

3-7-70

To William Hohri and Hiroshi Kanno:

In response to your suggestions: 1) yes, we are willing to become members of the new JACL caucus, 2) we agree that arrangements should be made for meeting facilities for the caucus, and 3) we would be willing to come to Chicago a few days ahead of the convention date to discuss tactics.

Here, in New Haven we are carefully considering the idea of forming a New Haven liberation JACL chapter. Already, we have found several persons who would be willing to join such a chapter.

In the next week or so we will be talking with brother Warren Furu-tani from Los Angeles. Warren will be visiting New York and other places in the East. He is also of the opinion that something can and should be done at the Chicago convention.

We believe it imperative that sooner or later certain issues be brought before the JACL. Among these issues are the following:

- 1) Freedom for all political prisoners, particularly such Asian Americans as Shinya Ono, Jean Yonemura, and Jerry Tong.

As the climate of political repression intensifies in the U.S., more and more Asian Americans harrassed, imprisoned, and eventually murdered for their political convictions. Indeed, last year at San Francisco State and Berkeley, many Asian Americans were beaten and arrested during strikes at these two campuses. In Los Angeles, several of the members of the Asian Radical Movement have been charged with felonies as a result of their protesting the firing of a black worker at UCLA. In Washington, members of Asian Americans for Action were arrested two months ago in a demonstration concerned with the U.S.-Japan Security Pact. In Chicago, Shinya Ono and Jean Yonemura of the Weathermen SDS were arrested during demonstrations last fall and now face jail sentences from two to four years.

It is important to realize that in each of these cases, the Asians were harrassed, beaten, and arrested for their political ideologies. We believe it essential that all Americans, particularly Third World Americans such as Japanese Americans, understand the reasons underlying political repression in America and what can be done to combat it. What is now happening to Huey Newton, Dave Dellinger, and Shinya Ono may soon be happening to anyone of us who believes that there must be certain fundamental changes effected in the U.S. if we are to attain equal justice and equal opportunities for all men.

- 2) An end to U.S. imperialism in Asia.

Americans of Asian ancestry should realize that in the very near future they will occupy a perilous position. As more and more Asian nations enter the liberation struggle, white racism will be directed more and more towards yellow people. We Asian Americans will occupy a perilous---and yet strategic---position.

It is important to view the Vietnam War from this perspective because what is now happening in Vietnam will soon be occurring in other Asian nations.

Therefore, we believe it essential that Asian Americans be made aware of the true objectives of the U.S. in Asia, of the possible new era of Japanese imperialism made possible by the U.S.-Japan Security Pact, of the true meaning of Asian liberation struggles, and of the future status of Asian Americans.



- 3) Asian American solidarity with Third World liberation movements in this country and around the world.

S. I. Hayakawa has maintained that the Japanese American is very literally in the middle when it comes to race relations--- he is neither white nor black. It is important for all Asian Americans to realize that we are not in the middle; indeed, we are either part of the problem or part of the solution.

As Asians in America, we must realize that our ancestral ties and our experiences in this country link us with the Third World both in the U.S. and around the world. We must join with our black, brown, and red brothers in our common struggle for self-determination. We must seek to smash the stereotypes that oppress us as individuals. We must seek to liberate our communities from economic and political oppression. And we must strive to convince our brothers and sisters who believe that there is something virtuous in being "almost white" that only by realizing and taking pride in the fact that they are yellow will they ever come to be fully functioning human beings.

- 4) The question of "quiet Americans"

We can only ask if silence is a virtue in a time of crisis.

- 5) A reassessment of the role of the JACL in Asian American communities

In a certain sense, the JACL has become the Uncle Tom oppressor in Japanese American communities. In certain instances, the role of the JACL has been one of impeding needed social change, or that failing, providing obstacles in the change process. We must ask why is it that when needed reforms have occurred in Japanese American communities, the ideas and the impetus for change have come from sources outside of the JACL? Has the JACL become more hung up on pleasing the white establishment than on meeting the needs of its own people?

Lastly, we must question the insensitiveness of the JACL to the problems and needs of other Asian American communities such as the Chinatowns and Manilatowns of this nation.

- 6) A reassessment of the role of the Jr. JACL

Why is it that so many of the young activist Sansei have shied away from the Jr. JACL or if once members, are no longer members? Why is it that the Jr. JACL has evolved the reputation of being a kind of social club? Perhaps in this respect the Jr. JACL is only reflecting the value patterns of the parent organization.

Increasingly, the Sansei are becoming aware that the Jr. JACL, as well as the JACL, are Nisei-controlled organizations. In an organization where by definition, any one between the ages of 18 and 25 is not even classified as a young adult; in an organization where the young have but a token voice and a token vote on even their own affairs; in such an organization, the young learn that they are not yet persons, that they do not yet possess the rights and privileges of human beings, that their existence, status, and role are defined for them.

The time has come for members of the Jr. JACL to seize the time. The time has come for the young people to declare that the Jr. JACL is their organization and not an organization set up by the Nisei for the Sansei. The time has come for the young people to take over control of their own affairs rather than to submit to the paternalistic policy judgments of the parent body.

- 7) Asian women's liberation

Asian American women are one of the most oppressed minorities in the world. Not only must they contend with the stereotypes



that whites have placed upon them, but they must also cope with the peculiar brand of Asian male machismo. When the Asian American woman has accepted her "place" in society, it is with a far greater price than when an Asian American male submits to the same humiliation. Not only must the Asian American woman confront the racism in American society, but she must also learn to cope with sexual oppression as well.

Let us examine some possible tactics in presenting these issues before the people:

- 1) Films are an effective means of communication. Several very fine films on the Vietnamese struggle have been made and might be shown.
- 2) Speakers from within the JACL and from without should be considered. Perhaps arrangements could be made to bring in a speaker from the Panthers or from Chinatown (i.e. the Chinatown Collective). Chris Iijima of Asian Americans for Action is knowledgeable on the dangers of the U.S.-Japan Security Pact. Mary Kochiyama could provide her own perspective on Japanese American involvement in the Black movement which would differ radically from that of Hayakawa. Yuji Ichioka or Karl Yoneda could speak to the myth of the "quiet American."
- 3) Guerrilla Theatre could be used to great advantages, particularly with the organizing talents of Warren Furutani.
- 4) Sensitivity training sessions and t-groups might be set up for those JACL members who have gotten too up-tight.
- 5) Counter publications could be established. For example, while the JACL reactionaries laud the virtues of Hosokawa's book, JACL dissidents might publish their own pamphlet titled "Not So Quiet Americans" which would contain Yuji Ichioka's book review, Karl Yoneda's articles, as well as letters which protested the title and the content matter of the book.
- 6) Task forces within the JACL could be created to research and disseminate information on what is really happening in Vietnam (or on the U.S.-Japan Security Pact, or the role of the U.S. in Asia, etc.).
- 7) Workshops for interested people could be established at the convention on such topics as women's liberation, Vietnam, the Third World, the student movements, etc.
- 8) A legal defense fund could be established and made available to Asian American and other Third World political prisoners.
- 9) A "children's crusade" of Jr. JACL people could be organized to bring their grievances before the larger body.
- 10) Full use of psychic guerrilla warfare should be made.
- 11) Floor demonstrations, disruptions of certain events, and parodies of certain other events could be used to point out the stupidity of such events as fashion shows and cocktail parties.
- 12) Outside the convention hall, such activities as picketing, rallies, and candlelight marches could be organized, as well as guerrilla theatre in the streets.

These suggested tactics are but random thoughts that I have quickly typed. As I mentioned earlier, we will soon be meeting with Warren Furutani and Asian Americans for Action, and our discussion will center on what tactics are feasible for us at the convention. We will relay to you the results of these meetings.

Power and Peace to the People!

*Glenn Ometter*