

3-11-70

Asian Americans for Action  
c/o Chris Iijima and Lynne Iijima

Brothers and Sisters:

I strongly agree with your objections toward joining the JACL. Here, in New Haven we have had some differences of opinion on the question of forming a JACL chapter. Currently, it looks as if some kind of chapter will be formed. The move can have certain advantages: it can allow us some degree of access to the young people in the JACL; it can allow us inside information on what the JACL is doing; it can allow us the opportunity to act as a kind of gadfly within the organization to keep it from becoming more complacent than it already is. However, I personally believe that the disadvantages of joining the JACL far outstrip the advantages, for much the same reasons that you have outlined. Moreover, I personally view the JACL as a dying organization, an organization not worth the time to "take over."

Nevertheless, if our group does decide to form a JACL chapter, I would support the action and probably join the chapter. In one sense, the actions of forming a JACL chapter and working with the JACL on the East Coast may be a necessary step in developing the political consciousness of our Asian group here at Yale. I have found that most of the brothers and sisters here have an amazing sense of trust in even the most reactionary elements of the Asian community. This sense of trust will probably not be confronted until our group has had a chance to work with these groups and to understand their true natures.

With regards to the convention confrontation and the long-range goals toward the JACL (and here again, I can only speak for myself)---when I first broached the idea of confronting the JACL convention, I had in mind some forms of actions that we could take that would bring certain issues before the JACL, spark debate within the organization, and induce some kind of polarization within the JACL that would lead to social change. In one sense, these objectives have now been accomplished. Even if we do not go to Chicago, something will happen at the JACL convention. In a sense, then, I conceived of our role as a kind of catalyst that would start the change process on its way. That has now happened.

Second, I believed it necessary that some form of action be taken at the convention simply because it was being scheduled for the summer in Chicago---a symbolic time and a symbolic place for the radical movement. Moreover, the image of Asian Americans congratulating themselves on their "quietness", parading themselves as the "model minority", honoring Mike Masaoka as Nisei of the biennium, and attending such important workshops as fashion shows and cocktail parties---that image must be confronted and that form of consciousness altered.

As I mentioned earlier, something will happen at the JACL convention whether or not we attend. Dissidents within the organization will be confronting the JACL. If we did journey to Chicago, then, what would be our role? I think our role would be a very important one. Essentially, our role would continue to be that of an outside catalyst; we would do whatever JACL dissidents could not do or were not capable of doing. The Security Pact is a good case in point. There is no one within the current JACL "liberation caucus" who has any understanding of the true nature of the



Security Pact; it would be our responsibility to disseminate information to these brothers and sisters in the caucus about this topic, as well as other topics of concern. Thus, I would conceive of our tactics as not "hit and run," "take-over," or "infiltration," but rather of catalyzing and polarizing, of waging psychic guerrilla warfare on the JACL, of disseminating information to and communicating with the "liberation caucus," of planting and suggesting ideas and issues, and of providing whatever support we can for those within the JACL to take the organization over themselves. Of course, these tactics are abstract. They might be specifically implemented through guerrilla theatre, the staging of counter-ceremonies, the establishment of counter-publications, massive rallies and picketing, etc.

Finally, our very presence at the convention as "outside forces" will help to build an alternative Asian American movement. Within the liberation caucuses and with the young people who attend the convention, we should make some efforts to try to build the movement ~~people over~~.

These have been thoughts off the top of my head (quite literally). I would appreciate any criticisms of these ideas and tactics. I think that I will probably be in New York on Tuesday of the coming week (we are on Spring vacation at Yale from March 14-March 28). Don may be able to get to New York this weekend, although it is doubtful at the present time. Also, Warren Furutani and Vic Shibata will be in New York on March 29. Brother Warren will be around in the East for a few weeks. Brother Vic of the Yellow Brotherhood will only be able to stay a day or two. Since both Warren and Vic are now working for the JACL and are vitally concerned about organizing the convention confrontation, March 29 might be a good time to talk about our collective goals and tactics. See you soon.

*Glenn*