

*Civil Info*

HEADQUARTERS EIGHTH ARMY  
 United States Army  
 Office of the Commanding General  
 APO 343

AGMGCI 091 (Japan)

17 June 1948

SUBJECT: Information Plan for Local Autonomy Law

TO: See Distribution

1. Transmitted herewith is a suggested information plan to be utilized in accordance with the program chart, "Schedule for Civil Information Activities."

2. This program is designed to combat the lack of interest among the Japanese population toward their government, and to make them aware of its functions and methods by which they can control it. At the same time, the program aims to undercut the position of Tonari Gumi by pointing out its illegal methods of operation and ways by which the people can make the system ineffectual.

3. These information materials are being sent directly to all echelons. Supplemental information and instructions may be issued by corps and regions as desired. The material is non-directive in nature.

BY COMMAND OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL EICHELBERGER:

2 Incls:

1. Information Plan for Local Autonomy Law
2. One set of 10 posters, "Rights and Duties of the Citizen" with translation.

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 Asst Adj Gen

DISTRIBUTION:

CGs I and IX Corps  
 COs all MG regions and prefec-  
 tural MG teams

HEADQUARTERS EIGHTH ARMY  
United States Army  
APO 343

PLAN FOR  
CIVIL INFORMATION ACTIVITIES  
ON  
LOCAL AUTONOMY LAW

References:

1. Local Autonomy Law, No. 67, contained in Official Gazette No. 312, 17 April 1947, and amended in Official Gazette Extra, 12 December 1947.
2. A series of five pamphlets published by Government Section, SCAP: No. 1, "Representative Government"; No. 2, "Powers and Responsibilities of the Office of Governor"; No. 3, "Powers and Responsibilities of the Legislative Body"; No. 4, "Administration, Functions and Responsibilities"; No. 5, "The Committee System of the Local Public Bodies."

Objectives of the Program:

1. To bring to the attention of the people the mechanics of local self-government as provided for in the Constitution and implemented by the Local Autonomy Law.
2. To eliminate the tendency to look for instructions from the central government on purely local matters.
3. To awaken the people to the fact that sovereignty rests in their hands and that they are responsible for establishing and maintaining strong local self-government and a competent national government.
4. To abolish the prestige and authority of Tonari Gumi by encouraging the people to repudiate its control.

SECTION I  
THE SITUATION

The principle of local autonomy is grounded on the recognition of the impossibility of maintaining an effective and healthy system of democratic government unless the central organs are supported by strong local units. These local units--villages, towns, cities, prefectures--derive their powers from the consent of the people and possess the power to manage their individual affairs. This decentralization is particularly necessary in a country that has had suppressive leadership from the central government and little experience in delegating authority to component governmental units.

Inclosure 1

FOR PRESS Release  
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History has taught that freedom and justice are more likely to survive and flourish when the government is decentralized. In western democracies, the strongest check against over-concentration of governmental power in the hands of a few has been autonomous responsibility at local levels.

To augment the Japanese Constitution and encourage more power within local governments, the "Law Concerning Local Autonomy" was passed by the Japanese Diet and promulgated 16 April 1947.

The law provides, first, for direct popular election of local chief executives, assemblies and other local officials. This is contrasted with the method of direct appointment from Tokyo of governors and other key officials, which existed under the Meiji Constitution. Direct appointment led to extreme and arbitrary authority over the Japanese from which, as a practical matter, they had no recourse.

Other important provisions of the "Law Concerning Local Autonomy" are the rights of local communities to manage their own property and administration and to enact their own laws within the broad framework of the Constitution.

Besides being able to place their own officials in office by election, the people have a further check on these officials: the power of recall. When the voters are dissatisfied with the governor, mayor, headman, assemblyman or other officials of their village, town, city or prefecture, they have the right to remove them from office. They have the responsibility, however, to use this right wisely so that it does not become a means for stirring up confusion by small but highly-organized minorities.

The steps in the recall process are:

1. The interested persons concerned draw up a petition which must then be signed by one-third of the voters of the local body, whether it is a village, town, city or prefecture.
2. The petition is given to the Election Administration Committee, which must hold an election.
3. If the election by a majority vote of the electorate is unfavorable to the official he must vacate office.

Another power vested in the people by the law is their right to initiate proceedings for the enactment, revision or repeal of laws. By this important initiative procedure, the electorate may introduce or force action on an issue. The steps in the initiative process are:

1. A petition concerning the matter must be signed by only one-fiftieth or two percent of the voters.
2. The petition is presented to the mayor, headman or governor, who must make it public and call the assembly into session within twenty days.
3. The assembly, by majority vote, must act on the suggested measure.

4. The mayor, headman or governor must then make the assembly's action known to the public.

These important checks and balances are the essence of democratic government, but just being written into law is not enough. The people must be aware of them, know how to use them and know of their importance in keeping intact the sovereignty vested in the populace by the Constitution.

The powers and responsibilities of the various assemblies must be known to the voting public so that they are able to perform their functions of citizenship. Too, they should be aware of the judiciary system and its responsibility of declaring which laws are within and which are outside the constitutional framework. In the same vein, the new position of civil service must be widely known if the populace is to have confidence in local administration. Comparisons between the new system of merit selection and promotion without regard to financial or social status and the old method of making bureaucratic appointments from those with certain family or school backgrounds will make the point that local government employees are becoming more competent, and the inefficient are being weeded out.

The Tonari Gumi, although outlawed 22 January 1947, still is exerting its strangle-hold on local governments, particularly in rural areas. Until this vicious boss system is forced into the spotlight with publicity, and until villagers know that they are no longer required to abide by Tonari Gumi direction, democratic local autonomy cannot be successful.

The system was, and is where it still exists, compulsory and allowed no criticism, no freedom of speech or action. Starting with the now abolished Ministry of Home Affairs which selected governors, the system controlled local governments through appointment of 11,000 mayors and headmen, who in turn influenced and commanded more than a million Tonari Gumicho who ruled neighborhoods with iron fists. Many of these ousted Tonari Gumicho are still squeezing and forcing families to do their will. They will continue to exert their influence until communities rise up and balk at their orders. This will come about when the people know that the system has been smashed and they are under no obligation to follow its orders. Now, their only responsibility is to the legally constituted government. By destroying the boss practice they will have freedom to choose their own course under a liberal constitution with due regard for their own best interests rather than those of a greedy, power-grabbing boss.

## SECTION II THEMES

The following themes may be adapted for use by any medium and for visual displays:

1. You control your government through the power of your vote-- use that vote to put honest, competent men and women in office.
2. If your officials are dishonest or incompetent, you can remove them from office through the process of recall.

3. If your officials are slow to act on an issue or you want to start legislation, you can force action with a petition signed by only two percent of the voters.

4. You women are equal with men under the law and must come forward to vote, hold office and accept your new position to make the community a more efficient, wholesome place for your families.

5. The power of governing the community is in your hands. Don't allow others to take that power from you by dictating how you are to vote and participate in your government.

6. Break the power of the illegal Tonari Gumi. Disregard their instructions and report coercion to the proper authorities. You have a right to free participation in your government, and power-hungry Tonari Gumi must be driven from authority.

7. Don't look toward Tokyo for direction in local government affairs--do it yourself.

8. Know your assemblyman and other local officials. Make your wishes and opinions known to them.

9. Know your government: (A series that could be adapted for newspaper features, forums or classroom study).

- Specimen*
- a. The functions of assemblies.
  - b. The duties of governors, mayors and headmen.
  - c. The functions of government administration.
  - d. Your rights under a democratic judicial system.

### SECTION III METHODS

Public forums can be used as an effective method to implant knowledge of local autonomy and to provide information about local government. Competent speakers with sufficient facts to answer questions from the floor should be obtained to conduct the forums, which should have greatest concentration in rural areas. Suggested persons to make up panels of about three speakers are prominent judges, lawyers, educators, leaders of women's groups, union officials and other well-informed community leaders. Visual aids should be used. Background material can be obtained from a series of five mimeographed pamphlets published by SCAP Government Section, which has been distributed to MG team legal officers. (See references). Several forum groups should be organized so that the entire prefecture is covered, including small villages. Newspapers should be encouraged to sponsor these forums in their circulation areas as a public service. Advance publicity should be given to the meetings and stress placed on the importance of each Japanese knowing the functions of his government. (This forum system if properly organized and kept intact would be useful for future political reorientation programs such as civil liberties, civil code and criminal code, etc.).

A series of newspaper features under a heading such as "Know your Government" could go far to make the populace aware of the functions of government and their power to control it. Topics of these features should cover specific points under the general fields concerning duties of the assembly, governor, mayor, headman; the mechanics of recall and initiative; the judiciary; and the new merit system of civil service.

The whole subject of Tonari Gumi should be brought into the open. Editorial support should be encouraged. A series of cartoons picturing this government behind the government in an uncomplimentary light would be effective in branding this lustful, greedy system as an enemy of the Japanese people. Over a period of time these cartoons would build up an unsavory mental association for and abhorrence of Tonari Gumi and thus promote non-cooperation with it.

The program should be coordinated with the education officer to bring the provisions of the local autonomy law to the attention of students at all levels. This important population group is the most pliable and should receive special attention in programs concerning political reorientation. A double effect is accomplished in producing conviction among students. Not only are these future leaders of Japan introduced to a basic reform, but also they play an important part in producing conviction among their families. The law was promulgated after most texts were printed, so arrangements for dissemination should be worked out with the education officer and the prefectural education section.

An effective method of demonstrating principal features of the local autonomy law is a one-act skit. This medium was used in one prefecture with exceptional results. Writing, producing and acting could be done by amateurs, such as school or other local dramatic groups. To encourage traveling to outlying areas, an expense subsidy could be provided by the prefectural government. Several such groups should be arranged for with appearances scheduled for women's groups, unions and cooperatives.

Oratory contests among secondary schools and colleges could produce speakers for public appearances. The best might be induced to appear with the dramatic groups to make introductions and opening statements.

To get visual aid materials, a poster contest could be conducted. A small prize should produce several acceptable layouts for reproduction. The contest should be made known to professional artists' groups and art schools.

A series of 10 posters, "Rights and Duties of the Citizen", inclosed, has been distributed to the Social Education Branch of the Prefectural Education Section. A total of 23,000 sets of ten has been published by the National Movement for the Foundation of a New Japan. Distribution should be supervised so that each series is shown intact. The posters lend themselves to display in CPHs, street cars and on wall surfaces. Pasted on cardboard, they could be used as Kamishibai for showing in schools and organizations.

Two movie films previously distributed to MG teams should be heavily scheduled for showings. Titles are, "How Laws are Made", and "American National Capital." A third film, "The Story of Local Government", is being rushed into production to be available for this program. Distribution to teams is scheduled for the latter part of July.

This program, although appearing on the schedule for concentration of activity during August and September, is considered a year-round campaign. Along with others in the political reorientation series it should receive an initial burst of activity, then be carried on by Japanese agencies continuously.

## RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF THE CITIZEN

Produced by the National Movement for Foundation of New Japan  
23,000 sets of a series of 10 posters  
National distribution through regular channels

## TRANSLATION:

## 1. MAN CANNOT LIVE BY HIMSELF

Man cannot live by himself. We owe our lives to one another's benefits and services. The towns and villages where we live are each of them a self-governing community formed by ourselves in order to enable everybody to lead a happy life by mutual consent and democratic government.

## 2. GOVERNMENT OF TOWNS AND VILLAGES BY COMMON CONSENT

The characteristic of such a self-governing community is in the fact that it is governed by all its members, according to their opinions and at their expense. The construction of roads, the building of schools, and the setting up of other institutions and facilities in towns and villages are all decided upon by common consent reached in the assemblies and commissions in those towns and villages. The town or village mayor and his subordinates are responsible for the correct performance of those things which have been decided upon by such common consent.

## 3. THE MASTER OF TOWN OR VILLAGE IS ITS MEMBERS

Both the town or village mayor and the members of the town or village assembly are elected by us townsmen or villagers. Through election we can get our opinions reflected in the government of towns or villages. We must never forget that the master of a self-governing community is we ourselves who are its members.

## 4. LET EVERYBODY THINK, SPEAK AND ACT

We have our right to speak of our own free will in connection with the administration of town or village affairs. We have our right to make use of town or village services. When the town or village officials are bad, we have our right to make them give up their posts through proper legal process. Let's try to form a comfortable, peaceful town or village as a result of everybody thinking, speaking and acting.

## 5. TAXES MUST BE PAID FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL

At the same time we must be aware of duty which is correlative of our right. It is a duty for us to give our money in reasonable proportion to our means, in order to make various facilities and to do necessary works in our towns and villages. That is town or village taxes. Taxes are, however, not always paid in money alone. We can voluntarily show in action our willingness to render some service to our town or village.

Inclosure 2



#### 6. TAKE GOOD CARE OF PUBLIC PROPERTY

When you consider your life as a member of a self-governing community, is there any room for improvement? Is there anybody who is entirely indifferent to town or village politics? Don't you find among you a person who has never been present or spoken in the public meeting and yet is continually grumbling behind people's back? Have you never been careless in handling public properties of your town or village? Do you never take away flowers in the public park, or make the roads dirty, or tear off the pages of books in the public library?

#### 7. SHUT OFF POLITICAL BOSSES FROM YOUR COMMUNITY

Are there any persons who make your town or village the source of their unrighteous profits by presuming upon their high births or their established influences? Are there any leaders in your town or village who waste the public fund of your town or village, or secretly enrich themselves by corruptions? Are there any enemies of democracy who want to have their own way by means of violence or bribery? Such practices exist only if citizens fail to assume their proper responsibilities. Dishonest, wicked performance of the kind will be ended if you keep close watch over such people and take proper legal action when necessary.

#### 8. ABANDON INTER-HAMLET HOSTILE FEELING AND CO-OPERATE

Do you find any feud or hostile feelings between hamlets of your village which make impossible your peaceful life? There is a town or village, it is reported, where owing to such hostile feelings, an unnecessary school has been built in a remote place at the cost of the children's convenience. We can avoid such errors by cooperation. It is highly advisable that petty feud be abandoned and reasonable compromise be made for the happiness of all of the community.

#### 9. THE CITIZENS' PUBLIC HALL IS THE LIVING ROOM OF THE TOWN OR VILLAGE

Our native community is ours. Let's speak together in order to make it better. Let's hold discussions and conferences as often as we can. Let's cultivate our minds by reading. Let's have friendly intercourse between us and promote our industries by busying ourselves in our own trades. To effect these ends, let's build our Civic Hall. The Civic Hall is the room of our town or village life. Its facilities are open to all members of the community.

#### 10. THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW JAPAN BEGINS IN EACH HOME COMMUNITY

Our community forms part of the foundation of our country. If we can make good towns and fine villages, our country will prosper. If our native place becomes a satisfactorily democratized community, the foreign peoples will trust our nation more and the position of Japan in the world will also be raised. The construction of new Japan begins in the reforms carried out in our native towns and villages.