

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY  
Community Analysis Section

Project Analysis Series No. 3  
July, 1943

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

FACTORS INFLUENCING LOW ENROLLMENT  
IN CERTAIN ADULT EDUCATION COURSES

The immediate purpose of this report is to throw light on the matter of low enrollments in certain Adult Education courses. The subject is of practical importance, the courses in question having been arranged and announced, and a competent instructor secured. Since this is the case, it seems advisable to assemble the data speedily which the author had earlier gathered on this topic, subjecting them only to the additional check of conferences with both appointed personnel and residents obtained within the last two days. Before discussing the data, thanks are due particularly to the Superintendent of Education, who made suggestions embodied in this report, and to the director in charge of the Adult Education program, who together with me analyzed both the problem and this report before and after its completion in the form of a first draft.

Enrollments in adult courses are surprisingly high in most instances, especially when one considers that this educational program really got into swing sometime after a Community Recreation department of wide appeal had first become firmly established and imbedded in community life. There can be little doubt that a fine job of organization has been accomplished by the director of Adult Education, and though this is not the topic of the present report, sewing classes and vocational training courses have been, to cite only two examples, consistently well-attended in the recent past and generally appreciated throughout the colony.

The definite concern of this report, however, is to understand why certain courses, two in number, should prove exceptions to the rule that Adult Education is now, fortunately, a going concern at Tule Lake. These courses, also in the program, are now being offered under the direction of \_\_\_\_\_ of the Adult Education Summer School staff and are poorly attended at the present time. They deal with "Americanization" and relocation under the titles, "Understanding America" (Mon. and Wed. from 7 to 9 P.M.), and "Preparation for Relocation" (Tues. and Thurs. at the same time). A third course in American history and government is included by the instructor in English classes already well-attended and in operation, and therefore offers no special problem.

A more general and, perhaps, more important concern of this report is to understand why courses of this type, "Americanization" and relocation courses, evoke so little interest in the colony. It should be said initially that the former category, aimed for Issei and Kibei primarily, has drawn low enrollments right along. "Preparing for Relocation", though a new emphasis, was actually requested from the colony. Why then, the disinterest amounting almost to apathy? In "Americanization classes" (the term is wisely and assiduously avoided here because of its "high-pressured salesmanship" connotations) the low number of registrants actually dwindled following the period of loyalty-registration. They have remained low ever since. But, obviously, that incident, although a definite set-back, hardly accounts for the more or less consistent apathy toward the program. The statistical chart would show a continually low enrollment, a drop during and after the period of loyalty-registration, and a slightly lowered threshold ever since.

In a community of almost 14,000 living within a single square mile, deriving from three states, and representing various age and social groupings, the search for causes of disinterest in a few courses cannot be mathematically measured, not limited to a single factor or set of them. As will be seen below, the age-pyramid of older Issei male, younger Issei (or Nisei) wife, and decidedly younger children (Nisei or Kibei) has a certain significance. But some reasons for disinterest as expressed by colonists are on the level of personal likes and dislikes, habits and tastes. For example, one minor factor easily overlooked unless one studied the habits of the colonists objectively is that rural Californian Issei, a sizeable segment of the population living mainly in two wards of the Project, represent a group who more than those from northern states or urban backgrounds, follow the simple farmer's rule of "early to bed, early to rise". At 9 or 10 P.M., "night life" is less in evidence than among those of urban or northern provenience. Thus, even at this center, rural habits of life, patterned over the years, help explain why a two-hour evening course fails to draw on a group within its confines. The more decidedly rural element here is no more noted than elsewhere for its proclivities in the direction of Adult Education courses beginning at 7 and ending at 9. I have found, in calling on rurals at a modest evening hour, that I am frequently met at the door by the paterfamilias,-- showered, robed, and quite ready to retire. This factor, important for a limited group, is of course not the whole story for the entire colony. While it illustrates a reason which might easily be lost sight of by the unwary in favor, perhaps, of such a shibboleth as "subversion", it is true also that the rural habit is far from immutable, and indeed is overcome when an effective or interesting event occurs.

The major resistance, as a matter of fact, is due not to rural backgrounds alone, but as regards such education, to Issei-

rural backgrounds. After all, adult education of this type depends in large part on the reactions to it of the Issei, for whom it is primarily intended. It is important, therefore, to look to some of these more typical reactions as they have been expressed in interview and informal questionnaire.

Here a second factor, but one less limited because of applicability to a wider grouping in this population, is the factor of language barrier. Just as language is a familiar and easy means of communication, language difference is a difficult obstacle, especially where education is concerned. A comparison might illustrate this point. It has been remarked earlier that the adult recreation program does not flounder as does the adult education program in its Americanization phases. It should be noted, however, that language difference does not affect the former as it does the latter. The fact is that recreation, once the routines and forms are learned, can almost proceed, to all intents and purposes, on a sub-lingual basis. What actually happens is that once the routine is established by the instructor, the individuals may joke and converse in their accustomed native language with little interruption to the activities at hand. But education, -- more serious, more verbal, more dependent upon continuous moment to moment rapport between teacher and class, -- requires an equally continuous and invariable means of communication, written or spoken. As stated on p. 7 of the Adult Education director's Report on the Tule Lake Adult Education Program, March 10, 1943, the Japanese language classes in American backgrounds, intended for Issei, were effectively prohibited by War Department instruction some time earlier. It is unfortunate that this ruling obtained so long before the ban was lifted, since here at Tule Lake Issei still refer to it as operative. It effectively strengthened a gap in communication which only Japanese could ever bridge in the early stages. Today the two courses mentioned above are designed to be conducted through the intermediacy of an interpreter. While this method contains a flaw in rapport between the instructor and his class, nevertheless the gain made by translation into Japanese, a gain in communication, should be advertised more intensively throughout the colony. In regard to such courses apparently, many people still labor under the impression that they are given exclusively in academic English, a language forbidding enough to the 100% American, but worse still in the minds of those constrained to do their thinking in Japanese.

Related to this matter of language barrier, or language difference, is another: namely, the difficulty of obtaining completely bilingual resident teachers who are capable, at the same time, of handling such materials interestly and expertly. Somehow, adult education, in a good many Issei minds, suggests teachers (Nisei) who may "understand" America well enough, but so far as they are concerned falter and flounder shamefully in

the complicated labyrinth of Japanese. From the point of view of Adult Education programs, on the other hand, there is no point in setting up classes with fluent Japanese-speakers, if they do not know the material at issue fluently, or better still, intimately and correctly. The shortage of teachers qualified in both skills is, by now, an insuperable difficulty. Nevertheless, the point might be that while lectures and class discussions will be through interpreter, smaller discussion groups (quiz sections; conference groups) could easily be arranged in connection with such courses, in which the discussion could be led by someone fluent in Japanese. As will be seen below, such sections should be headed by someone older than the average Nisei. The net gains in developing informal leadership among the Issei might be well worth the trouble, and the difficulties of foreign (in this case, English) language, or unpalatable Japanese, disposed of. Naturally, such group discussions, related to the course, should be based on the material of the week and the suggestion of the Caucasian instructor. I believe it will help make the course, for Issei, much more "their course", and the small sections may develop leadership which in a larger group would not be forthcoming.

Related to the point just made is another matter which must be watched, I think, in arranging for such courses. It has to do with the annoyance older Issei feel at being taught by younger Nisei (who do not even know how to speak "good Japanese"). The spectacle of the young teaching the old is not viewed here with equanimity, and ill accords with Japanese-American's attitudes, derived from old world peasant backgrounds, on the topic of education in general. The claim of age to authority is especially strengthened in the new world by the absence of older individuals (grandparents) in the average Issei family. The grandparental generation, which in the old world peasant family acted to diffuse authority by age, and remove a portion of it, as it affected the young, from the parental generation, is largely absent here. The Issei, therefore, represent a parental generation level which is solely in authority. This claim of age to authority, pure and unadulterated, is overcome best as regards education where the prestige of degrees or the magic of higher education enters the picture. Now, of course, the contention is that the cream of Japanese-American college instructors and highly trained students have largely left the Project area. While age, even in the peasant mind, will sometimes bow to the authority of higher education, these resources are strictly limited at the present reading for the uses of Adult Education.

In regard to Americanization classes in the past, or courses of this general type, other discomforts, -- more physical than psychological, -- are remembered. Classes without seating accommodations came to the mind of some questioned. Others remembered rooms so cold that classes huddled near the stove.

The director of Adult Education has told me of sewing classes in the "pioneering" days which did their cutting on the floors. Rooms without blackboards are mentioned. Certainly, this is not Adult Education de luxe, or even on the level, speaking of standards, found on the outside. The department has more than made up for this by sheer skill in organization, by involving block leadership, and by consistently bettering physical standards. Still, there lurks in many minds a remembrance of things past, to which is added the likewise real shortage of resident instructors, mentioned above, possessing facility and confidence afforded by earlier teaching or graduate school experience.

Still, these difficulties of a concrete sort, which have been coped with effectively by organizing skill, do not themselves wholly explain enrollments of four and six people reported by the Adult Education director for these classes. While enrollments in these courses have been generally low right along, they appear to have become worse after the period of loyalty-registration. To illustrate the effect on education of these turbulent days, and the kind of harvest still being reaped, one might refer to the concomitant drop in high school enrollment. During and immediately following the registration period, parents came in large numbers to the local high school and withdrew children from the classes. When the peak of this crisis was left far behind, these children re-enrolled, in many cases again at the parental behest. But public or high school education is education in the accepted and respected sense for Issei, while adult education is something else again. The insistence on education for "our" children, -- something "we" missed, -- is a far cry, they say, from "lecturing adults". Adult education is, further, absent in tradition and consequently not encrusted with sentimental attachments. Indeed, it is thought of seriously only as a matter of higher professional training, or else the pursuits of the venerable scholar. In the old world communities, certainly no vast amount of attention was lavished on adult education by authorities. In the immigrant communities, economic survival consumed the bulk of one's energies, and the cultural enclaves formed, half through discrimination, prejudice and exploitation, and half through the weight of cultural factors making for familial and social solidarity, acted effectively to cut off the outer world in anything but an economic sense. The resultant communities maintained their social and cultural distance. Unlike the Japanese in Hawaii, Japanese in America saw their communities encysted, their language schools formed, and their homogeneity maintained. In Central California, where this process continued under the whip-lash of an unfriendly press, and a history of plantation labor, it is no secret that virtually segregated schools existed without legal authorization, it is true, but through the simple expedient of zoning school districts by community (and color) line. While adult education programs

attempted to reach into these communities, and did to an extent, the barriers of social distance, of community enclaves, and of in-group solidarity were most effective. The process of assimilation by hybridization, accomplished in Hawaii, was illegal according to California legislation.

Today, at this center, the lack of habituation to Adult Education is most noticeable. There are, to begin with in such a program, a few stalwarts of the Hyman Kaplan variety already in the ranks. The beginning is only made, and then, this unfamiliarity with adult educational programs is intensified by certain other developments.

Let us remember that registration, and all that transpired in this general setting before and thereafter, was preceded by the period of federal investigation, the period of economic loss and evacuation, assembly centers, etc. These are the things which are discussed and remembered with trepidation at the Project. They lead back, in many memories, to earlier experiences of an unpleasant sort, particularly in California. We have already mentioned registration as a distinct set-back, and one recorded in enrollment figures in classes. But even today, here and now, there remain in a good many simple farmers' minds a fear of and a reaction against official rulings, official-looking forms, official policies, and even official education. W.R.A., in all of this, is hardly judged by its own lights alone. There have been, it is true, vast strides in winning confidence in the program. But while it is realized that evacuation was not a W.R.A. decision and assembly centers not W.R.A. creations, the total outline of the recent past as it impinges on current emotional reactions, in hopes, fears, wishes, disappointments and desires, cannot be neatly separated from the present. The tendency to react against officialdom, while fearing it, meets and merges with such older cultural patterns as are easily recalled. These older cultural items are naturally those to which the elder Issei are inured and in which they experience a sense of comfort and security. Thus, as reported on p. 15 of the Adult Education director's Report, op.cit., the cry again becomes "Woman's place is in the home", and startling references are made to children "running wild" and uncared for, -- all presumably in the interests of launching a critique against Adult Education. Obviously, when 14,000 people are confined in one square mile, under government order, the closeness of the resulting community amplifies and exaggerates each instance of mischief. A "kid's stunt", which in a larger, more diffuse social setting would be dissipated by distance, here is magnified by the lack of anonymity and privacy in the community, and by sheer rumor. Therefore, the delinquency "furor", rightly scored by the director of Adult Education as a spurious critique of Adult Education, is in reality just grist for the mill of a reactive, almost revivalistic, tendency to invoke such older cultural norms as "woman's place is in

the home". The author is collecting other evidences of this re-voiling from the present and the more immediate past into an earlier haven. On the score of personal disintegration, Nisei are found who are, in the Project situation, losing whatever facility in English they once had; on the side of cultural revivalism, individuals are re-discovering abilities in specifically Japanese arts and crafts, once thought dead and forgotten, but not avidly remembered.

I mention the "woman's place is in the home" variety of crisis because it helps explain why women's participation in these programs is not greater. Actually, they are younger and more Americanized in many instances than their Issei husbands, but become a part of the total reaction in the elder segment of the population. When a community recoils from modernism and officialdom into the comfortable grooves of traditional security, however, we may safely look to the Issei men, the paterfamilias in each family, as pivotal in the entire process. In Japanese-American social structure, these men indeed control family decisions, and though they may encourage the ladies to learn such arts as flower arrangement and artificial flower-making, both enjoying wide popularity, these activities fall to the benefit of Community Recreation programs, not of Adult Education. Thus, the Japanese traditionalism of a half century ago, as these gentlemen learned it, is revived and flourishes again. Insofar as it is cultural (not political), it is not reprehensible; and it will flourish in these forms so long as the past and the present are thought of with fears and misgivings. Indeed, the cultural factor will continue to operate, whether we like it or not, since cultural traditionalism, which is continuous by definition, cannot be ruled out of court by obiter dicta or wishful thinking. Also, so long as the recent past is recalled, as indeed it must be, it will act to reinforce feelings of group solidarity and cultural solidarity among the older Issei gentlemen to whom the recent past has been, by and large, an unpleasant experience.

Along this line, there is the factor of sheer disinterest in courses which strike no immediately responsive chord. I think it is proper educational psychology to say that courses to be successful (popular), must start where the students (residents) actually are, and not in some imagined academic haven outside their world. Where adult education is concerned and such affairs as diplomas and credits are hardly obligatory, the same applies to the active promotion of course offerings. I know full well that at Tale Lake courses of this type have been geared to adult needs and accomplishments. But in "promoting" courses of this type, not yet popular, the appeal must be doubled. In launching a program of Americanization which has never drawn fire in the past, programs cannot merely be described by title

in the Tulean Dispatch and be expected to take hold in the general community. Nor can the methods used in the past, no matter how effective in connection with vocational courses and such things as sewing classes, really be relied on to accomplish the job. Not everyone reads the Dispatch from stem to stern (to put it mildly) and letters to key individuals in the community are too easily disregarded. The block managers, undoubtedly useful in other connections, are too official a channel to carry the message. The approach, I should imagine, should be made personally, and in good Japanese American style through intermediaries who are respected in the community and "sold" on the idea. The author in his efforts to assemble "key" people of the community into a staff for community analysis, and in all important operations since that time, has relied on culturally sanctioned forms in winning people to the idea of studying their own community. In regard to Americanization programs, likewise, individuals who tell their friends, verbal communication and sound approach are all necessary in popularizing the classes. I find most decidedly, especially as regards Issei, that older patterns of promoting interests through the intermediacy of respected individuals (go-betweens) have by no means broken down in the Tule Lake colony.

Reference has been made above to the matter of sound approach in promoting programs. The word is a vague one, and require clarification. In remembering whom we are dealing with, and the exact situation in which they find themselves, such instrumentalities as the go-between and polite personal contact will not be enough. They will go far in convincing Issei conditioned by peasant patterns of culture of a specific type, that Americans are not wholly official, impersonal, and oblivious of Japanese ways, -- that the neighborly and polite use of go-betweens is recognized by them, too. But sound approach implies also the use of subject-matter in such a way as to win confidence in the purpose of such courses. Here the matter of cultural reaction, of escape into the past is of first importance. An appreciation of the weight of this factor, and the emotional intensity of a cultural revivalistic trend, requires that we forget about the promotion of Adult Education in the usual unsegregated community on the outside, and focus attention upon the specific nature of the community in question. It is not a community in which courses may be set up quickly, advertised formally and through official channels in large part, and be expected to win immediate converts to the cause. These people came here with an acute sense of community, familial, and in-group solidarity, many of them from cultural enclaves, and the tie that binds them is an emotional realization of this fact. More than that, as regards Issei particularly, they have found their community of culture always at hand in their own group; the language they speak, the thoughts they think, the polite forms they have learned to follow from childhood, and all the cultural baggage they carry in every



venture, within the community, or outside. The older and the more rural, the less they are used to speed, to official modes and operations, and to pressuring from the outer community. Today, with broken plans and fortunes, there is a certain fear, a certain canny manner of approach, toward "white official doctrine". The emotional affect in all of this is far from the norms of politicalized thinking. It is a part of the cultural reaction, emotionally felt and psychologically evidenced.

Thus, America which has never entirely been, even in their economic dealings, what sociologists call an "open casteless" society, must be geared to their own experience and understanding. Likewise, relocation, a new and unfamiliar emphasis, must be placed in a context which to their minds is warm and secure. There is still the fear of "something being put over", the in-group and ingrown stigma of inu ('dog', informer), the desire to remain within the accepted community and not to break with it on pain of ostracism. While the courses in question undoubtedly take account of these facts, it would seem to the author that there is a promotional aspect here which is lost sight of.

In view of the delicacy of these topics -- Americanization and relocation -- in the current situation, I have one suggestion to offer. I have noticed in talks to social groups throughout the colony, a tendency to ask questions about resettlement, about American attitudes toward those of Japanese ancestry, about assimilation, and about what I think of little 'Tokios'. I have had enough experience at this to realize that all are touchy subjects among the Issei. In much the same way, the newspapers most critical of Japanese-Americans (Hearst press; Sacramento Bee) are the most widely read and discussed throughout the colony. This is not psychological sadism, on inquiry; it is a desire to feel out the official world and the world of opinion, and to know the "worst", if needs be. Since both "understanding America" and relocation-resettlement topics are moot points for crystallizing latent fears in the community, I suggest a constructive approach which begins with less "official" points and at the same time points to deeply rooted interests, over which the Issei feel they exercise real control. Thus, in starting on "neutral" ground, or with the individual's own interests, it might be well, since this set of courses is intended for Issei already rigidly formalizing resistances to relocation and all that smacks of officialdom, to center attention upon the needs of their children. Already it is apparent, that the best instances of Issei resettlement were accomplished in the interests of the children of the family. An Issei woman recently boasted, in good sensible fashion, that she was resettling to get her children out of here. There have been other instances of a similar sort, and the position, I find, is unassailable, even by the most ruthless critic in the colony.

Thus, in either "Understanding America" or in "Preparing for Relocation", a change of title and a simple, but proper emphasis, might go further toward the same end among a people deeply attached to and concerned about their children if it stressed "understanding your children and their problems in the American world and their possibilities of making a way in the world 'outside'". Actually, I am convinced that the Issei as a group have a real understanding of the fact that the gap they must learn to bridge is present in the microcosm of their own homes and families, just as it exists in the outer world. The request for a course in relocation, later ignored when offered might well have been due to just such a realization, timorously faced and later rejected in view of the definite flavor of officialdom with which it was soon served. The almost intangible fear of resettlement required the substitution of a concrete interest which strikes home immediately. The America so many of them fear almost ambivalently can be portrayed in terms of the world their children face. In a social group in which the cherishing of children is a main cultural emphasis, imbedded in ceremonial, attitude, and family structure, the stress upon the fortunes and prospects of the young would indeed strike a responsive chord. Moreover, a concrete interest would be substituted for a set of intangible fears. "Understanding Your Child and His World" and "The World Your Children Face" are respectively the two substitutions. The first, if it is at all realistic, will involve in due course, "understanding America"; the second, for a generation which has largely lived out its life, and views with trepidation the entire adjustment involved in a new start, economically and psychologically, places the question of resettlement in its most compelling form.

A further factor, possibly relating to the one first mentioned (i.e., the time when classes are held), hinges upon the question of women's interests in Adult Education classes of this special type. Issei women, on the average younger and more Americanized than their husbands, would constitute an important group as "converts" to such courses. The fact is, however, that many of them already attend day classes, particularly the more socially inclined and acculturated. With the nursery-school arrangement, the day class is most feasible. The age-gap between young and old is marked here, especially because of the fact that Issei males came first to this country, and only later married younger women who either came with their families or were imported, so to speak, as picture brides. The Nisei and Sansei generations are therefore decidedly younger. Thus it is that conservative husbands complain that families are not tended; to the latter, evening classes are sometimes felt to add insult to injury. Whether a late afternoon class for Issei women would draw better results, I cannot say; perhaps they would. At any rate, the question might also be raised whether segregated classes for men and for women in these topics might not again accord better with

cultural norms than "mixed" classes. The division of labor, and sexual separation is marked in adult Japanese society.

It should be said, in conclusion, that the above discussion is somewhat tentative at some points, and does not attempt to isolate a chief factor. By way of summary, this emphasis might now be made. If I were to make a choice, I am sure that the factor of a reactive tendency, of cultural escape and cultural revivalism, along with the fear of having something "put over", and the recourse to the soothing effect of traditionalism, are all central to the problem. One of the courses, namely, "Preparation for Relocation", is especially hindered by this fact. The author is preparing a preliminary study of resistances to relocation, among Issei, which it is felt will go far toward analyzing the reasons lying behind a shying away from this term. In making the above suggestions, concerning topic and approach and method of promotion, the author has kept in mind what appear to be the root-problems. But it is likewise thought in sum that all the factors mentioned above, and described to me again and again by colonists, or indicated in conferences and reports of appointed personnel, together explain a situation for which no one of them is alone responsible. It is felt that this study likewise explains circumstances which otherwise might be relegated to the limbo of deep, dark mystery: (1) why it is that Adult Education, so notably successful in other fields, should have enjoyed so little success in these two instances; (2) why the relocation course was requested from the colony; (3) why promotional methods successful in other connections do not work well in these; and (4) why this department, despite an excellent job of organization, occasionally meets with problems which others, like Community Recreation, generally can avoid.

Community Analysis Section  
Tule Lake Relocation Center