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Title: Kathy Yamaguchi Interview
Narrator: Kathy Yamaguchi
Interviewer: Naoko Wake
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<Begin Segment 3>

KY: And they, I mean, so the interesting thing for me about all this, and I don't know if you'll ever get to this, but there's a lot of connections with sectarian politics. Do you know what that, sectarian politics, what . . .

NW: You can tell me about it.

KY: Well, I don't know about it, but in the '60s, late 60s, 70s, there were some very Left-wing groups, there was Progressive Labor, there was Communist Worker's Party, there was League for Revolutionary Struggle, Spartacist League, all kinds of these very radical groups. Okay. And, I've only been, I can only piece this together and people don't really talk to me about it. For example, Floyd, and Jean, were in the Communist Workers' Party. This was when they were underground.

NW: Okay.

KY: I sh . . . probably don't want to mention their names.

NW: Okay.

KY: Because she's now the mayor of Oakland.

NW: Okay. I understand.

KY: And they, and they keep it out of the news, it's very interesting. It's not in the news that she and Floyd were very involved in the CWP. And Richard, my coworker, my, my colleague here, he was very, he was involved in League for Revolutionary Struggle, which a bunch of my other friends were also involved in. So this whole history there that no one talks about. And what was very uncomfortable in FOH, and I don't even know if Geri, she probably didn't mention this.

NW: I don't think so . . .

KY: There was a huge, very unpleasant, competition within FOH between LRS and CWP to take control of . . . 'caus there . . . take control of FOH. It was very ugly. It was extremely unpleasant.

NW: Hmm, was it mostly political dispute?

KY: Oh, totally political. In fact, I don't even know if there was a difference in approach. All, all I know is that CWP tended to look, as people would say, towards USSR, and LRS tended to look towards China. Now, I don't even know what that means, but, it . . . LRS had more org . . . commun . . . Japantown community organizations than CWP did. They had a lot of, they had a lot of . . . depending on your viewpoint, they had infiltrated or taken over or they were key people, and I just, I don't know this. Because I was never part. Although . . .

NW: It was before your time?

KY: Oh, yeah.

NW: Okay.

KY: It was before my time, and I, I was never a joiner, although I found out later from someone in FOH that they assumed I was CWP. Because I was friends with Floyd. [background noise] I mean they just assumed that I was CWP. I was, I mean, I have no idea, you know. I just, I was sort of an innocent. I didn't know and, and I'm sure Geri was aware of this but she just didn't wanna, you know, acknowledge it. And, and, it was very unpleasant. 'Cause at one point, Jean, Quan, current mayor of Oakland, was very, as far as I can tell, briefly, in FOH. And, I just know it was really, really ugly. It was so ugly. People were like saying bad things about each other within FOH. It was, it was horrible. I mean, and that bad feeling would spill over to the survivors. Some of the . . ., Reverend Hanaoka . . . I don't know if you'll ever . . .

NW: Yeah, I just talked to him yesterday.

KY: I think he was, I think he understood there was something going on.

NW: Huh.

KY: I sort of recall, he was very savvy. He understood there was some stuff going on in this. I don't remember how many years it went on, but it was ugly. And I think, I don't know, somehow, by the time I was leaving for New York in '84 and coming back, this was all over with. Because CWP didn't exist anymore, it became aboveground instead of being underground. It was sort of all gone. And, you know.

NW: So, in a way, you came back at the right time?

KY: Right, but I'll never know. I mean, no one ever talks about who was what. It's not, it's not, I have never heard Richard say, he would tell me about their newspaper, but he wouldn't talk about being a part of League for Revolutionary Struggles; he probably wasn't anymore. And a lot of Japantown, a lot of Asian politics were, you know, somehow there was an intersection with the very sectarian left groups.

NW: Really, huh.

KY: I just don't, I just don't, I don't know enough to really even talk about it. But I just know that I was aware of something going on, but many people were aware of that, that was going on.

I am fascinated by groups, and especially when they are ideological and people are fanatic about things . . .

NW: Right.

KY: So I've always like, you know, stayed around long enough to find out about them but wasn't gonna get involved.

NW: Right, right. So your sense is that it's not necessarily a problem within Friends of Hibakusha but also something that involved the whole Japanese American community.

KY: A lot, a lot of the groups, I think a lot of the groups, I just don't know the, I just don't.

NW: Remind me, CWP refers to the . . .

KY: Communist Workers' Party.

NW: Okay, alright, LRS is . . .

KY: I think, I'm not sure, it all; it's LRS, and I think it's League for Revolutionary Struggle.

NW: Okay.

KY: I'm not positive about those initials, but, 'cause there was another group that . . .

NW: League for Revolutionary . . .

KY: . . . I was on the edge of, in the medical field and that was the Coalition of Concerned Medical Professionals and another part of the Communist Party; I mean it was all kinds of weird stuff going on in the early '80s. Late '70s, early 80's. And it was best for most of us to stay clear of it. But . . .

NW: But so you were saying then, you were not really politically interested in this when you became involved in Friends of Hibakusha, or just helping out.

KY: No, I was, just to help out the survivors.

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