

Today we had the third meeting of the group which I shall hereafter call the Liberators. The first meeting was held on the Sunday of the 13th, just three weeks ago. I judge that the group was first proposed by Najima, Fumi Sakamoto, Shibutani, and company. The inception of the group probably was caused by two main aims, on the one hand, to have an organization of the Nisei in opposition to the JACL, and, on the other, to organize the Nisei for vigorous action to save themselves from the pressure of anti-Japanese feeling rising in this country at the present. At the first meeting it seems the group had felt themselves out trying to arrive at some program of action, but no decision was made then. The second meeting was interrupted by extraneous discussion, and the subject of organizing the group which was uppermost in everyone's mind then did not come forth. It was only today that a more definite line of action was proposed, though there is clearly much to be done before any real organization will be forthcoming.

There had been talk of having a meeting today as usual, but no one took any definite action and I had been uncertain as to whether or not I should wander up to 1608 or not. However, a little after 2:30 Koso came by to ask whether I was going or not and informed me that Fumi was waiting with a car. We then went down to Tom's to pick him up, and though he was reluctant to leave a radio mystery thriller to which he was listening, we dragged him along. Fumi couldn't find Naj in, but when we returned to 1608, he was waiting with G.T. and Art Morimitsu.

No one wanted to take the initiative in starting the discussion; no one offered to chair the afternoon's meeting. Hence, we kind of sidled into the question of organization without much direction from any one of us. Koso took up where he had left on at the meeting of three weeks ago with the following argument, "As I said before, I don't think it would be a good idea for us to organize into a group. Better that we should just meet like this every Sunday and discuss problems which are of importance in the community. We can still influence others individually. But if we organize, people can immediately single us out as a political group, call us radicals or whatever they think of us, and we would shortly have no influence at all."

I replied, "That all depends on the scope of the organization's function, and as to how specific are the programs outlined by the group. If this group is to pursue a clearly defined program, and if it is to be successful in the pursuit of the program, it will be necessary to organize."

Koso then declared, "Well, suppose we organize; then we shall have to give ourselves a name and write up a program. ~~That~~ We might call ourselves that ABC association or perhaps Alpha - Omega political group. In any case, as soon as we name ourselves, everything we do will be thought to have a political motivation behind it. The Issei will be especially suspicious of us, for they have had an unfortunate experience with the JACL already. I am sure that



the opposition against the JACL at the present time is so strong that we hardly need to organize in order to gain whatever ends we desire."

G.T. agreed with Koso that it was necessary to take account of the Issei voice in politics here. Art Morimitsu was of the same opinion, saying "Before evacuation when all the Issei leaders were taken and the question of evacuation was up, the Nisei seemed to be coming into leadership, but more I see of things here, the more I'm convinced that the Issei and not the Nisei are running things." Koso substantiated this view by declaring that the City Council is composed of all Nisei, but that the block meetings where the representatives get their instructions are all carried on in Japanese, or at least the Issei are the main group present. All this led into the question of whether or not Issei are to be included in the organization if we do organize.

Harno spoke up at this point and vigorously pursued his point. "Suppose we do organize and limit ourselves to Nisei. I don't see why we should necessarily weigh the Issei consideration heavily. The Nisei views are largely in opposition to the Issei's, at least insofar as our future is concerned. I listen to my parents talk about their political views, and they hold that Japan will probably come out victorious in this war. They're not thinking in terms of the defeat of the Axis philosophy." By this time we were all thinking in terms of the problem which Tsukamoto had raised at the last Council meeting, of the passage of a bill in the H. of Representatives for the deprivation of Nisei citizenship, and its favorable consideration by the Senate committee. Tom also added his voice in support of Harno's expression. "Even if we do organize as a Nisei organization, it needn't mean that we shall exclude Issei interests. It all depends on the kind of program which we decide to follow. We can probably pursue our own interests and still support certain things which the Issei are interested in getting through the council here. We might as well be realistic about what we're doing. As Elbersen said, we're in politics and we've got to use every means at our disposal to attain our ends."

I further added my voice to the discussion of why it seemed desirable to organize rather than keep the group informal. "If we're going to merely try to influence incidental events as they arise in the community, then it may not be necessary to organize. But the kind of purpose which I visualize this organization fulfilling is much broader in scope than merely ~~the~~ affects this community alone. I think we should concern ourselves with the Nisei problem, and for that matter, the Issei problem, all as a whole. If we can get this group organized, we can make and maintain contacts with powerful groups on the outside that are able and ready to help us fight such a bill as is before Congress at present. I also think of this organization educating the Nisei into a recognition of need for political action on their part to maintain their interests in this country. When you make the scope of the function as broad as that, it's almost a necessity that we organize into some very definite structure."



But Koso continued to declare that it was too late to organize for such a purpose, to which I replied that the work would not end even should the bill pass both houses of Congress. The Nisei problem would endure for the rest of this war, and we be most acute in the aftermath of the war. Some kind of organization in preparation for the needs of the future is wanted.

By this time we were all pretty much agreed that organization was necessary, and even Koso conceded that given such a program as we were speaking of, it would be necessary to organize. He hedged out for one last point, however, that perhaps we should proceed as an informal organization without officially announcing ourselves.

Harno was curious to know what it was that caused Koso to hold back from external expression of our purpose. "Are you afraid," he inquired, "of the influence it may have on the Issei's view of you if you identify yourself with a political group that expresses a definite purpose?" Koso gave no clear cut answer except to reiterate that he thought it would make it difficult to work among the Issei if he were identified with a strictly Nisei organization. In all likelihood, Koso did not know, when he first joined this group, what the shape of this group would ultimately be. He probably had in mind a discussion group which would exchange ideas on problems confronting the community, and make effective it's decisions through accepted members of the Council.

Once it was decided that an organization is necessary, the question of a plan of organization was raised. Harno read off a few ideas which he and Tom ~~xx~~ had worked out. "For the functions of the organization, we have in mind three purposes, (1) to educate the Nisei in the political history behind discrimination, (2) to endeavor to change certain undesirable conditions in this community and make it a better place for living, and (3) to make all efforts contact outside groups and organize the Nisei for the maintenance of their civil rights."

Immediately, the question arose as to what the Nisei could do at this stage in fighting the bill now before Congress, or, more specifically, what our group could do toward that end. After some discussion, it was decided that we should ascertain the nature of this bill that is before Congress, and as to whether the information given us by Tsukamoto was actually true, for there was nothing but the very brief statement which he made to confirm the fact. We thereupon decided to send out a series of letters to our Caucasian friends, especially those who might be influential in altering the growing public sentiment against the Nisei; while at the same time, a few of us were designated to write up some kind of program of organization for the whole group. We also discussed the desirability of bringing in new members and immediately enlarging the central group, but it was decided to keep this initial group small for the time being.

Harno remarked on our way home, "Koso is pretty conservative, isn't he?"