

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

Community Analysis Section

Project Analysis Series No. 2

March 19, 1943

ARMY REGISTRATION AT GRANADA ^{1/}

This report on Army registration at one relocation center is based on information acquired during eight days at the project. While no claim is made that the analysis presented is exhaustive nor that the emphasis on specific factors is an accurate representation of the actual importance of these factors in determining the outcome, it is felt that the general picture presented is a fair one.

The question may well be raised as to whether events at Granada are representative of events at other centers. It is my feeling that the same considerations are involved at other centers, but that certain unique characteristics of Granada make it likely that they will have operated somewhat differently elsewhere. At least two conditions may be mentioned as possibly distinguishing Granada from other centers. First, the fact that the Army registration was conducted separately from the general leave clearance registration—which obviated the protests raised by Issei at having question 28 in its original form presented to them. Second, the generally amicable relations between the appointed personnel and the project residents, reflected in the widely expressed opinion that "Granada is the best center."

Undoubtedly, there are other differences between Granada and other centers, but these two seem especially important.

I. FIRST PHASE, REGISTRATION, 6 FEBRUARY TO 13 FEBRUARY

A. Announcements

The residents of the center first learned of the proposed Japanese American Combat Team when it was announced in the public press. The project paper carried President Roosevelt's letter on the 6th of February and in its next issue on the 9th, it printed the text of the War Department message in full. Meanwhile, the Chief of the Employment Office, who was charged with organizing the registration, had decided to utilize the appointed teaching staff as registrars. He had met with them the afternoon of the 6th and gone through Selective Service Form 304A question by question.

^{1/} Formerly titled "Army Registration at One Relocation Center." Except for a few minor typographical or grammatical changes, the insertion of the name of the project, and the addition of footnote No. 5, the original text is unaltered in this edition.

B. Army Team Presentation

On Monday and Tuesday, the 8th and 9th of February, the Army Team and some member of the appointed personnel, usually the Chief of the Employment Office, conducted a series of fifteen meetings, one every hour, to explain the registration to the entire population. Present at each meeting were the residents of two blocks. The Army Team went through its formalized routine and then allowed time for questions and discussions, copies of DSS Form 304A having been distributed to the audience to enable them to follow it. According to the Chief of the Employment Office the explanations were quite sufficient, although he recognized the limitations imposed upon the Army Team by their apparent instructions to say nothing which was not planned in advance. At the early meetings, the answers to questions raised were read by the Captain--although later he apparently memorized them--and any questions to which he had no written answer had to be passed by.

At the end of the meeting for each pair of blocks, the people were instructed to return to the same place at a time at least forty-eight hours later and in some instances more than forty-eight hours later, the original meetings occupying two days and the time allotted for registration three days.

C. Registration

On Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, the 10th, 11th, and 12th of February, a formal registration took place. The adult population--whether military age or not--returned to the place at which the earlier meeting had been held, and each individual was given an appointment for registration. The Nisei males of military age were given immediate appointments, and the rest of the adult group were given appointments for a later date for their leave clearance registration. A brief time was allowed for further questions and discussion. Whereupon the men of military age went to the school and the individual designated for registration. This registration was concluded the morning of February 13, there having been a few stragglers.

D. Results

Following the Army registration, it was found that 31 had volunteered for the Army, and that 106 had said "no" to question 28. These results came as a severe shock to the appointed personnel. Their reactions ranged from the sentiment that "if that is the way they feel, the hell with them," to the feeling of disappointment that the residents of Granada should have "let them down" so badly.

E. Factors Involved in the Registration Outcome (Affecting both Question 27 and Question 28).

1. Positive

These results require some explanation. While it is true that there were a large number of "noes" to question 28, it is also true that there were approximately 1,100 who said "yes"; and although 31 volunteers is not a large number, yet it does represent something. Several positive factors were involved in producing these results.

a. Patriotism

There can be no doubt that many of these original volunteers were influenced by a patriotic desire to serve their country at war, and perhaps a number of them were rather eager to manifest their loyalty in this concrete fashion--not so much as individuals, but as members of the Japanese American minority group.

b. Desire to Leave the Center.

At least one individual volunteer, aside from any other motives, expressed himself as seeing in the Army opportunity a chance to leave the center where he found life distasteful. It seems possible that others may have been somewhat influenced by this desire.

c. Pre-evacuation Experience

It is probably of first importance to recognize that the reaction of individual Japanese Americans to the Army registration has been influenced by their experiences prior to evacuation. This is shown by the fact that in two blocks at Granada there were fifteen volunteers all of whom were from _____, California. _____ was a community in which Christianity was very powerful among the Japanese Americans and it seems likely that this large number of volunteers from a small area have been influenced by their pre-evacuation experience. (These fifteen were not necessarily among the first group of volunteers, but the case is cited to illustrate the significance of pre-evacuation experience.)

d. Normal Impulsions to Enlist

Aside from the above factors, the Nisei males of military age must also have been influenced by the same considerations that induce people to enlist from the general population; the desire for adventure, the desire to escape from an uncomfortable domestic situation, and like personal considerations must have been involved.

2. Negative

a. Unemphatic Presentation

The manner in which the Army registration was presented to the residents of Granada was not well calculated to produce the optimum results. Omitting the more detailed difficulties, there were three general flaws in the presentation.

(1) The whole scheme was pushed through very suddenly and it came, as it were, like a bolt from the blue to the center residents. It is probably no exaggeration to say that the last thing the evacuees had been expecting when this announcement came was that there would be a sudden call for Nisei volunteers in the Army. This naturally meant that a considerable mental readjustment was required on the part of many before they

were able to get the whole idea in perspective and were prepared to express themselves on questions 27 and 28. Although at least forty-eight hours did elapse between the first explanation of DSS Form 304A and actual registration, it is probable that this was too little time to allow the idea to be thoroughly digested. In any event, it is certain that there was a good deal of tension among the evacuees from the time of the first announcement until after the registration had been completed, and it is further certain that there was a tremendous amount of discussion of the registration and its implications during that time.

(2) The presentation was weak from the point of view of persuading people to enlist, and from the point of view of impressing the importance of question 28 on the residents. This was true because of the Army's plan which demanded that no recruiting campaign be conducted. Both evacuees and appointed personnel stated repeatedly that the Army Team "leaned over backwards" in refraining from persuading anyone to enlist. This undoubtedly was according to their instructions, but it had the effect of deflating the importance of the whole proceeding and may well have convinced many that it did not matter much whether they enlisted, nor how they answered question 28. The Captain was quoted as having said publicly that it did not matter in the least to him how many volunteers there were, and that his only desire was to complete the registration as quickly as possible so that he could go on furlough to Texas.

Considering the intrinsic emotional significance of the entire proceeding to the evacuees, the absence of any emotional appeal must be regarded as contributing to confusion rather than to clarification.

It is perhaps worth noting, in addition, that the Nisei member of the Army Team was not probably a good choice. For one thing, his family were in the center, a fact which may have interfered with his effectiveness. For another, he was described by several evacuees as having been rather unsympathetic in discussions of the evacuation experiences.

(3) Perhaps most important in making the initial presentation unemphatic is the fact that DSS Form 304A was only the last of several "loyalty tests" to which the population had been subjected since Pearl Harbor. When it is recalled that these people were urged to show their loyalty by evacuating peaceably, which they did; by volunteering to participate in advance groups in the construction of the center, which they did; by participating in this, that, or the other work project which they did; it becomes apparent that the idea of a loyalty test was something of an old chestnut.

Thus the Army registration as a loyalty test was but one of a series of such tests to many evacuees and because of the previous ones, it seemed to them not to be of special significance.

b. Protest Reaction

The relative paucity of volunteers and the relatively large number of "noes" to question 28 were in part a protest. For different individuals, the protest might be differently motivated but a number of factors may be enumerated as of considerable significance.

(1) Pre-evacuation experience is certainly involved in some of the negative responses. The status of the Japanese-Americans from the West Coast and the frequent discriminations against them there are a contributing factor in the bitterness of many. To be more specific, some of the "noes" on question 28 came from individuals who had resided in _____, a small town distinguished by the fact that it has had a separate and inferior school for the Japanese for some years.

(2) The evacuation itself is, of course, deeply resented by many. The more ideologically inclined of the Nisei are especially resentful of the partial denial of their citizenship rights. This resentment has been aggravated by the attitude of some of the Issei who have taunted them with the assertion that, after all, citizenship has not resulted in their obtaining any distinctive treatment now that a crisis situation has arisen.

Many unpleasant personal experiences in evacuation have contributed to a general resentment on the part of the Nisei, for example, some of them have seen their parents interned suddenly and without—from the Nisei point of view—any justification.

(3) Among the evacuees the Army, in particular among the agencies of the Government, has been disliked by many for a number of specific reasons.

(a) The Army is held responsible for the fact of evacuation, since it was ordered by the West Coast Defense Command.

(b) The Army discharged Kibei soldiers immediately following Pearl Harbor, a fact which was of particular importance during the registration when the Army turned about and requested volunteers.

(c) The assembly centers were organized and administered by the Wartime Civil Control Administration, an agency of the West Coast Defense Command. These centers were the scene of some of the most exacerbating experiences of the evacuees. To cite a minor illustration only, the soldiers manning searchlights at Santa Anita are reported not only to have illumined the boundaries of the center, but also to have followed the movements of evacuees from place to place within the center. That this was not pleasant for women enroute to latrines can be imagined.

(d) Shortly after Pearl Harbor, the Army changed the classification of Nisei selective service registrants to 4-C, the classification for enemy aliens. This was deeply resented in itself, and of course, the Army was held responsible for it.

(e) The relocation centers are guarded by the Army, and all passes in or out must be approved by the resident company of military police.

(f) The special restrictions on the movements of the evacuees into and out of the relocation centers within the restricted zone of the West Coast Defense Command are imposed by the Army.

(g) The decision to create a Nisei Combat Team, that is, to segregate the Nisei who do volunteer for military service, is presumed by many evacuees to have been made by the Army.

In this complex of factors, it is easy to see many reasons for a dislike of the Army, and a partial explanation for the somewhat negative response of many Nisei to the Army's appeal for volunteers. It is also apparent that the Nisei had good reason for feeling, as they did, that the appeal for volunteers was a radical change in policy, and thus for their not readily understanding the reasons behind it.

c. Actual Disloyalty

Some of those who said "no" to question 28 of course did so in full understanding and with deliberate intention to deny allegiance to the United States. Some of these were influenced by their Issei parents, but the influence was probably one of long standing rather than an immediate effort on the part of the Issei to persuade them to repudiate the United States. It is an interesting fact that all but five of those who originally said "no" to question 28 had come to Granada through an assembly center, consisting largely of a rural population from Northern California, and because the rural people were so isolated from the normal currents of American life it must be supposed that they were correspondingly more influenced by the Japanese culture of their parents and that as a result some of them felt a genuine loyalty to Japan. 2/

Others who said "no", however, must be presumed to have been so embittered by the evacuation experience as to have been rendered disloyal by it.

Some few were members of families who had applied for repatriation, or who for other reasons looked to Japan for their personal future rather than to this country. These people were under a compulsion to say "no" to question 28 if only to insure their future acceptance by Japan.

Finally, some of those who were classified as "noes" must have been genuine cultural hybrids. For example, one Nisei answered question 28 by saying, "I love both countries." These sentiments must have been shared by others.

2/ The Issei influence perhaps was rather important in preventing more Nisei from enlisting during the original registration. This is shown by two events which occurred at that time. One Nisei, desiring to enlist but yet somewhat uncertain about it, called on the Project Director accompanied by his mother. The boy expressed his wish whereupon the mother addressed him in Japanese, and turning to the Project Director bowed and smiled. This was repeated several times until someone who understood Japanese was located. It turned out that she had been saying to the boy, "You are a disgrace to your father and your country."

Another individual, a member of the council, who was considering volunteering reported that no less than seven mothers had called upon his mother to try to persuade her that he should be prevented from enlisting. The reason given was that because of his influential position his example might lead their sons to volunteer also.

d. Normal Reluctance to Enlist

Finally, it must be recognized that among the evacuees, as among the rest of the American population, there is a certain reluctance to volunteer for military service. This is motivated by a desire to provide for one's family, by a desire to remain in civilian life, and by countless other personal considerations. It is evidenced in the relatively small proportions of volunteers found in most states of the Union—the percentage being usually not over 10 per cent.

3. Confusion Regarding the Significance of Questions 27 and 28

It must already be apparent that at the time of the original registration there was a tremendous amount of confused thinking among the evacuees regarding the meaning of the entire Army registration procedure. I believe it can be said with certainty that this confusion persisted in the minds of many registrants up to the time when they filled out their questionnaires. Moreover, I think that the confusion and misunderstanding of the questionnaire accounts in a large measure for both the small number of volunteers and the majority of the original "noes" on question 28. This confusion was not resolved until the third phase of registration to be described below. 3/

F. Factors Involved in the Registration Outcome (Affecting Especially Question 28)

1. Confusion

The general confusion just mentioned played a part in many of the negative answers to question 28, but in addition there were at least two misunderstandings of a different sort.

Some of the registrants did not succeed in distinguishing questions 27 and 28 as is evidenced, for example, by the Nisei who said in response to question 28 "yes, if drafted"; and by the twelve Nisei who answered question 28 "yes" with the qualification that they were unwilling to enter combat duty. Other answers indicate the same sort of mix-up, and personal conversation with evacuees produced the evacuee opinion that some of the registrants had interpreted the "defend" phrase of question 28 as meaning that an unqualified "yes" was tantamount of volunteering.

3/ One form taken by this confusion is seen in the reluctance of some Nisei to swear unqualified allegiance. One individual crossed out the "unqualified" and answered question 28 "yes" (he later stated that he wished to delete his deletion). Also, one Christian pastor reported that it was the word unqualified which caused the most trouble to several boys who consulted him about registration. The feeling seems to have been that because the evacuees could not accept as unqualifiedly justified the evacuation and its curtailment of rights; they ought not to say that their allegiance was unqualified. That is to say, they somehow wished to state their loyalty while at the same time reserving the right to protest the evacuation.

Question 28 was verbally confusing to a few of the registrants. Discussion of the language difficulty with a number of people who know Japanese or who have had considerable experience with bilingual Nisei or Kibei produced the unanimous view that because of the double negative in Japanese the combination of a positive and negative statement in question 28 must have mixed up some of the Nisei whose command of English is inferior. This view was borne out by at least one of the answers to question 28 which read as follows, "No, I swear that I have no intentions of harm to the United States."

2. The Cultural Background

Aside from the concentration of "noes" among Nisei of a rural background in California, it is of interest to note that 49 of 106 of the original "noes" on question 28 were from Kibei; and that 73 of the 106 were Buddhists in religion. These facts confirm the impression that a disproportionate number of the "noes"—as might be expected—were from those whose contacts with Japanese culture had been generally close.

II. SECOND PHASE, INTERIM, 13 FEBRUARY TO 18 FEBRUARY

When the results of the registration became known to the administrative staff the reaction was largely one of shock that they were as negative as they were. Following a staff meeting at which the results were announced, a joint meeting of the old and new councils was called which was attended by the Project Director, the Superintendent of Education, and others of the administrative staff. Council members were apprised of the registration outcome and of the administration's attitude, great stress being laid on the fact that there were three times as many "noes" on question 28 as there were volunteers. Following this council meeting, the new council held a meeting at which it was proposed that the significance and importance of questions 27 and 28 be explained to the males of military age at three special mass meetings. This decision apparently was arrived at by the executive committee of the new council, although it may have its ultimate origin in small conferences between certain executive committee leaders and certain of the administrative personnel. In any event, the three mass meetings were called by the council, and at the time it was emphasized that the administrative personnel present had come by invitation of the council. Thus the action taken had evacuee sponsorship in the eyes of the center residents.

These proceedings took place over the week-end of February 13, and lasted into the next week. On Thursday, February 18, the announcement of the mass meetings to be held on Friday and Saturday appeared in the Project paper. It was decided to hold three meetings of approximately 400 each rather than one meeting for the 1,200 male Nisei of military age.

III. THIRD PHASE, RECONSIDERATION, 19 FEBRUARY TO 6 MARCH

A. Mass Meetings

The three mass meetings were held as scheduled, two on February 19 and one on February 20. The program at each was substantially the same and included the following items:

1. Opening remarks by the chairman of the community council. The three to one ratio of "noes" to volunteers was stressed as a reason for the meetings, and the council's desire that a better showing be made was emphasized.
2. Statements were made by two volunteers as to their reasons for volunteering.
3. The Captain discussed possible answers to question 27, and explained how each answer would be interpreted.
4. The Superintendent of Education delivered a short address entitled, "Observations on Nisei Registration in the United States Army," in which he did two things: first, attempted to relieve the obvious seriousness and tension produced by the early speakers; and second, to make a deliberate emotional appeal for more volunteers.
5. The Project Director discussed the meaning of answers to question 28, stating that the question was a straightforward loyalty question which must be answered with an unqualified "yes" or "no" according to the registrant's feeling. He also suggested rather plainly that those who were disloyal must expect to lose certain privileges, and might even be subject to internment or segregation.

B. The Council's Campaign

Following the mass meetings, the community council through its representative in each block or each district, approached individually all those who had said "no" to question 28 with the exception of those who had applied for repatriation or who were known to be sincere and unconfused in their repudiation of the United States. In each individual conference, the registrant was quizzed as to his reasons for the "no" and counterarguments were presented by the councilman. One executive committee member approached nine individuals in his district himself and talked to each "until they agreed to change their answer." He reported that no one of the nine had any sound reason for the "no" but had either been confused, or had simply underestimated the importance and the significance of his answer.

C. The Results of the Reconsideration

By March 6, the mass meetings and the council's campaign of individual contact had raised the number of volunteers to 116 and had resulted in 77

of the original "noes" changing their answer to "yes". Since the 116 volunteers had been preceded by about a score of volunteers who were in service at Camp Savage, and an even larger number who were teaching at Boulder, the total number of Nisei males of military age who had volunteered for military service was well above ten per cent of the total group. This compares favorably with the ten and a fraction per cent of volunteers from the State of Colorado, and is especially significant when it is remembered that no evacuee was allowed to volunteer for the Navy or for the Air Corps, and that very few of them could anticipate commissions. 4/

The twenty-nine who, after personal contacts by councilmen, declined to change their "no" to a "yes" must probably be regarded as an irreducible minimum of non-loyal Nisei. 5/

It should also be borne in mind that the 106 originally classified as "no" on question 28 included everyone whose answer to that question was anything but an unqualified "yes". Thus nineteen of the original "noes" had actually said "yes, if non-combat duty", or "yes, if citizenship rights are restored."

D. Factors in the Changed Results

The effect of the mass meetings was to define clearly and emphatically the significance of negative responses to questions 27 and 28. An emotional appeal, to volunteer or to express loyalty on question 28, for the sake of the residents at Granada and the future welfare of the Japanese American group had been introduced into the situation. Moreover, the prime significance of this particular "loyalty test" as compared with previous ones was made plain. This clarification apparently did much to dissipate the confused reactions of the evacuees, and to show them how the registration results would be interpreted by the public at large.

The council's individual explanations to those who said "no" made certain that no one whose response had been unfavorable was left untouched by this new definition of the situation.

I believe that the majority of those originally classified as "no" on question 28 who later changed that answer to "yes" are fundamentally loyal to the United States. I feel that the circumstances under which their original answers were made (see discussion of negative factors in E and F above) are quite sufficient to explain their original negative. In this connection, it is worth noting that at a time when about half of the original "noes" had been changed to "yes", 36 of those who changed stated that their original answer had been due to misunderstanding; or that when the question had been explained to them they had decided to change.

4/ It is perhaps of interest to note that well over fifty per cent of the Nisei girls volunteered for service in the WAAC'S in the later leave clearance registration.

5/ Or so it seemed on March 6, when the writer left the project. A letter from the Project Director dated 27 March, 1943 notes that changes from "no" to "yes" on question 28 and additions to the number of volunteers continued until the close of registration on March 10. As of that date, volunteers totaled 126, and only 14 were maintaining their "no" or qualified answers to question 28, DSS 304 ^A.

Some few who changed, no doubt, did so because of the obvious implied threat (of lost privileges or segregation) in the new presentation, but in my opinion the number who did so while remaining actually disloyal must have been small.

The increase in the number of volunteers can be explained largely in terms of a decision to enlist on the part of many who had been somewhat inclined to at first, but who had said "no" because they were unable finally to make up their minds. The emotional appeal in the new presentation, the chance that their action might redound favorably for the entire Japanese American population, the pressure of public opinion as expressed by the community council--sometimes in individual recruiting talks apparently, the "band wagon" effect of certain prominent young men's volunteering, largely explained the increase in the number of volunteers.

IV. FOURTH PHASE, CURRENT SITUATION

It was widely reported that by March 6 most of the tension which had existed in the center at first had disappeared. With the situation redefined, and with many individuals changing their original answers on questions 27 and 28, the entire registration began to be looked at as an historic event which was important certainly, but which no longer remained an active issue.

There is some evidence that the Issei have been reconciled to the idea of their sons serving in the United States Army. Most blocks have arranged parties for the volunteers under the auspices of leading residents, both Issei and Nisei. The feeling as reported by one Issei of prominence is that these volunteers are courageous young men who are entering the Army, that they had volunteered for the sake of the country at large and of the entire center population, and that they should be given the best possible send-off by all concerned.

Both Issei and Nisei now seem proud of the volunteers. This is especially in evidence among the Nisei, and is shown in various ways; for example, in the appearance of a service banner with ten stars in the Reports Office towards the end of the first week in March (ten Nisei from this office alone had volunteered).

There is, however, some continuing anxiety as to the fate of those who said "no" to question 28, and as to what provisions will be made for those who changed from "no" to "yes". One influential Issei stated his view that if segregation is ordered--even for those who did not change their "no", there might be some trouble in the center. He went on to raise the question of the constitutionality of segregation of citizens for their political views, arguing that so long as their opposition was not active there was no ground for segregation. On the other hand, one Nisei, a volunteer I believe, insisted that unless those whose answers to question 28 remained "no" were removed from the center serious difficulties might arise. The evidence at hand does not permit any accurate estimate as to the relative prevalence of these two views: they are cited merely to show that some anxieties remain, and that the disposition of the "noes" on question 28 is a matter of great delicacy, and must be carefully handled.