

DECEMBER 6, 1996

TO: CIVIL LIBERTIES PUBLIC EDUCATION FUND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DEAR BOARD MEMBERS,

I AM WRITING THIS LETTER IN SUPPORT OF FRANK ABE, FRANK CHIN AND LAWSON INADA'S REQUEST FOR FUNDING TO PRODUCE THEIR VIDEO PROJECT ON THE HEART MOUNTAIN FAIR PLAY COMMITTEE (FPC) AND THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGE ON THE MATTER OF THE MILITARY DRAFT BEING IMPOSED ON NISEI MEN INCARCERATED IN AMERICA'S WARTIME CONCENTRATION CAMPS.

THE STORY OF THE HEART MT. FPC DRAFT RESISTERS WOULD PROBABLY NOT HAVE BEEN AS WELL KNOWN TODAY EXCEPT FOR THE PERSISTANT EFFORTS OF CHIN, ABE AND INADA.

I FIRST MET FRANK CHIN AND LAWSON INADA IN EARLY 1982 AFTER READING FRANK CHIN'S WELL WRITTEN INVESTIGATIVE REPORT ON THE HEART MT. FPC IN THE DECEMBER 19TH, 1981, RAFU SHIMPO HOLIDAY SUPPLEMENT. THE ARTICLE WAS TITLED, "THE LAST ORGANIZED RESISTANCE." I WAS AMAZED AT HIS DEPTH OF RESEARCH AND FACTUAL ACCURACY. HIS ARTICLE EVEN HAD EXCERPTS FROM MY LEAVE CLEARANCE HEARING TRANSCRIPT. ALL THIS, BEFORE I EVER MET OR TALKED TO HIM. HE HAD RESEARCHED ALL THIS FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND FROM OTHER SOURCES.

AFTER WE MET, HE ARRANGED MEETINGS AND INTERVIEWS WITH MANY OTHER RESISTERS BOTH LOCALLY AND AT SAN JOSE. HE ALSO SET UP SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS FOR BOTH ME AND JAMES OMURA AT ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAMS AT VARIOUS UNIVERSITIES AND OTHER ORGANIZAIONS.

ON MAY 29, 1992, FRANK CHIN, FRANK ABE AND LAWSON INADA ORGANIZED A UNIQUE FORUM ON THE HEART MT. DRAFT RESISTERS AT SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY, TITLED, "THE HEART MT. DRAFT RESISTANCE: THE BOYS OF MOUNTAIN VIEW--SAN JOSE." MANY OF THE RESISTERS WERE FROM THAT AREA. A VERY LARGE CROWD ATTENDED THE FORUM. I WAS VERY IMPRESSED BY THE TRIO'S EXPERTISE IN CREATING SUCH AN INTERESTING PROGRAM.

ON FEBRUARY 21, 1993, ABE, CHIN AND NARRATOR INADA, ORGANIZED ANOTHER MORE SOPHISTICATED FORUM, "RETURN OF THE FPC", PRESENTED AT CENTENARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IN LOS ANGELES. THE PUBLIC INTEREST MUST HAVE BEEN GREAT BECAUSE WE ATTRACTED A STANDING ROOM ONLY CROWD IN THE CHURCH'S LARGE AUDITORIUM. IT WAS A VERY SUPPORTIVE AUDIENCE. THE FORMAT DEVELOPED BY ABE AND CHIN WAS VERY EFFECTIVE AND INTERESTING. DRAMATIC READINGS OF LETTERS, TRANSCRIPTS OF HEARINGS, FPC BULLETINS, AND MANY OTHER ITEMS FROM THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT. PORTIONS READ BY THE ADULT CHILDREN OF THE RESISTANCE LEADERS. THE PROGRAM WAS VIDEO-TAPED BY THEIR VIDEO CREW.

THEY HAVE SPENT COUNTLESS HOURS, ENERGY AND PERSONAL FUNDS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO BRING THE STORY OF THE HEART MT. RESISTANCE TO THE PUBLIC. THEY ARE DEDICATED, KNOWLEDGEABLE, AND HAVE THE ABILITY TO PRODUCE A HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL HISTORICALLY ACCURATE, WELL DOCUMENTED VIDEO OF THE LARGEST ORGANIZED RESISTANCE INSIDE A U.S. CONCENTRATION CAMP. A PART OF JAPANESE AMERICAN CAMP HISTORY THAT HAS BEEN ALMOST TOTALLY OVERLOOKED OR PURPOSELY IGNORED BY MOST J.A. WRITERS OF THE EVICTION AND INTERNMENT EXPERIENCE. THIS IS A STORY THAT MUST BE TOLD. ABE, CHIN AND INADA ARE THE MEN WHO CAN DO THE JOB IF THEY CAN GET FUNDED.

December 6, 1992

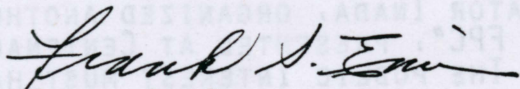
THERE IS MUCH TO BE TOLD. BESIDES THE DRAFT RESISTERS, THERE WERE THE LEADERS OF THE FPC, MOST WHOM WERE NOT AFFECTED BY THE DRAFT, BUT WHO FELT SO STRONGLY ABOUT THE INJUSTICE OF THE WHOLE THING, THEY REFUSED TO STAY QUIET. I WAS ONE OF THE SEVEN LEADERS INDICTED ON A CHARGE OF "CONSPIRACY TO VIOLATE THE SELECTIVE SERVICE ACT AND COUNSELING OTHERS TO RESIST THE DRAFT." WE LOST OUR CASE AT THE FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT LEVEL AND WERE SENTENCED TO FOUR YEARS IN A FEDERAL PENITENTIARY. HOWEVER, WE APPEALED OUR CASE AND WON A REVERSAL IN THE APPELLATE COURT. THAT COURT SUSTAINED OUR CONTENTION THAT WE HAD A RIGHT TO CHALLENGE A LAW THAT WE THOUGHT WAS UNCONSTITUTIONAL. ALTHOUGH OUR CASE HAS NEVER HAD MUCH PUBLICITY, OURS WAS ONE OF ONLY TWO SUCCESSFUL CASES IN THE APPELLATE COURT DURING THAT PERIOD. THE OTHER BEING THE MITSUYE ENDO CASE ON THE INTERNMENT.

IN THE CASE OF THE SIXTY THREE FPC DRAFT RESISTERS, THEY WERE TRIED AND SENTENCED TO THREE YEARS. WE FILED APPEALS ALL THE WAY UP TO THE U.S. SUPREME COURT, BUT WAS UNSUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING A REVERSAL OF THEIR CONVICTIONS. HOWEVER, ON DECEMBER, 1947, PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN ISSUED A PRESIDENTIAL AMNESTY TO ALL NISEI DRAFT RESISTERS RESTORING ALL CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS, WITH A COMMENT THAT THE GOVERNMENT UNDERSTOOD WHY THE NISEI MEN TOOK THE STAND THAT THEY DID. THE COMMENT WAS MADE BY THE HEAD OF THE PRESIDENT'S AMNESTY BOARD, OWEN J. ROBERTS. FORMER ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT.

AS I SAID BEFORE, THERE IS MUCH TO BE TOLD. I HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE ABILITY, THE DESIRE AND INTEGRITY OF FRANK ABE, FRANK CHIN AND LAWSON INADA TO COMPLETE THEIR PROJECT. I URGE THE MEMBERS OF THE FUNDING BOARD TO GRANT AMPLE FUNDS TO THIS GROUP SO THAT A PROFESSIONAL QUALITY EDUCATIONAL VIDEOTAPE CAN BE PRODUCED TO EDUCATE THE YOUNGER J. A. GENERATION AS WELL AS THE BROADER AMERICAN PUBLIC.

THANK YOU FOR LETTING ME EXPRESS MY VIEWS ON THIS MATTER.

SINCERELY YOURS,



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