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ORGS

YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

1942-45

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Berkeley, California,
July 13, 1945.

Editor,
Auburn Journal,
Auburn , California

Dear Sir:

Our attention has been called to the column, "To Bill From Dad" in the Auburn Journal of June 14, 1945, in which the writer welcomes the youth harvest camp as a substitute for the normal supply of Japanese-American labor.

The sponsoring groups of the Berkeley Girls Harvest Camp, Incorporated, wish it to be known that this organization was set up to take care of the war time farm labor shortage only, and not to supplant any normal labor supply.

Yours truly,

Executive Committee, Berkeley Girls
Harvest Camp:

- , Chairman, Representative
University YWCA
- , Vice Chairman, Representative
Community YWCA
- , Secretary, Representative
Camp Fire Girls *protem*
- , Treasurer, Representative
Girl Scouts of America

STATEMENT

REGARDING THE FORMER JAPANESE Y.W.C.A. RESIDENCE

The former L.A. Japanese residents' Committee interested in the welfare of the Japanese Y.W.C.A. residence at 2616 East Third street., Los Angeles, California, believes it necessary to make a public statement on the status of the residence house at this time for public information.

To get a correct picture of the start of this women's dormitory, it is only necessary to quote from the annual report of the International Insitute for the year 1922:

"In September, the Japanese Advisors and Board Members decided that the need of an adequate dormitory was imperative--that a campaign to raise \$10,000.00 should be commenced and that the building committee with the members of the Joint Committee of the International Insitute and the Japanese Y.W.C.A. (Miss Darnall, Mrs. Graves, Miss Atsatt, Mrs. Nagamine, Mrs. Kojima, and Miss Hiraoka) should look for suitable property. We are delighted to report that before the end of September, a very desirable twelve-room house, 2616 East 3rd Street, (with hardwood floors throughout, a cement basement with a good furnace and a finished third story, which can be used for a dormitory or a social hall, on a lot 100 by 135 ft.) at the price of \$9500.00, was selected.

Pursuant to the above decision, the Los Angeles Japanese residents' Committee raised all of the money for the purchase of this residence from donors within the Southren California Japanese residents. Therefore, it was operated as a dormitory for the needs of Japanese women until the Evacuation order.

With the removal of the Exclusion Order and the return of persons of Japanese ancestry to their former residence, the acute need for housing for this group is again severe.

It became known in late October of 1945 that the Metropolitan Y.W.C.A. was proceeding to formulate the policies of the Japanese Y.W.C.A. residence. This was being done without the knowledge or consent of the majority of the former members of the Japanese Y.W.C.A. Board. The Metropolitan Y.W.C.A. had proposed an inter-racial dormitory at 2616 East Third Street, Los Angeles, California, under its control. Therefore, the Committee, representing the overwhelming majority of social workers, and the Japanese community, had Reverend K. Unoura act as spokesman for them and presented the Los Angeles Y.W.C.A. a letter and petition which read as follows:

"Los Angeles, California
October 29, 1945

Mrs. E. Case, President
Board of Directors
Los Angeles Y.W.C.A.
Los Angeles, California

Dear Mrs. Case:

We, the undersigned, request the Los Angeles Y.W.C.A. to return to a Japanese committee of management the operation of the residence located at 2616 East Third Street, Los Angeles, which was purchased with the contributions of Japanese people specifically for the purpose of providing residence for Japanese women and girls. The residence was so used until the necessity of evacuation left the property in the care of the Los Angeles Y.W.C.A. with the understanding that it would be returned to the Japanese committee of management when the Japanese returned.

The deed to the property is held by the Los Angeles Y.W.C.A. in trust for the Japanese; an agreement signed by the President of the Board of Directors and the President of the Japanese Y.W.C.A. is on file at the Y.W.C.A. In September, 1922, upon the request from the Japanese Y.W.C.A., the Board of Directors of the Los Angeles Y.W.C.A. unanimously voted to purchase this property for the Japanese Y.W.C.A. -- the Japanese Association members agreeing to raise the money, and the building to be used for Japanese work only.

Thus, in justice to the thousands who contributed to the purchase of this home for Japanese women and girls, the undersigned here now returned feel that any new policy pertaining to the use of the residence, such as the inter-racial plan, however laudable, must be held in abeyance until more people have returned, and that any change should be decided at a general meeting after March, 1946, when all the Relocation Centers should have been closed.

In the meantime, we feel it our obligation to continue to pursue the policy under which the residence was subscribed to, purchased and operated until the Evacuation, that of providing housing for Japanese women and girls.

Sincerely yours,"

The above letter was signed by 28 persons; including 4 ordained pastors, namely Reverends Kawashima, Kowta, Yamaka, and Unoura, two of whom were on the Advisory Board; and 24 members of the Japanese Y.W.C.A., 7 of whom were members of the Committee of Management.

The matter was discussed with Mrs. Case, the President of the Los Angeles Y.W.C.A., and Mrs. Hamilton, General Secretary, and Mrs. Spaulding, Chairman of the Inter-racial Committee, at a formal meeting on November 1, 1945.

At the time of this meeting only five replies favoring the inter-racial plan had been received from the committee of management members; and there had been received twelve replies over

against the policy. One of the writers who had favored the policy presented herself in person to retract her former statement explaining, "the cessation of war and the terrible housing shortage calls for different planning." In other words, there were only four members favoring and thirteen against the inter-racial plan.

Mrs. Case stated that the petition of the Japanese committee would be presented to the board meeting of November 15, 1945.

On November 26, on the eve of the Y.W.C.A. welcome tea to returned Japanese, the Japanese members met and appointed Rev. K. Unoura to represent them in the event the Y.W.C.A. Board failed to grant the petition of October 29, 1945.

On the occasion of the Y.W.C.A. tea of November 27, there was no reply made to the request of October 29 for the return of the residence to a Japanese committee of management. Instead, there was only a series of talks on the inter-racial plan. Thereupon, Rev. Unoura requested that an arbitration committee be appointed to study both sides of the question. Mr. Raymond Booth and Dr. Genevieve Carter were appointed to Confer with Rev. Unoura and Mrs. Sugino.

At the arbitration meeting the Japanese committee emphasized the importance and advisability of the right procedure, that of first returning the residence to the Japanese people in order to maintain the amicable feelings between the groups. Miss Hamilton, the General Secretary, explained that the Japanese branch had been dissolved in May of 1942, by the Y.W.C.A. Board. This announcement was being made to the Japanese for the first time at this meeting.

On December 12, 1945 another meeting of the arbitration committee was held and at which time the Central Y.M.C.A. representatives merely announced that they could not return the residence to a Japanese committee of management. In the meantime, Rev. Unoura, representing the Japanese committee requested the Central Y.W.C.A. to make a public statement of their decision at the earliest date possible.

A public letter was issued by the Y.W.C.A. under date of January 30, 1946 which was signed by Mrs. Case, President and Mrs. Spaulding, Chairman of Inter-racial Committee. The gist of the letter is that the Los Angeles Y.W.C.A. has now decided to make this residence

house at 2616 East Third Street, Los Angeles an inter-racial cooperative residence for girls, and will accept application of Japanese girls along with other racial groups. This letter appears to be the only answer to date on the request made by the Japanese committee for the use and return of the residence house to their management.

The above letter makes no mention of the petition presented by this committee of 28 Japanese, requesting the discharge of the custodianship of the residence which we made in good faith at the time of evacuation, but it only tends to give an erroneous impression to the public as though the Central Y.W.C.A. Board acted on the basis of the general consent of the Japanese committee by merely stating that "all the replies received had been favorable".

Therefore, the L.A. Japanese Y.W.C.A. and resident' committee memebtrs have resolved that:

1. The action taken by the Metropolitan Y.W.C.A. Board to use and operate the property at 2616 East Third Street, Los Angeles is not only contrary to the spirit and and the origial trust agreement drawn in 1922, but also this being a limited deed, it is legally questioned. This is an obvious violation of a public trust.

2. That such procedure instituted by the Metropolitan Y.W.C.A. is a breach of understanding made at the time of evacuation. Although we are not permitted to obtain the Y.W.C.A. minutes, letters received from Miss Maki Ichiyasu (dating November 20, 1945), then the Japanese Branch Secretary, and Miss Grace Steinbeck of the Central Y.W.C.A. General Secretary at that time (dating November 19, 1945), very plainly show that the Metropolitan Y.W.C.A. was to act merely as a custodian until the Japanese returned, by stating that "the Board of Directors to care for it while the Japanese were away".

3. The signers of the petition who constitute a majority of the former members of the committee of management and others who represent the Japanese community-at-large are still in hopes that the newly lected Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Y.W.C.A. would reconsider the matter in all fairness so that the Japanese will be given justice which they desrve .

Respectfully submitted,

822 East Twentieth Street,
Los Angeles 11, California
July 15, 1946

Kojiro Unoura,

Kojiro Unoura

PERSONAL STATEMENT REGARDING
THE JAPANESE Y.W.C.A. RESIDENCE

In the course of discussions and conferences with the officials of the Metropolitan Y.W.C.A., Mrs. Spaulding, the chairman of the Inter-racial Committee, and Dr. Raymond Booth, executive Secretary of Council for Civic Unity, the Japanese were given four-pointed assurances which were to be fulfilled before the residence is opened. To date, to the sad disappointment of the Japanese, not one of such promises was fulfilled. The Japanese committee which owes its responsibility to the Japanese community that supported the cause, and myself who is chosen as a spokesman for the committee, have been waiting eagerly and most patiently for their full developments. It is with a great regret and reluctance that I must make such a public and personal statement at this time. These assurances were as follows:

1. It was understood that the Y.W.C.A. officials were to exert their best efforts "to educate the Japanese" as to the real meaning and value of such project as an inter-racial policy on Y.W.C.A. program so that the Japanese might see its advantages in the long run, and again, by so convincing them, the inter-racial project might be initiated by Japanese themselves rather the issue is forced on them. Thus in the end, it might become a shining example to the cause of an inter-racial program for religious and social organizations throughout the United States. To our knowledge no such move has been made.

2. When the committee of management was to be formed for the residence the majority of members would be Japanese since they have had a greater part in sharing the responsibility in purchasing the residence. So far, we heard nothing to this effect.

3. When the residence was ready for occupancy the Japanese public was to be given a full opportunity to inspect the place. With exception of a brief announcement in the latter part of January that it was under preparations for reopening. According to reports it has been opened sometime ago for some three or four months. No such courtesy was extended to the Japanese committee, the Japanese community, or the spokesman.

4. When it becomes ready for occupancy the Nisei girls would have a larger ration, something like 14 to 4 in favor of the Japanese. Reports and observation indicate there are only 2 or three Nisei girls over against several Negro, Spanish, and Caucasian girls.

I reveal these facts with a good deal of reluctance and sadness in my heart. A casual glance at the whole procedure will make one feel that the Japanese did not receive a square deal or a full justice in the matter. However noble the policy may be, the unfair means does not justify the ends. It is more complicated and deeply involved than it appears on the surface. The American principle of fair play is at stake. I, therefore appeal to the fair minded and understanding officials and the members of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Y.W.C.A. the matter may be given a thorough review so that more amicable conclusions reached and that a cordial relationship is continued.

July 15, 1946

Respectfully submitted.

Hajiro Aonuma