

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

WASHINGTON

November 20, 1943

FOREWORD

A Community Government Manual was issued October 1, 1942, which emphasized the role of the temporary councils and the preparation of a plan for permanent government, and included some remarks on the organization and function of the permanent Council. The present handbook presents in summary and generalized form some of the insights gained and techniques used during the past year. These are stated in terms of the functions, organization, and relationships of the Council and the administration.

Community Government is a significant segment of the War Relocation Authority program. It can make and has made many contributions, and should be called upon in the future to assume important additional responsibilities. Through common understanding of policies and procedures, residents and the administration can work hand in hand for efficient center operation and in the paramount task of integrating one of our racial minorities into American life.

/s/ D. S. Myer

Director

HANDBOOK OF COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT

"...When a government orders, it but gives its subjects an artificial interest to obey; when it enlightens, it gives them an interior motive, the influence of which they cannot evade. The best method of instruction is the simple publication of facts, but sometimes it is advisable to aid the public in forming a judgment upon those facts." - Jeremy Bentham "The Theory of Legislation."

I. INTRODUCTION

The two major objectives of the War Relocation Authority are to facilitate the resettlement of evacuees into the main current of American life and to provide during that resettlement process the basic necessities and services within the relocation centers.

Most of the problems within a relocation center are similar to those which any new community faces in its initial adjustments. These are problems of health, education, law and order, employment, food, housing, recreation, production, and maintenance. The more unique problems include relocation, the temporary and emergency nature of many activities, the disruptive effects of evacuation, the identification of the evacuees with an enemy group, and the general setting of hostility engendered by war.

The solution of these problems is the joint responsibility of the War Relocation Authority and the evacuees and no satisfactory answer can be found to many difficulties except through cooperative efforts. Such cooperation is most effective when each cooperator understands the differing roles and responsibilities and when confidence and mutual respect are maintained. Community Government has as one of its objectives the provision of machinery by which administration and the evacuees can work out these problems in an organized and systematic manner.

Community government is not self-government of and by the evacuees alone. It is not self-government because, in addition to the legal limitations, the need for cooperative effort on the part of administration and evacuees eliminates the desirability of completely independent action on the part of either. But within the cooperative relationship there exists a real opportunity for the development of sound administration and effective democratic action. This development to date has been sometimes erratic and sometimes slow, but a measurable degree of progress has been made at all centers and at some the record is outstanding.

The growth of stable and integrated communities has come in spite of major obstacles. The evacuees have had only limited civic experience in their recent history, and were in disagreement on many major issues among themselves, a disagreement rooted in the fact that the Japanese in America were neither socially nor economically homogeneous. The population is split into Christian and Buddhist and each of these are further sub-divided into many sects. Occupation ranges from the unskilled laborer to the highly trained professional man with a high proportion of agriculturists, small tradesmen and persons in service occupations. Loyalties are divided by the accident of birth and age.

There are some characteristics shared by all. The residents are of Japanese descent. They have had the common experience of evacuation. They are called "evacuees", and are resident in relocation centers, under the supervision of a non-Japanese administrative staff, guarded by soldiers. Basic facilities within the centers are at almost level uniformity. There is little variation in wages, housing, food, or other essential services.

It is against this economic and cultural diversity of the inhabitants and within the requirements of physical and administrative uniformity that any center program, including government, has had to develop. This handbook is intended as an aid to the further development of the community through responsible, representative government.

II. THE FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT

A. Legislative

The Community Council has been charged with the responsibility for enacting regulations and providing penalties for their violation on matters which affect the internal peace and order of the centers and the welfare of the residents subject to certain limitations prescribed in the Administrative Manual. (See Section 30.6). Such regulations, when adopted, constitute the law of the center and are the rules which the Judicial Commission enforces. The adequacy of law enforcement in the centers will to a large extent depend upon the adequacy of the regulations adopted by the Councils.

Some of the Councils have not yet enacted bodies of regulations covering the whole areas of center life which they are authorized to regulate. The Project Attorneys, members of Internal Security, and others can render valuable assistance in laying the groundwork for such enactments and in drafting them in proper form. It is important in all the centers that such regulations be enacted as soon as possible.

B. Judicial

The judicial function of Community Government in the centers is exercised through a Judicial Commission. Such a Commission is to be set up at each center in accordance with the provisions of the basic charters adopted at the centers. These charters are, of course, not uniform and there is no expectation that the detailed operation of the Commissions will be according to a uniform procedure. Under the charters, varying degrees of authority are granted to the Community Councils in determining powers and procedures of the Judicial Commission.

It is, of course, highly important that the Judicial Commissions secure and maintain the confidence of the residents in the high quality of justice administered by the Commissions. Many aspects of the work of Judicial Commissions have been discussed in a memorandum issued by the Director on June 18. Though this memorandum was intended primarily for the use and information of the Project Directors and members of the administrative staffs, there are some parts of it which are decidedly relevant to the work of the Judicial Commissions. Two pertinent paragraphs are quoted herewith:

"The importance of dignity and decorum and a fairly regular procedure of a judicial character, in proceedings before both the Project Director and the Judicial Commission, cannot be over-emphasized. There is no necessity for rigid adherence to the technical formalities observed in courts of law, nor to the rigorous rules of evidence and

pleading which are observed in courts. On the other hand, a complete lack of formality breeds contempt for the judicial process, and creates occasion for saying that "we are not in a real court, after all". The idea that nothing more than a "kangaroo court" is being held will not only have a bad effect on maintenance of law and order, but will also be contrary to the legal basis which underlies the whole system of evacuee community government. Furthermore, omission of reasonable formalities may give defendants a ground for saying that they are being subjected to star chamber proceedings, without adequate opportunity to present a defense to charges made against them. It is not believed that this complaint can be fairly made by any evacuee who has yet been tried and punished for a law and order offense in a center, but we wish to be certain that no such complaint can ever be made, and insistence upon such reasonable formalities is one way of assuring fair trials."

"In centers in which a permanent system of community government has been established with a Judicial Commission regularly set up so that under Administrative Instructions No. 34 and 85 most law and order cases will be heard by the Commission rather than by the Project Director, the problem arises as to formulation of a code of judicial procedure for the Commission. This code may permissibly be included in the charter for community government, or it may be left to the Judicial Commission to formulate its own rules of procedure in the same manner that rules of court are promulgated by judges presiding over many courts. In either event it would be not only appropriate but desirable for the project attorney to lend his aid to whatever agency is given the task of formulating the code of procedure. In general, the rules of procedure to be drafted should not be too detailed. Probably a set of rules substantially similar to those appearing in Section III of Administrative Instruction No. 85, governing proceedings before the Project Director, might also be appropriate to proceedings before a Judicial Commission."

C. Advisory

One of the most difficult but important functions of the Community Council is its advisory role. It is important because the Council is in a strategic position to reflect evacuee attitudes and to organize and direct opinions of the evacuees. It is difficult because administration for one reason or another may find it impossible to carry evacuee recommendations into effect. The Council, if it finds its advice and recommendations being ignored or not followed, can easily develop a non-cooperative and negative attitude. For that reason, it is important that sympathetic attention be given to the recommendations of the Council, and full explanations be given where the action proposed is not feasible and credit be given where Council advice is followed.

The administration has the obligation of keeping the Council informed on current problems and developments. If the administration does not bring the Council into its confidence, it is inevitable that the Council will not be up to date on problems and programs, and is likely to waste its time on insoluble or already settled matters with the possible result of having the administration and Council out of step with each other. The Council has an equal obligation to keep the administration informed of community problems from the evacuee point-of-view.

D. Communication

The Community Council occupies a strategic position in the dissemination of information from the administration to the residents and in advising the administration of the wishes and desires of the residents. An adequate communication system facilitates understanding and mutual cooperation between administration and the evacuees.

It is obvious that as an organization becomes more complex, and more people are involved, the difficulties of communication increase. The only solution to such difficulties is the creation of an administrative structure with well defined channels for the free flow of facts, ideas, etc., from one individual to another.

The individual or psychological aspect of communication presents an equally difficult problem. Our experience has been that too often the facts have been interpreted against a background of experience which is not shared equally by appointed personnel and evacuees. The inevitable result is misunderstanding and frequently unexpected explosions of one kind or another. One striking example of misunderstanding of intent and purpose was seen in the announcement of the combat team. It was the intention to dramatize the loyalty of the nisei through a special Army unit, but this was interpreted by many as "segregation."

In developing a system of communication and in transmitting information and ideas, there are several cautions. We must never assume that people know the facts, that there is common understanding, or that a plan of action has been agreed upon. In other words, there is need for continuous transmission of current information. Success in transmitting information or ideas should be determined by checks to discover the effectiveness of the communication system.

There are three basic principles that should be observed in insuring an adequate communication system. The first is that the communication should conform to the lines of authority. For example, the Project Director or his representatives should be the principal ones to have contacts with the Community Council; similarly, there should be insistence that, through the Council or its affiliated bodies, information is transmitted to the administration.

The second principle is that communication should be systematic. Specific care should be taken that the same channels are used in each comparable situation and that the same individuals or groups participate in this relationship. Communication should also be regular and frequent. Formal contacts between the Council and the administration should take place weekly.

The third principle is that information transmitted should be meaningful. Each communication should be phrased in understandable language and should be of concern to those who are reached.

The organization of communication channels will include use of the Council to relay through its members information to the blocks. In turn, the blocks, through their representatives or through the action of block councils, can pass on information to the council and thence to the administration. The use of official announcements on bulletin boards and through the newspapers can be utilized as effectively by the Council as by the administration, but face to face relations are a more desirable means of dissemination of many kinds of information for both Council and administration.

have arisen from time to time. Most councils have an executive or administrative committee which considers over-all problems of the community. This group occupies a key position in relation to both the Council and the administration. Its functions should include coordination of the Council committees, boards and commissions, and close working relations with the Project Director. It is the group which should plan the strategy for presenting problems to the community and for enlisting community support for specific programs.

B. Boards and Commissions

While the primary function of Council committees is to keep the Council informed on the status of current problems and to advise intelligent action in regard to such situations, the boards and commissions composed of non-council members have a somewhat different function. These groups may be either advisory to the Council, to the administration, or to some other group. Some of these boards may operate semi-independently of the Council. In a normal city there are citizen-composed boards for the libraries, schools, health activities, planning and zoning, etc. Such non-council groups have not as yet been widely used. Administration might well encourage the council to create such boards for the library, schools, labor relations, employment, relocation, and other civic functions which permit semi-permanent and semi-independent bodies.

The persons appointed to membership on these boards should hold office independently of Council elections. Their term of office should probably be for a period of not less than six months, with reappointment the usual procedure. The advantage of a semi-permanent board is to ensure that community interest and participation in such affairs do not lapse with the election of a new Council. These groups will have a continuity over and beyond that of the Council committees.

With each new board, the Council should establish certain rules governing membership, frequency of meetings, and reports. The Council should insist that these boards provide regular reports to the Council of their meetings and their activities. The appointment of a Council member on each board has been followed at some centers.

C. Block Organization

The block group has become an important social and political unit at many centers. The block population often works together in cooperative social, economic, or political activities. The cohesion of the block is frequently manifested by a formal organization with a Council to discuss block problems and decide upon major and minor problems. Meetings are sometimes held weekly.

The block group offers an excellent opportunity for organized administration-evacuee contacts. Working through and with the community Council and the block representative therein, meetings can be utilized to bring to the residents current administration problems and new policies, and to promote better understanding and improve morale. Meetings arranged by the block representative for the Project Director would attract considerable interest and would provide an opportunity for him to become better acquainted with the older people and learn of their problems. Such meetings would also give him an opportunity to review the project program and to answer questions.

One of the weaknesses in government at some centers has been the failure of Council members to report regularly to their constituents. The result has been that the residents remain uninformed and Councilmen lose touch with current problems. One remedy would be for the Council to make it mandatory for each Councilman to meet at least twice monthly with his block group. The Executive Secretary should

prepare a summary of recent actions and current business for the use of each Councilman in such meetings.

D. Permanent Employees of the Council

The number of persons available for conducting the business of the Council on a full-time basis is limited. Provision has been made for an executive secretary, two clerk-stenographers, and a messenger. In addition, the chairman of the Council is paid for full time work in connection with Council affairs. Provision can be made for the employment on a part-time basis of an interpreter for use at Council meetings and translation of Council minutes and reports.

E. Bi-lingualism

Many of the Issei elected to Council membership will have greater facility in speaking Japanese than English. Some may know no English and some Nisei will know little or no Japanese. The bi-lingual character of the Council poses certain problems that should be resolved at an early date. It is essential that English be the official language. Interpreters should be provided for those who will find difficulty in either speaking or understanding the proceedings. All minutes should be released in both English and Japanese.

F. Parliamentary Procedures

Most legislative bodies develop their own parliamentary procedures. These are the result of long years of usage and custom. Robert's "Rules of Order" represents a systematization of such rules and is generally considered authoritative for this country.

Formal parliamentary procedures are in some ways contrary to the normal pattern of discussion in informal community groups. This can be observed in block meetings where there is little need for a formalized set of rules since it is the practice for each person who has something to say to be heard in turn and the decision is made from an orderly discussion. Generally speaking, the older Japanese are accustomed to this system while the younger ones are acquainted with the formal motion and discussion procedure. Among all old-world Japanese there is a great desire for unanimity.

It is probable that with many Issei on the Council there will be a tendency for Council business to be conducted Japanese style with long and thorough discussion of each point at issue. Such discussions may produce impatience among the younger members, but decisions will carry full support of most of the participants. The formal statement of these decisions should conform to recognized parliamentary procedures.

G. Official Reports of the Council

The Executive Secretary should assume responsibility for the keeping of minutes of Council meetings, reports of committees, and other official action by any group connected with Community Government. Copies of minutes and other reports should be made available to each Councilman, to the press, and to key administration officials.

An excellent procedure for summarizing Council actions and for evaluating the effectiveness of Council work is to provide for interim reports of Council activities. These reports should probably be made at least every three months. The reports should be for the use of the Council and for giving to the residents a connected story of recent happenings and action taken. Such a report should also be made available to the Project Director and, in fact, should be requested by him.

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Arbitration

- D. The plan of government shall provide for orderly methods of arbitration for settling civil disputes between residents of the project who voluntarily agree to submit their disputes to an arbitration commission (or such other name as used for this type of agency by the law of the State where the project is located).

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Limitations

- A. The Project Director may, at any time, in a communication addressed to the members of the Council, act aside and make void any regulation made by the Council which he finds to be in excess of the functions of the Council herein defined.
- B. During the time that may elapse before action is taken by the Community Council in exercising any of its functions or duties, the Project Director may establish such organization or provide such regulations as he may find necessary.
- C. The authority herein conferred in the field of community evacuee government is in addition to, and not in substitution for, the functions and responsibilities of the Project Director in administering the relocation center.
- D. All official records of the community evacuee government and all official actions of the government that are reduced to writing shall be written in the English language.
- E. The provisions of this Manual Sections do not apply to the Leupp or Tule Lake Centers.