

February 16, 1943

Dean C. B. Lipman  
Administration Building

Dear Dean Lipman:

Early last semester, I raised the question of graduate credit for three of my best Japanese-American students who were then and are still in Relocation Centers. Since the problem was not pressing at that time, I am afraid that I did not take time to make clear exactly what was involved. So, in raising the question again at this time, I want to be sure that you are under no misapprehension about the whole situation.

The three students in question have had excellent undergraduate records: two of them were honor students at this University, and the third was top student at San Francisco State and had an A record during his year of graduate work in the Social Welfare Department here.

All three have had intensive training from me during the last semester. This training has been in methods of field observation, and in the preparation of research reports. In all cases, their performance was such that each would have unquestionably rated an A for the work accomplished.

Training has been carried through both by personal contacts and seminar sessions in the Relocation Centers by myself, and by constant supervision by a Research Assistant of the University resident in the Relocation Center. Reports received by me at frequent intervals have been criticized in detail. An arrangement has been made with the University Library to have books needed for collateral reading sent to the Relocation Centers.

It is my considered opinion that these three students have had better training from me than have most of the students whom I handle on an individual basis on the Campus. Their performance equals or exceeds the work that I have got from the top-ranking resident students.

I respectfully request that I be permitted to register these three students in absentia for four units credit each in Agricultural Economics 203 for the current semester. The only special concession I am asking is the privilege of registration in absentia, for the University, as I understand it, allows



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credit for research done in the field. In fact, one of our Research Assistants, Robert Spencer, obtained four units credit from Professor Lowie last semester for exactly the same sort of work as is done by the Japanese students in question.

I shall be deeply grateful for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Dorothy Swaine Thomas

DST:mw

BERKELEY: OFFICE OF THE  
DEAN OF THE GRADUATE DIVISION

20th February, 1943

Dr. Dorothy S. Thomas  
207 Giannini Hall

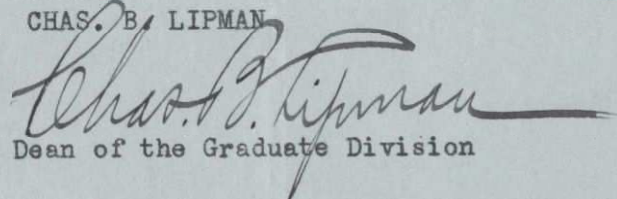
Dear Dr. Thomas:

Please let me acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 16th February and say in reply that so far as I know, we have never departed from the established policy of requiring persons who wish to register as students to come here in person to do so. Since, therefore, your proposal is one which involves the establishment of a precedent and the breaking of policy, I am referring your letter to Mr. W. C. Pomeroy, Registrar, who is in charge of all matters relating to registration of students. You will doubtless hear from Mr. Pomeroy in due course.

I would not be entirely frank with you if I did not tell you, as you have probably surmised already, that there are other much more serious grounds for denying your request as I see the problem, but there would seem to be no point in taking those up now until Mr. Pomeroy has settled the formal question which is apparently one of importance or we should not have clung to that policy as long as we have.

Faithfully yours,

CHAS. B. LIPMAN

  
Dean of the Graduate Division

CBL:FM



February 24, 1943

Dean Charles Lipman  
Graduate School  
Administration Building

Dear Dean Lipman:

I appreciate your frank letter of February 20. I have talked with Mr. Pomeroy about the technicality of registration in absentia for the Japanese American students and we were unable to reach an agreement. However, I pointed out that there are two possible methods of attacking the problem: (1) I might be able to arrange, with permission of the Western Defense Command, for the personal appearance of these students for registration in Berkeley. (2) A three-cornered conference with President Sproul, Mr. Pomeroy, and myself might lead to a solution of the technicality.

Before proceeding with either of these alternatives, however, I should like to know whether in your opinion it would be worthwhile to try to overcome this technicality if the other issue to which you refer would in any case bring about an ultimate refusal of my request. I am puzzled about your reference to the "other much more serious" grounds for denying my request, and I would be grateful if you would clarify the matter by telling me more specifically of your further objections.

With cordial regards,

Very sincerely yours,

Dorothy Swaine Thomas  
Professor of Rural Sociology

BERKELEY: OFFICE OF THE  
DEAN OF THE GRADUATE DIVISION

3rd March, 1943

Dr. Dorothy S. Thomas  
207 Giannini Hall

Dear Dr. Thomas:

Please let me acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 24th February and say that I have noted for my own information what you say in the first paragraph of your letter about your attempts to arrange for the "in absentia" registration of the Japanese students under discussion.

As regards the point raised in the second paragraph of your letter, and in connection with which you ask for further clarification of my statement about the more serious difficulties than the mere matter of registration which is connected with the cases of the Japanese students, I have the following to say: Your proposal for the Japanese students was that they be counted as students who are carrying on research on the problem or problems which arise from the extraordinary means which our government has taken to segregate Japanese and Japanese-American populations on this coast. My idea of research, whether it be carried on by students or faculty, is an investigation by thoroughly objective methods of a given problem which is more or less susceptible of solution. I cannot see how members of a community who are segregated can study objectively their own problems, whether they do so on big problems or on the gathering of information which is useful in the solution of big problems. I should personally regard data collected by students who start out with a bias in favor of their own people, or who might well do so, as being of questionable value for the solution of any important problem. Moreover, I think that when students are doing research or learning to do it, they should be under the more or less constant supervision of the professor or professors who are guiding them. It is not enough that they be visited occasionally by a research assistant. Research assistants are not eligible to direct other students, and especially graduate students, because they are graduate students themselves. You see, therefore, that I have some very serious objections to the proposal which you have made for the Japanese students.

In the second paragraph of your letter you use the words, "in any case bring about an ultimate refusal of my request." I did not say in my earlier letter, nor do I say in this letter, that my objections would bring about an ultimate refusal of this request. I am simply giving you my personal view of the matter and my personal objections to the proposal, which I think are really serious and important. For any final answer on your request when the proper time comes I should, of course go to the Administrative Committee of the Graduate Council.

Hoping I have answered your request intelligibly enough, I beg to remain

Faithfully yours,

CHAS. B. LIPMAN

*Chas. B. Lipman*  
Dean of the Graduate Division

CBL:FM



March 15, 1943

Dean C. B. Lipman  
Graduate Division  
Campus

Dear Dean Lipman:

[As you perhaps realize, the question I raised about graduate credit for certain of my Japanese American students cannot be settled this semester, since so much time has already passed.

In your letter of March 3, however, you raise some methodological issues to which a reply seems appropriate. In this letter you discuss the "other much more serious grounds" mentioned in your letter of February 20 as objection to my request to register three Japanese American students in absentia for graduate work. As I interpret it, you raise the questions of (a) whether it is possible for students in the social sciences to study problems of which they are a part, and (b) whether competent guidance can be given to students carrying on research in the field. I further interpret your answers to both of these questions as being in the negative.

In regard to the question of bias, which you also raise, I feel that I should point out that competent social scientists have given a large part of their attention to the matter of observer reliability. Detection of bias and devising means of overcoming bias are technical problems that are not new to us. We train our students in methods of objective recording. We devise means of evaluating bias where it cannot be overcome. We check and cross check. We do not, of course, achieve perfection, but we do know how to allow for imperfections in our data and in our tools of analysis. And, further, we consider that "bias," or the matter of how given people view a given situation is in itself an important part of the data of the social sciences.

In regard to the nature of bias, I should, further, like to emphasize that, irrespective of the observers, bias varies with the topic under consideration. In the Evacuation and Resettlement Study, bias has had to be guarded against in analyses of pressure groups, of anti-administration riots, of the issues involved in strikes. We have found, however, that it plays a minor role in analyses such as the following, which have been made by our Japanese American assistants: forms of collective behavior; structure of the family; types of private



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enterprise; the development of cooperatives; food, clothing, and shelter; communications; educational organization; and a long list of other topics on which we have had reports.

If I interpret your argument correctly, it implies that no social scientist can make an unbiased study of a social group of which he is a member. Swedes studying Swedes, Jews studying Jews, women studying women are presumably ruled out because of "bias." We, of course, would never claim that a Swede is the only person who should study Swedes; the approach of the scientist from another culture is vitally important, but the study of the Swedes by outsiders alone, without the cooperative efforts of Swedes would probably bias the results in terms of the "outsider's" cultural equipment. We have found, on the Evacuation and Resettlement Study, that the outsider-insider bias is by no means always in the expected direction. I have had some trouble in devising means of overcoming the strong anti-Japanese bias of two of my Japanese American assistants. I have also had to guard against the tendency of one of my Caucasian American assistants to develop what might be called the "evacuee attitude." Bias has unquestionably been one of our problems, but we have been constantly aware of it, and have a considerable body of data on its manifestations. In fact, one of the most interesting chapters in our methodological volume will be the one, now in preparation, called "An Analysis of Bias in Participant Observation."

The preceding paragraphs have, I believe, shown that we have the factor of bias well under control, both for our "outsiders," i.e. our Caucasian American assistants, and for our "insiders," i.e. our Japanese American assistants. The point at issue, then, is whether, as is now the case, only the former are to be permitted to register and receive graduate credit for the work they are doing. That the latter are not permitted registration or credit is plainly an unreasonable discrimination.]

In regard to the type of field training received by my assistants, I should like to call your attention to an important discrepancy between my letter of February 16 and your reference to this letter in your reply of March 3. I said "Training has been carried through both by personal contact and seminar sessions in the Relocation Centers by myself and by constant supervision by a Research Assistant resident in the Relocation Center." In referring to this you say "It is not enough that they (the students) be visited occasionally by a research assistant." I believe you know that I give practically full time to the direction of the study, in consultation with Professor Lowie and others of our senior staff. My Caucasian American assistants fulfill dual roles of trainee and trainer. They are



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supervised, and, in turn supervise others. This is the procedure I follow in advanced graduate instruction, not only in the field, but the campus and it is, I believe, good educational technique.

Very sincerely yours,

Dorothy Swaine Thomas

DST:mw



BERKELEY: OFFICE OF THE  
DEAN OF THE GRADUATE DIVISION

22nd March, 1943

Dr. Dorothy S. Thomas  
207 Giannini Hall

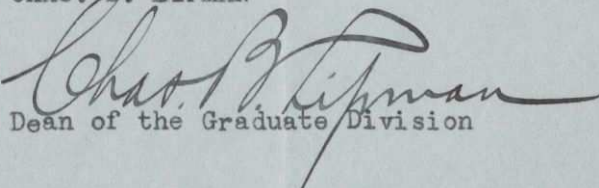
Dear Dr. Thomas:

Please let me acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 15th March and say in reply that I am not convinced about the objectivity of the work done by your Japanese research assistants at the relocation centers from the description which you give and from your account of their activities. These matters, I think, do not lend themselves to statistical study. I cannot, however, see much purpose in entering into an argument on an issue of this kind and therefore I am forbearing from doing so now.

As regards your statement that any view which I have taken in the premises constitutes a discrimination against the Japanese students, I must say that that must certainly be an error. The Japanese students who are working for you are paid for their work. Therefore, they are certainly not being unjustly treated, and as regards discrimination, I cannot see the point since we are not giving the kind of privilege which you advocate for the Japanese students to any other kinds of students. Is there any reason why we should give these Japanese students, who are paid for assisting in research, credit for graduate work in research when we are not offering anything of the kind to our men in the Army or Navy, some of whom could conceivably make such observations in the field just as well as the Japanese students are doing on their kind of problem?

Faithfully yours,

CHAS. B. LIPMAN

  
Dean of the Graduate Division

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