

CONFIDENTIAL

Tokyo, May 10th, 1947

To the Board and
National Committee

Friends,-

I have been now in Japan for just about a month, and I venture the conclusion that it is about the most useful single month I ever spent for our objectives. I was at once given every possible facility by General MacArthur, who assured me of complete independence and cooperation. His observations on civil liberties and democracy rank with the best I ever heard from any civilian,- and they were incredible from a general. But even with the highest intentions and principles, there is a terrific job to be done in transferring responsibility to the Japanese from the occupation, which controls every activity.

There is an amazing sense of a crusade all through the occupation personnel, a lively friendliness between Japanese and Americans, but too much reliance by the Japanese on occupation direction. That attitude arises both from traditional subservience to government and the ultimate power of the occupation, despite its democratic encouragements. Their whole attitude to their own government has to be reversed, from looking to it as master to regarding it as their servant. Everybody on both sides is in an almost feverish hurry to democratize. The principles and institutions have been established; the practices and attitudes will take years. But to learn the practice requires responsibility, and that has not yet been at all transferred, even where it appears it could be done safely and successfully. It is a matter only of timing, and General MacArthur's judgment on that is obviously to be trusted. I anticipate action in that direction shortly, especially as regards the sweeping censorship of every form of communication, domestic and international.

On the practical tasks of organization among the Japanese it looks as if the three movements I have stimulated are well under way,- a branch of the Japanese American Citizens' League to handle the cases of some 10,000 of American birth who wish to return to the United States but whose citizenship must be cleared; a civil rights organization which the three bar associations have already initiated; and a United Nations Ass'n., which is in process of being formed from a group of small societies. Japan's isolation from the world is complete, but both the occupation and the Japanese are anxious to lift it promptly. Affiliation of Japanese organizations with international bodies is in the works; travel for Japanese delegates, scientists, professors and students is now permitted when expenses are provided from abroad; and the ban on all printed matter in the international mails will, I think, be removed soon, subject to censorship. Air mail will be resumed when the commercial air lines open up this summer. The eagerness of Japanese leaders to get into the world currents of democracy is almost pathetic,- they

are so starved for contacts so long denied.

The net impression I get is of a country that regards itself as liberated. I am sure that the occupation would get a 75% popular vote to stay until its job of setting the new direction firmly is done. Everybody talks "democracy" and they are getting it with a vengeance - four elections in one month with better order, system and turn-outs than with us; a new constitution popularized by the distribution of 20 million copies, illustrated and annotated, with discussions and explanations in thousands of gatherings; a public debate on the desperate economic situation as searching in its political implications as anything I have heard at home.

I have met with all sorts of groups for discussion, from the Chambers of Commerce, labor relations boards, Rotary Club to the educators, trade unions and socialists. The high level of understanding of economic and social problems fully equals if it does not exceed, similar groups at home. The reforms already made are cutting deep. We can do here what we cannot do at home. We, too, could do with a good occupation!

It is exceedingly fortunate that I came here as a representative of the Union, the Japanese American Citizens' League and two international agencies associated with the U.N. If I were an employee of the War Dept, I would have no such freedom of contact, nor such facilities as I enjoy. I get immediate entree and cooperation in all departments of the occupation and from all the Japanese, with whom the standing of an independent American (almost unknown to them) is very high. I am under no such rules or restrictions as apply to the occupation forces and I do not have to work through the usual "channels" And I can see General MacArthur whenever necessary, a privilege denied to all but his top-ranking department heads. The reason for this extraordinary opportunity is evidently that what we want to do the general not only believes in but encourages.

I spend my days from early morning till late at night in a round of interviews, conferences, meetings and excursions in the private car with GI chauffeur which is at my constant service. I have been to western Japan to examine democratic procedure at their grass roots, but most of the job necessarily lies in Tokyo. I have come at exactly the right time to do the most useful job, with the new constitution effective May 3 marking the greatest advance in the reorganization of Japanese life and institutions.

There is unfortunately an unreasoned fear of Communism both in the occupation and in the more conservative Japanese. It has been somewhat modified as a result of the elections, but it still dominates some policies. There is a point where fear of Communism, which a year ago did impose minority control on unions and many newspapers, becomes fear of democracy. I think that danger has been passed, but in the international situation and the distress of a country marking economic time till the peace treaty, it is not to be dismissed as a possible restraint on a forthright liberalism. The fear of reaction

is far less, though the chances of its resurrection are far greater if the present economic controls were loosened. There is a new rich class of black marketers and army contractors which might undermine democratic political power.

The whole experiment here is so unprecedented and so hopeful of achieving its objectives that I am in a state of constant enthusiasm. There are some holes, of course, but they are not large. I am off to Korea for two weeks where I expect to sober up,

Sincerely yours,

Roger N. Baldwin