

Karen,  
Please share this with F. Abe.  
Thanks,  
WFF

August 29, 1979

Dear Shosuke, Hentry, Frank and Karen:

We're almost at \$1,000 received from a dozen donors. I hope it keeps up at that rate. We're shooting for \$10,000 from all sources, which should keep us going for one year. There has been substantial response from my letter in the Rafu Shimpō. The news and letter from AFSC was very encouraging. They've got their heads screwed on right on this issue. I even got a letter from Lillian Baker. Such a massive waste. I sense that most of the letters are from hostile or suspicious Nikkei, JACLers, though I don't know. One was from a Kris Ikejiri. Maybe Ron doesn't have a copy of our bill?

I disagree with the directive that "None of our spokesman should say anything directing (sic) opposing S1647 by name." First, a directive is not good form. At the very least, provide an argument for the recommendation and include, if feasible, those who support the argument. Second, I disagree with passive resistance to S1647.

S1647 represents a vital threat to redress. It has an extremely good chance of passage. Do not deceive yourself with self-generated optimism. The introduction of our bill will serve to improve its chance of passage. Members of Congress, when they realize that there is a redress bill, will be put into a quandary. They will agree with the moral point but be made very uncomfortable with the fiscal cost. Then, they will realize that here is S1647, which is also for redress -- at least that's what its sponsor will have to say about it. Moreover, its sponsors are Japanese. Moreover moreover, it has the blessing of the Japanese American Citizens League, the sole representative of the Japanese community and associated with good ol' Mike Masaoka. Given all this, they will immediately perceive S1647 as the escape road, the loophole, the cop-out. So, they will vote for it and congratulate themselves, with the help of the JACL, for their untarnished sense of moral rectitude.

In addition, our present position is very weak. No self-deception here, either. Building a strong national organization takes time. We will be much, much stronger a year from now. Hardly anyone in vast America knows of our existence. That will change. Right now we are weak. Without power, we must fight. As we grow, we can afford to be generous and reconcile our differences, patch up the splits, make friends with Senators Inouye, Matsunaga, and Hayakawa. I think when one's position is weak, one must fight. Think a bit about 1942. Shikataganai. Can't be helped. They've got the guns. We've got to go along. But I wonder. People like Joe Kurihara and Harry Ueno didn't give up and they didn't go along. Did they say things like "We don't want to split the J-A community?" I don't think 1942 ever came to an end. We're living in continuity with that time. It's one helluva long story. The cast of characters has changed. But the situation is the same.



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Constitutionally, I am not a fighting man. I think the last physical fight I got into was in grammar school, maybe the fifth or sixth grade. No, I remember a pathetic fight I got into in junior high, maybe the eighth or ninth grade. I'm not known to be aggressive. So, I have to wonder when I find myself straining at the leash to attack S1647 and the betrayal it represents.

*the*  
I believe that only chance we have is to create so much fuss in the Congress about S1647 that the senators draw back and have enough second thoughts as to cause its delay and postponement and eventual demise in the 196th Congress. It's a lot easier to do it in the senate than in the house. It's easier to find people in the states than in the districts. I also think that this is one of those cases where sweet reason is not going to do it. They have got to hear from many Nikkei. You can't convince a senator that Inouye and company do not represent Nikkei unless Nikkei themselves en masse speak out against S1647. And who is to tell them to speak out?

If S.1647 passes, redress is killed. No one can predict what the Commission will do. One possible scenario is that of angry Japanese Americans venting their wrath at the Commission and the JACL during the hearings. New York, Chicago, and Seattle are sure to be very tough. There may even be rebellion amongst the Old Guard JACLers who are now being asked to make contributions for the Commission bill. What will they have bought with their money? Whatever happens, a whole new effort will have to be mounted by some people from some where.

August 30, 1979

More on S.1647.

Another point to consider is that S.1647 may not be that difficult to delay and thereby defeat. From a Congressional point of view, nothing is lost by not passing it. I think members of Congress see quite clearly that this is an inconsequential bill. Non-passage may upset the JACL; if they perceive the JACL as ass-kissers, they may understand that it won't upset them in terms of lost votes. The JACL is not about to conduct a campaign, should they lose, to defeat candidates. Once not passed, the JACL's next step should be quite interesting. Do they re-introduce the bill? Will they chicken out? Will they consider supporting our bill? There will be change in the leadership by then. The 1980 convention could be quite interesting.

Another tactic that should begin to show its effect pretty soon is the choice made by our coalescing organizations. As organizations join us, the JACL will find the door closed to them. For I am sure they will all be aware of the Commission. Their decision to join us will, in part, be a decision against the Commission. If the JACL fails to obtain substantial support from other organizations, they could begin to sense a growing problem with their bill. One of our tactics, then, should be to publicize the endorsements we receive?



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I do hope the changes I made yesterday and communicated by phone to Karen were satisfactory. I think you should realize that I do not act alone in Chicago. Most of the members of our Chicago board read the Op-ed piece and strongly approved. I have others read it, too. The criticisms I've received have been heard and incorporated if I felt them correct. I think I only rejected two points. I also think I was misunderstood when I described Michi Weglyn's reluctance to do the Op-ed piece. She said that the standards were too high for her, not that she was not a big enough name. Many of the names in the Op-ed page are not well known at all. They do tend to have credentials, such as a professor, an executive director, a writer, or something. And in some cases, the person is the important reason for publication. But in others, it is next the topic and its presentation. Moreover, the re-publication of NYT articles in other newspapers such as the Chicago Tribune is a function of the Trib's on-going relationship with the NYT whereby it apparently receives the right to publish NYT articles to fill its pages two or three days later. The re-publication is not adone because of the importance of the person; it's done to supply content. Science articles, for example, are difficult to come by and do not have to be particularly timely. I think redress may be in this class. The actual introduction of the bill is not that significant as a day-to-day event, but it is of interest, or becomes of interest when published in the NYT. If the re-pulicaxpublication rights are already there, why not?

I don't know how much longer I will be unemployed. I am actively seeking employment. My job resume doesn't read very well because of the many jobs I have held in the past four years, beginning with the last recession. I pretty much had to start near the bottom in 1975 and have been working my way back up. I still haven't reached my 1974 income level. I may never. It doesn't matter much to me. I think I'd have to agree with the Confucianist-Taoist-Buddhist that wealth gets in the way. I'm convinced, by now, that at the very least working for wealth does get in the way. This hiatus I've been enjoying, I just realized, is longest non-work period in my life since I graduated high school in 1944. I guess I could never be a Marxist-Leninist-whatever because I can't glorify work. It's a drudge. Maybe this (attitude of mine) is the real reason I can't find work. The point is that my productivity towards redress will go down drastically once I begin working again. So, I 'm hoping we can use and re-use the stuff that I've written to date. By the way, I still have not heard from the Chicago Reader. I did call the Christian Century and they're still considering.

anyone

Has anyone thought about writing a book? It might not be that hard. There's a guy who's made a mint publishing stuff in the computer field. One technique he uses is to rearrange the same written material and to change all the illustrations. He has a long series of books.

Well, I think I've got it all worked out of my system now.

Peace,

W.H.

William Hohri

