Chicago report

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Proposed Plan for Nisei Integration in the City of Chicago

I. Introduction

Ever since the evacuation of the Japanese from the Pacific Coast, the United States government has been seriously thinking of the scattering and complete integration of Japanese Americans throughout the United States. Since the early part of October, 1942, under the War Relocation Authority the government has set up special agencies and working committees to bring this about. Early in the year 1943 the War Relocation Authority organized a relocation office in the city of Chicago to place persons of Japanese ancestry in this city. However, they have dealt mainly with the employment of these people and not the integration and assimilation of Japanese, both socially and recreationally. At the time of this proposal, there are approximately 1200 Japanese in this city, 200 of which established their residences after the evacuation of Japanese from the Pacific Coast and the remainder due to the relocation program of the WRA. It is the belief of this organization that approximately 2000 more Japanese will relocate themselves in an about the city of Chicago in the next few months. Until the present time, there has been no need for a social and recreational integration program bec use the newness of the city and settling of jobs and homes has occupied most of these people to keep them busy. Many of these people now permanently settled are now looking for an outlet for their excess energy and their leisure time activities. For this reason, such a program to be proposed by this paper will be necessary in the months to come.

II. Three tentative plans already proposed.

A. Complete integration. Ideally speaking, complete integration, especially the Japanese Americans, is the thing that all groups are striving for. Many sociologists and religious organizations believe that a complete integration program should be introduced in which no transitional groups of Nisei be formed but that every Japanese coming from the centers should be immediately channeled into some Caucasian organization. It is their belief that transitional groups will become permanent in nature and would be hindering rather than helping the integration program.

B. Nisei segregation. The word "Nisei segregation" is used in this case because no other adequate term can be found. Because of vested interests of several organizations on the Pacific Coast, it has become apparent that there will be several attempts to form Japanese organizations which have existed prior to evacuation. Several home missions of various church groups, both Buddhists and Christian, will attempt to establish themselves in this city. Also, small social organizations that have existed on the coast will attempt to re-organize themselves with the nucleus of their group settling in Chicago. This, we believe, will be definitely detrimental to an integration program and may cause some alarm in the city. It is the opinion of most groups in the city that such groups would cause some Chicago public to segregate those coming into the city as a Japanese organization which will in due time tab the Nisei into a racial group and later become very conspicuous.

C. Many groups in the city adhere to a transitional integration because it is their belief that Nisei due to loneliness and the fact that

they have known only Nisei organizations on the coast need a transitional group to be organized first through which an educational program for gradual integration can be introduced. It is impossible to completely change the pattern of Nisei thinking to complete integration as many of them have set ideas and will want to meet and mix socially with persons of similar racial extraction.

III. Classification of organizations interested in this program.

There are many organizations and agencies that are interested in an integration program for the Japanese American and we will list them briefly into the following six categories:

(1) Governmental agencies. The WRA and other governmental agencies are naturally interested in this relocation program as they realize that it is their job to completely and happily relocate these people in this city.

(2) Religious organizations. Several religious organizations such as the American Friends Service Center, Federal Council of Churches, Brethrens Home have been very active in the integration of Nisei in this city. As you know they have set up hostels to provide temporary residence for the Nisei as well as to introduce them to church organizations of their denomination.

(3) Social agencies such as the YMCA, YWCA and the International House have been particularly helpful not only in the providing of shelter but also in the encouragement of social assimilation in this city.

(4) Educational Institutions such as the University of Chicago, Sociological department and the Northwestern University are interested objectively in this program of integration and assimilation.

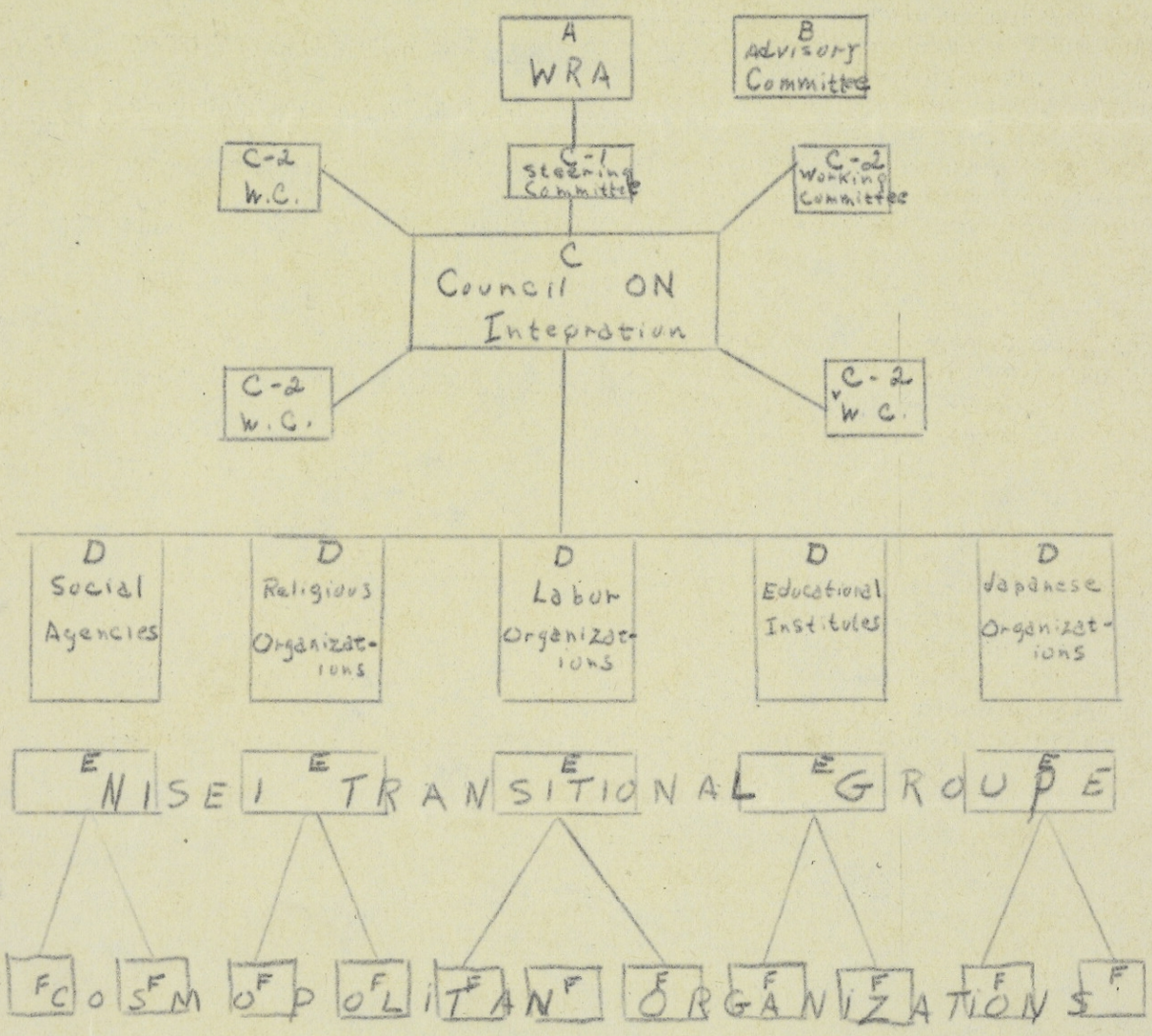
(5) Several Labor organizations and trade unions are interested in the placement of skilled workers in various lines of work. Although they have not been actively participating in this program, they have been very helpful in many instances in placing many Nisei into jobs in which they have been specifically trained.

(6) Japanese organizations such as the JACL have also been working towards a happy assimilation program for their group.

IV. Proposed plan

Here briefly will be outlined a proposed plan which we believe is not only practical but desirable for Nisei integration in this city. Submitted below is a diagram showing the organization of an over-all committee to guide and direct this integration program.

A. Diagram


A
WRA
B
Advisory Committee
C-2
W.C.
C-1
Steering Committee
C-2
Working Committees
C
Council ON
Integration
C-2
W.C.
C-2
W.C.
D
Social Agencies
D
Religious Organizations
D
Labor Organizations
D
Educational Institutes
D
Japanese Organizations
E
NISEI TRANSITIONAL GROUPE
F
COSMOPOLITAN ORGANIZATIONS

B. Explanation of diagram

1/ Letter A shows the position of the governmental agencies in this program. Since the WRA has been given the Job for relocation of Japanese, they should be instrumental in the organization of such a group. However, being a governmental organization, they should act in an advisory capacity and lend aid wherever possible to see that such a program is put into effect. They should also be a source of information as well as the governmental voice in the program.

2. Early in the year 1943, the WRA appointed in the city of Chicago an advisory committee composed of thirty-three leaders in this city to aid them in an advisory capacity to plan and organize this integration program. They are shown in this diagram in section B.

3. Council on Assimilation is section C. This Council on assimilation should be composed not only of Caucasian but Japanese residing in the city. The Caucasian to be represented should be those of the advisory committee as well as representatives of organizations and agencies interested in this problem. The Japanese group, which should comprise of at least half of this council, should be members chosen from various Nisei interest groups in the city, key Nisei and Issei who resided in the city prior to evacuation, and Nisei who have shown intesest for organizational ability in California as well as in the relocation centers. This group will listen to the proposed plans of the working committees shown in diagram as C-2 and pass judgment and approval after due consideration. Since this group will be too large to become effective, a small steering committee, C-1, composed of half Nisei and Issei should be appointed from the Council to determine policies of the whole group. Working Committees

shown as C-2 should be small effective units chosen from the Council to discuss various phases of the program. Such working committees should deal with specific problems such as speakers bureau, public relations, housing, case workers, etc.

4. Organizations for channeling of duties and responsibilities, section D. For the sake of simplicity these organizations have been divided into the following five categories:

a. Social agencies

b. Religious organizations

c. Labor organizations

d. Educational institutions

e. Japanese organizations

Since the Japanese group here in Chicago are very new, it will be necessary to have institutionalized organizations which have existed in the city for a number of years to aid in this program of integration. Also, if these organizations and institutions will foster Nisei organizations under their wing, there will be less chance that such a group will become conspicuous and noticed by the Chicago public. These organizations will also have the facilities available to carry out such a program. The Japanese American Citizens League will play a peculiar position in this program. Since they have been considered as the "voice of the Nisei" in the field of politics and public relations, this group should be horizontally associated with these Nisei organizations for financial and moral support. The JACL should limit themselves purely in the field of public relations and protection of our rights that might be jeopardized by yellow journalists, Jap baiters, etc.

5. Nisei transitional groups (section E.) This proposed Nisei group has caused most of the opposition and debate as to its very existence. To those who believe in complete integration they believe that transitional groups will not remain transitional but permanent in nature. They also claim that this group will become very conspicuous and will be used as a basis of criticism by those who oppose integration and assimilation. Some sociologists claim that minority groups have no transitional organizations but will remain as racial groups as long as they are permitted to exist. Therefore, in the program of assimilation they are hindering the process rather than accelerating it. Especially in religious institutions many denominations because of vested interests in California, wish to organize large Nisei groups under their wings. This, we believe, will be a definite hindrance to this program and may cause suspicion as well as criticism by the Chicago public. The transitional groups that we have in mind will be very small in nature and will be used as an educational group to convinced the Nisei that integration is necessary for a happy existence in this city. Without Nisei support in the program as well as the fact that Nisei themselves must be convinced that assimilation is necessary, no program introduced will become effective and realizable. This transitional group will also be necessary to aid organizations which need Nisei support to carry out their program. All minority groups have such organizations and we believe that it is inevitable that such groups will be formed. If, however, under this whole program of integration these groups are formed under guidance and supervision by an over-all steering committee and organizations who foster such committees see to it that such Nisei organizations do not become too large in nature, we believe it will

be permissible. If these agencies in diagram D can be convinced that the proposition of transitional groups is for a gradual integration, they will see to it that these groups will not get out of hand. Since they are under the fostership of institutions already organized in this city, they will be less conspicuous in nature.

6. Finally in diagram F. cosmopolitan organizations which is the ultimate goal of this integration program. The Chicago Park Committee have already agreed to help the Nisei as the YMCA and the YWCA will have several organizations which may be cosmopolitan or completely Caucasian which Nisei may be allowed to join because of their background and interest. These organizations in diagram F should be the permanent organizations from which the Nisei will be integrated in the social and recreational program in this city.

V. Conclusion

This briefly is the proposed plan which we believe will meet the needs of a large group of Nisei who will come to this city totally foreign to the vast facilities and opportunities that face them. Although this program is not perfect by any means, it would be used as a basis for study and consideration and any objections, criticisms and corrections will be greatly appreciated. We submit this plan for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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