

Shimizu: Since men have been detained for such a long time, psychologically, they have changed. I think 90% of them have the same attitude as we have. There are cases which are really pitiful -- boys who are merely 20 or so have been detained in there for three months just because their past records weren't too good or something.

Since I became a captain of the barrack, I met boys who come in to fill coal and do other works. They have told me that they were detained simply because they didn't carry or because they lost their temporary passes. Some of them are really handicapped because of their inability to speak English. Recently I have noticed many fellows like that. There are three boys in particular, who have been in Tule since the inception of this center. I think something should be done for them, even before us. Once when I heard that a young boy dreamt about his mother, I felt so sorry for him. I think it's urgent that such boys be released as soon as possible. Do you know anything about Shingu?

Akitsuiki: I think we have his name on the list going out soon,

Shimizu: Please get him released. There are many other boys like him. Torii, for example -- his younger brother went out but he's still in there and he doesn't even know why he came in. He told me that he wasn't at the Motor Pool at the time of the incident as the Army thinks so. He told me that he was willing to testify strongly and even provide evidence, a time punch, to establish proof that he was in a mess hall.

(Conversation recurred to the subject of the last interview.)

Shimizu: No one actually expressed their true personal opinion at that time, I think. But, as I said before, if you had interviewed us individually, I might have told you what I really thought. Even for myself, I didn't know Mr. Inouye very much and didn't have the opportunity to really get acquainted with him so I hesitated. I hate to say this but I didn't trust him at that time and I'm sure he felt the same way toward me.

Shimada: Yes, I knew Mr. Inouye from the outside, in connection with judo. I realized and knew that those weren't his true words.

Shimizu: If it were private and informal it didn't matter much but since we felt that we were called more-or-less officially, we couldn't very well say as we felt and always had to bear in mind the many who were supposedly supporting Kai-Kuratomi group.

Even during that hunger strike, I didn't know that some men ate food because I was just sleeping and barely living on water. I couldn't believe that people who weren't so young and people who were suppose to be responsible men did such a thing.

Kozuma: We also had another informal meeting with Mr. Robertson sometime ago, seven of us, Sugimoto, Kuratomi, H. Mori and some others. At that time, I did say a few words but as Shimizu said, I couldn't express myself honestly. Mr. Kuratomi acted as our spokesman and did most of the talking.

Oh yes, as we came out of the stockade today, Lieutenant jokingly asked if we came out with Kai-Kuratomi-Headquarters-big shots' permission.

Shimizu: Even some of the former Negotiating Committee members do not feel as Kai Kuratomi and some others do. For instance, Mr. Kimura, he had often mentioned that Negotiating Committee should disband and it's not even too late now. Among the Negotiating Committee members, Kobayashi, Yamamoto, and few others had a sensible point of view. Of course they didn't come out with it because they knew that it'll be useless anyway. Mr. Kimura is in an awkward position since he came from the same center as Kai and Kuratomi.

Akitsuki: Let me say this, as a Committee, we have never, as far as we remember, talked abusively or have criticized the Negotiating Committee. Even if we did, people wouldn't believe it anyway.

Shimizu: Mr. Morri had constantly warned Mr. Kai, but it was all in vain. Kai would immediately jump on him saying 'are you slipping?' Mr. Morri just gave up and resigned as a block representative in November, I think. Mr. Morri's viewpoints, I noticed, are very moderate. Recently a group of young fellows yelled out in nasty language to some people who were passing. At this time, Mr. Morri politely cautioned and suppressed their impudence. So you can readily see what kind of a man Mr. Morri is.

Shimada: We are progressing slowly but surely and are still encountering some obstinate groups. The more obstinate they are the more stockade victims there will be. We certainly do not enjoy seeing such a thing. With the assistance of you men, we hope we can avoid such to a certain extent.

Kozuma: We are not asking for our release, but, regardless of our release or continued detention, we are heartily willing to cooperate and help in any way possible from within the stockade. Besides, Army's attitude toward the Negotiating Committee hasn't changed in the least. My personal opinion is that the attitude we took involving 'giri' was certainly meaningless, even in spite of the Army's blunt statement of December 4th. To tell you the truth, I don't know for what reason we were all so stubborn.

Akitsuki: Mr. Shimizu, remember, at the last meeting you said that even for an hour or two, the Negotiating Committee should be released for the purpose of conveying message to the colonists. Was that your idea?

Shimizu: Yes, it was. I thought perhaps if it were that kind of a plan, the Negotiating Committee would concede to.

Shimada: And that request you six made regarding unconditional release en masse of all the detainees, I've talked to the authorities about it as I promised. Accordingly it was denied.

But, really, what I resent is this - I heard that the Negotiating Com-  
\*GIRI -- swayed by one's sense of obligation.

mittee said that if Akitsuki, Yamatani, myself and few others were picked up and placed in the stockade, the Negotiating Committee could transform this camp into a peaceful one in within 24 hours. I was indeed disappointed when I heard this. I just gave up hope.

(Discussion followed in reference to the letter sent to Lt. Shaner by this group, including Kozuma, Shimizu and some 14 others, requesting for a meeting with the Co-ordinating Committee.)

Kozuma: I can assure you that whatever is written in this letter is true.

Shimizu: Let me warrant you that if those people on the list should fail in their promise or commit an offensive act against the will of the people and of course against the peace of the colony, we are willing to assume full responsibility. I am not just saying this to make you feel good. If those people do something when drunk, then please don't blame me. And this I can swear, we did not write that letter as a strategy or just because we wanted to put something over you.

Thereupon, the group decided to call together the 16 persons listed in the letter before the Project Director for the purpose of signing any statement which the Project Director or the Army may deem necessary, subsequent, of course, to their approval.

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Byron Akitsuki  
Executive Secretary of the  
Co-ordinating Committee