James Matsumoto Omura “Research Notes”
(Ordered chronologically and moderately copy-edited by Arthur A. Hansen)

When preparing his memoir between 1981 and 1994 for future publication [Arthur A. Hansen, ed., The Memoir of Militant Japanese American Journalist Jimmie Omura (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018), James Matsumoto Omura compiled a compendium of items that he labelled as “Research Notes.” These notes were not ordered chronologically, but rather were assembled randomly. Accordingly, they are now rendered below in chronological order to facilitate longitudinal consumption and enhanced comprehension by users. The notes encompass the period extending from June 25, 1942, through October (?), 1947. They commence from the time in which Omura and his wife Caryl [née Fumi Okuma] resettled from San Francisco, California, to Denver, Colorado, and the notes terminate during the first two post-World War II years, when the Omuras became first separated and then divorced and when an economically and emotionally James Omura was estranged from the Denver Japanese American community. The bulk of the notes treat the resettlement experience of James and Caryl Omura, his work as the director of the free Evacuee Placement Bureau (1942-1943), as a freelance journalist contributing articles to the English-language sections of Denver’s two vernacular newspapers, the Colorado Times and the Rocky Nippon/Rocky Shimpo (1942-1944), and most especially as the English-section editor of the Rocky Shimpo (1944). In connection with the last of these positions, the most significant of the notes focus on his embattled editorial support for the organized Nisei draft resistance movement mobilized by the Fair Play Committee (FPC) at the Heart Mountain Relocation Center in northwest Wyoming, and the opposition to that support mounted by the United States Department of War, the War Relocation Authority (particularly the WRA administration at Heart Mountain), the Heart Mountain inmate newspaper, the Heart Mountain Sentinel, and the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), and its newspaper, the Pacific Citizen. Very important are the notes that relate to the US government-forced removal of Omura from his Rocky Shimpo editorship in April 1944, and his subsequent indictment, arrest, jailing, and federal trial, along with the FPC leadership, for unlawful conspiracy to counsel, aid, and abet violations of the military draft. In addition, notes bearing on Omura’s interactions, mainly correspondence, with government officials and the JACL leadership are noteworthy, as are those with his supporters, his wife, and arguably the most illuminating (in revealing Omura’s character, political and social perspective, and passions and antipathies) with his brother, Kazushi “Casey” Matsumoto. Concluding the dated entries within Omura’s compilation of notes there are appended a few that lack a date.
March 24, 1942  (Telegram protest to Jiro Tsukamoto, President of Ogden [Utah] JACL, copy to San Francisco Chronicle, protesting opposition to incoming evacuees into Utah)

Spring 1942  (Yoshioka case at Camp Carson, similar to Pando case at Camp Hale, handled by Barron E. Beshoar of Manpower Commission)

April 13, 1942  (Address by Dr. Monroe E. Deutsch, Provost of the University of California, Berkeley in the Men’s Gymnasium)

“In this light, I call on all—yes, the American-Japanese, too—and I firmly believe in the loyalty of the great majority of them—and on those refugees from Germany and Italy, miscalled enemy aliens, who hate Nazism and Fascism far more bitterly than we can hate it—on all of you I call, to whom my heart goes out in this sad hour, to seek to forget the slights, the annoyances, the insults, even the forced migration, and to believe that these are but indications of our failure or our inability yet to attain our ideals; step by step we have made progress—the road ahead seems long but we shall steadily advance. And the hope of us all lies not in less—but in more—democracy. Wherever we can—even if it be as out American-Japanese fellow citizens away from their homes and associates—let us do what our country asks, remembering that he also serves who only stands and waits.”

April 18, 1942  (Letter from James Omura to Frank J. Wolf, editor of The Monitor)

“The Japanese to whom you refer are in the main American citizens and by the same token as that granted to you entitled to the blessings of an enlightened government. I am positive that you would be the first to denounce abrogation of your civil rights and the right to live wherever you choose. The American Nisei ask no more than this that their inalienable rights of ‘life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness’ be observed.

“Race discrimination is a totalitarian disease. In our democratic America, we should attempt to live in peace and neighborliness with each other. It was this ideal that built America and made her incomparably great.”

April 21, 1942  (Letter from James Omura to Lincoln Kanai, in San Francisco, CA)
“I have been outspokenly critical of JACL leadership not because of any selfish motives but because I am convinced that such representations would be disastrous. This belief is now somewhat vindicated by the apparent helplessness of the organization during the formation of evacuation programs. The civil rights issue which I propounded is still our best argument, and when this war is over that is the theme on which our economic readjustment must be made. Individuals and organizations, who have not stood on their civil rights, will find their arguments vulnerable on that day of judgment.”

April 21, 1942 (Letter from James Omura to John L. DeWitt)

“A subordinate officer, who took the call, inquired as to the caller’s nationality and upon being informed that he was a Japanese he was told roughly, ‘Get out!’”

April 22, 1942 (Letter from James Omura to Paul V. McNutt, Chairman, War Industries Commission)

“In respect to the proposed new legislation currently being considered by President Roosevelt to draft the nation’s millions for war work and of which I understand you to be the chairman, I would like to suggest the usage of Nisei labor in this program.”

April 29, 1942 (Letter from Paul V. McNutt, Director, War Manpower Commission)

“I have read with interest your letter of April 22 concerning the use of Nisei labor in connection with the program for manpower mobilization. . . . Although the plans in progress already comprehend the subject you have written me about, I am transmitting a copy of your letter and of my reply to Mr. John J. Corson, Director of the Bureau of Employment Security, and to Mr. Milton Eisenhower, Director of the War Relocation Authority. . . . Thank you for writing me about this matter which lies so close to the interests of any loyal Americans who are affected by international affairs over which they have no control.”

May 9, 1942 (Letter from James Omura to Lincoln Kanai in San Francisco, California)

“It is my hope, and I believe it is your hope, that there should be a minimum of bitterness engendered through the forced dislocation of U.S.-born Japanese. But I believe that we are both acutely conscious that there will be a certain amount of bitterness and that unless the
military comprehends the importance of this matter and take proper steps to alleviate it that the minds of many Nisei in the so-called reception centers, which are hardly more than concentration camps, will become warped and twisted. And there is a great danger that the military, though recognizing this factor, will not be able to cope with this issue at the present period, for all their time and energy are required primarily toward the prosecution of the war.

“In my position as director of a placement bureau for evacuated Pacific Coast Japanese, I have had the opportunity to come in contact with many people of our own racial strain, and through conversations with them and discussions of the problems confronting them, I have fortunately been able to draw a certain definite picture of the trend this evacuation is taking in their collective mind. It makes me wish that I could do more for them and that I could forestall the eventual certainty of military restrictions that shadow even our lives here in Colorado. We are merely living day to day in what is hardly more than a temporary haven, and though we have tried to impress Coloradans and Californians alike with the gravity of the situation which impends, we have found the same lack of sincere and wholehearted cooperation. It will be too late when these Nisei awake to reality.

“But there are people here from the Pacific Coast who have learned something from enforced evacuation. The JACL has few friends here in Colorado, and among those who recognize a need for housecleaning and reorientation of JACL policies are past and present officers high in the organization. Such individuals as James Sugio, national secretary, Roku Sugahara of Los Angeles, Mits Nakashima of Oakland, Bo Uyeda of San Francisco, and Kazumi Miyamoto of Fort Lupton, Colorado, subscribe to this belief and I would venture to say that there are any number of past and present members of the JACL here in Colorado who also concur. The JACL has failed the Nisei in this trying hour and they have failed not merely because of their collective shortcomings but because of their shortsightedness and personal selfishness.

“The job of relocating the evacuated Japanese is a thankless job, but a job that must be done. They come here to Colorado bewildered in the main and uncertain as to their future. They are suspicious of everyone, even of their own racial people, and with a few exceptions are interested in only their own personal welfare. Their selfishness and lack of a proper perspective and appreciation of efforts in their behalf sometimes nauseate me, but when I think of the greater good that I can do and the urgent need for such work here at this and other inland points, I am sustained again with the courage and worth of my participation in this crisis. The least that I can do, and that I am doing voluntarily and willingly without any hope or desire for remuneration, is to help these poor unfortunate evacuees. I still retain my faith in the Nisei and in America, and together they should and must solve the problems of this great catastrophe. The future of U.S. Japanese rests upon it.”
May 9, 1942  (Letter from James Omura to A. Norman Depew)

“No change here in Denver, excepting information four key leaders of Japanese American Citizens League coming here. Two reported coming directly from Salt Lake City next week. Foresee trouble ahead, but last night began rallying opposition to any program they might institute. Believe can mobilize sufficient opposition to stop them.”

May 13, 1942  (Memo from James Omura to [?] Carpenter, Denver FBI)

“A. Norman Depew came into the office at 1023 19th Street on or about April 6, 1942, attracted by our Pacific Coast Evacuee Placement Bureau sign in the window. He seemed particularly interested as to what our work envisaged and seemed quite impressed when I explained to him that the service was entirely voluntary on our part and without remuneration.”

May 15, 1942  (Letter from James Omura to Earl Warren, Attorney General of California)

“The forced evacuation of citizens of Japanese lineage is predicated on the exigency of protecting against a naval thrust against the Pacific coastline and on a presumptive theory of Nisei disloyalty. The U.S.-born Japanese have committed no crime, are guilty of no treason, but their legal and constitutional rights have been virtually abrogated without due process of law—or even a fair consideration of their peculiar position.

“It should be obvious that they should be entitled to some protection from such arbitrary and arrogant treatments—war or no war. Without so much as a sympathetic regard for their difficulties, they have been ousted from Civil Service posts; they have been uprooted from their homes; they have been forced to give up their jobs and businesses.

May 20, 1942  (Letter from James Omura to L. W. Michaelson, Editor of The Monitor)

‘Your headline, ‘CALIFORNIA DESPERATE FOR FARM LABOR WHILE SKILLED JAPANESE REMAIN IDLE,’ cannot be regarded otherwise than as newspaper sensationalism and an effort to arouse public resentment and protest. The sub-title, ‘Senator Reports Many Internees Get $50 a Month,’ is obviously misinformation, discoloration and inaccurate. Senator Guy M. Gillette of Iowa knows the facts relative to such camps, and it is doubtful that he ever made the assertion that internees ‘are being paid as high as $50 per month’ for doing virtually nothing. I have just been informed that basic wages in assembly centers are $8.00 for manual work and $16.00 for professional work.”
“In these difficult times when Japanese and things Japanese are in such high public disfavor, the lot of those who might conceivably be loyal to the United States and her interests is not made appreciably easier by lack of understanding and appreciation of their peculiar circumstances by those who are in a position to contribute toward molding of public opinion.

“This America of ours is not the Germany of Adolf Hitler or the Japan of Tojo. We pride ourselves in the sacred blessings of democracy, and it should be our unstinting efforts to preserve democratic ideals, whether in times of peace or war. There are many Nisei in America who are for America in this great conflict and are desirous of preserving our way of life at all cost.”

May 22, 1942  (Letter from James Omura to A. Norman Depew, sent to Los Angeles, California)

“The plan to create a directional board of Nisei here in Colorado may yet be realized. Mr. James Sugioka, national secretary of the JACL, is here in Denver and when this became known to us, we made strong representation to him that we would resist vigorously any efforts of his organization to organize or to supervise their work here. From this conversation, it became know that he had fought [JACL] President Saburo Kido and Mike Masaoka and other national policymakers ever since his induction into office. I found him very understanding and receptive to certain of our protests, though of course there is no doubt that he is 100 percent for his organization; -- that, of course, does not mean for certain of its policies.

“Mr. Sugioka called tonight. He brought with him a copy of the new JACL constitution and asked me to collaborate with him in making revisions. I did so. This is the second time I have been asked to criticize matters of the JACL. The first occasion was in San Francisco when a high official of the Nisei Writers and Artists Mobilization requested me to draft a press release for Mike Masaoka on the eve of the military edict which led to the creation of military areas on the Pacific Coast. I refused. Mr. Sugioka is very strong for a directional board here in Colorado to cooperate with the Denver Council of Churches which is eager to help us. However, I am told that this group is uncertain what problem to tackle first, and so far has been impotent in regards to practical assistance.

“Though I am at the moment swamped with other matters, I think that we should not merely decry the need for such a directional organization. We should put our thoughts into action. The FBI has brought in four agents from other areas; Denver has been getting an increasing number of defense jobs; FBI agents have been seen in the Japanese district. These are significant facts. They point to only one conclusion—that the water is beginning to boil. A military crackdown is headed in this way. These matters taken separately may appear ordinary news but when they are brought together and properly analyzed, the gravity of our temporary
refuge here in Colorado begins to take their proper perspective. But Colorado Nisei are indifferent to it; the same sort of indifference which led to the collapse in California. Only if [If only?] we could do something—we who can see these dangers ahead.”

**May 24, 1942** (Letter from James Omura to [JACL President] Saburo Kido, acknowledged by Teiko Ishida but no response or other action believed taken)

“Case of Mits Nakashima $50 deposit for house in Idaho Falls pledged by Mitsugi Kasai following glowing report by him, Saburo Morishita and Yukio Inouye at the national Emergency Meeting in San Francisco. Brother-in-law, Bill Enomoto, made trip to Idaho Falls but told houses held for own relatives. On May 7th check drawn on Idaho Falls JACL received.”

**May 27, 1942** (Letter from James Omura to A. Norman Depew, sent to Los Angeles, California)

“In mid-April [1942], a Mr. Harry Osumi of Denver came to me and warned me about associating with Mr. Depew. . . . Mr. Osumi’s reputation being none too clean in Jap-town, I placed little credence in what he said. Our efforts in behalf of Pacific Coast evacuees are being continued, but I am afraid that it is not too greatly appreciated.

“But I must explain that I have never considered myself an exceptional being, but in respect to Americanism I have fought for, believed in it and tried to be an American. Yes, I have known many Nisei in my time, have been in a better position to study them and judge them than most. But regretfully I must admit that to a large extent you are right in assuming that the doctrines of Japanism go deep among them. However, I must correct you in one instance, and that is that I am not the only person who should be considered an American among my racial people; I am but one. There must be others who think and believe and feel much in the manner in which I do. I have not met them and you have not met them, but that does not eliminate the fact that they do exist. This is a theory, of course, but I believe it is a correct theory.”

**June 11, 1942** (Letter from James Omura to Guy M. Gillette, Senator from Iowa)

“However, I protest strongly your implication that fifth columnists in the Pearl Harbor attack included resident U.S. citizens of Japanese descent. . . . If sabotage was committed at Pearl Harbor, why is there not a clear, forthright statement to that effect?

“The policies of the Western Defense Command have never comprehended anything else than the complete removal of every single individual of Japanese descent from the broad sweep of
the Pacific seaboard. This in direct contradiction to their assurances that the utmost consideration would be shown in hardship cases and in respect to ill-health and infirmity. People who were unable to move physically were bundled away to assembly centers in ambulances. Sanatorium inmates were also ruthlessly conducted to assembly centers without regards to their health and the health of other internees. Surely, ‘military necessity’ was not the yardstick by which their removal was dictated.

“Neither can I dismiss the fact that German and Italian aliens are receiving and have received liberal protection from the War Department, despite the fact that the United States is also at war with their mother countries. It has always been by firm belief that Americans of Japanese descent should not have been singled out as a menace to national security and that, in the process of evacuation, if such need existed—and I grant that it did—that Germans and Italians should also have been included on a fair and equitable basis. No nationality or race holds a premium on loyalty. What answer is there for the deprivation in times of great national emergency of what is one’s inherent and inviolable right in normal periods? What is the significance of citizenship? Is it merely a ‘scrap of paper’ to be shaped to the will of demagogues and politicians? America has lost her head; hysteria has made of democracy and the processes of an enlightened government a shamble. The nation is assertedly engaged in a desperate battle to preserve the American way of life—a system and standard made prosperous by the common contributions of every race and every nationality and our proud boast that America is the melting pot of the world; and yet conversely, our own enlightened government feels no repugnance at depriving those basic and essential rights of free men, for which the country is engaged in this bitter duel, merely on the basis of racial dissimilarity and on the questionable issue of disloyalty or the probability of disloyalty.

“The entire program of evacuation is and has been wrong. The premises that have been employed are false premises. The methods used are totalitarian methods. Hitler’s inhumanity to the Jews is no more revolting than the categorical abrogation of our ‘inalienable rights’ and the resistless persecution of the Japanese minority group in America. Our very rights have been trampled upon and today in the midst of a war-wrecked world, we are little more than ‘forgotten citizens.’ In truth, there are some people who are desirous of stripping us of the last shred of our citizenship and the rights entitled by a free and liberty-loving republic.

“And it is my personal observation that too much weight have been given by you and others to the expostulations and exhortations of JACL leaders. With the impending crisis, resulting from the rupture of commercial intercourse between the United States and Japan, the membership of the Japanese American Citizens League was blown up to 20,000 to serve the purposes of the League, while actually it remained at 10,000 or less. This last figure is substantiated by the fact
that the total subscribers to the *Pacific Citizen*, official League organ, has been placed at 5,000 and that it is virtually mandatory to subscribe to the League publication.

“I can safely say that the great majority of Nisei Americans have disapproved and do disapprove of the JACL, its policies and practices. It is a mistake to judge all or even a good portion of U.S.-born Japanese on the basis of one’s opinion of the Japanese American Citizens League. The organization itself is held in high disrepute among its own racial society. For 10 years I had led the fight against the JACL, and you have only to question a ranking official of that organization to learn that I am on its ‘black list.’ Frankly, what I think of its leadership is hardly more complimentary than your own personal opinion.

“I ask, therefore, that you do not judge the Nisei on the basis of your opinion of JACL leaders but that your listen to the voice of Mr. Average Nisei. It is Mr. Average Nisei who is asking for understanding and common identity as American citizens, together with a common participation in America’s war efforts. We, too, want a part in defeating the Axis. Our bloods, too, boil at the dishonorable and treacherous attack on Pearl Harbor. The same pulse of patriotism that courses through your veins runs through our veins as well.

“I take as great a pride in the heroism at Corregidor, at Bataan and at Midway as you possibly do. My heroes and the heroes of thousands of Americans of Japanese racial origin are George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, General Robert E. Lee and Benjamin Franklin. We thrill to the stirring words of Pickett, of Calhoun and Henry. I know very little the history of Japan and I venture to say that the great majority of my fellow Americans know as little. Patriotism and loyalty cannot be nurtured on barren grounds and race is no infallible measure upon which to judge—unless the ties of kinship are particularly close and strong.”

**June 12, 1942** *(Letter from James Omura to A. Norman Depew)*

“It should make quite a story how we manage to finance the Pacific Coast Evacuee Placement Bureau from a meager income of an unemployment insurance and part-time domestic employment.”

**June 19, 1942** *(Letter from Guy M. Gillette, member, Committee on Foreign Relations, to ?)*

“. . . there are some of these Americans who are definitely disloyal to their country and have been engaged in subversive activities in the aid of the country of their parents.”

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1 About this time started Home Maintenance Service to keep Placement Bureau afloat. Placement Bureau discontinued on April 1, 1943 . . . after exactly one full year of operation. Caryl’s Malt Shop sold August 1943.
July 2, 1942 (Letter from Governor Ralph L. Carr of Colorado to Major Herman P. Goebel, Jr., Chief of Regulatory Section in San Francisco, California)

“...and no Governor has the right to deny to any American citizen or to any other person living in the country legally the right to enter or to reside in or to cross his state.”

October 15, 1942 (report by James Omura submitted by transmission to Barron B. Beshoar of Manpower Commission on dismissal of five Nisei workers at Camp Hale ski cantonment at Pando, Colorado)

October 15, 1942 (Letter from James Omura to Kazushi Matsumoto at Richmond Highland, Washington)

“I conferred today with Barron B. Beshoar, a representative of the War Manpower Commission from Washington, D.C. upon his invitation with a view toward clarifying the use of Nisei labor on army projects. He is to call me tomorrow for the purpose of a conference with a Major Sherrell of the Army and the possibility is that we may manage to open the doors for Nisei labor on defense construction jobs.”

November 22, 1942 (Re Fitzsimmons General Hospital suspension of six Nisei on November 21, 1942, complaint file with Barron B. Beshoar by letter from James Omura citing Presidential Proclamation 8802, [which] prohibits discrimination based on race, creed or color in war industries and allied industries with government contracts)

November 30, 1942 (Letter from Barron E. Beshoar, Field Representative, Minority Groups Service, War Manpower Commission, to James Omura)

“This matter (suspensions of six Nisei employees at Fitzsimmons Hospital) has been taken up with Dr. Will Alexander, Special Assistant to the Director of Operations, in Washington, D.C. with a request that he carry it directly to the War Department in Washington.”

December 17, 1942 (Report made [by James Omura] to Denver Division of Coca Cola Company)
“Caryl’s Malt and Sandwich Shop, 2008 Larimer Street, opened for business on September 11, 1942.

“From mid-November, Caryl’s had noticed numerous suspicious incidents pointing toward an effort by someone or groups to knock the shop. On December 1st, the first direct move was made and since then other unpleasant incidents occurred. Those incidents seemed to dovetail with reports up the street that people were knocking Caryl’s. The shop’s daily receipts had shown a harp drop.

“On the evening of Saturday, December 12, 1942, two persons—a Bob Kamano of Teapot Inn, 1814 Larimer Street, and a Sam Hessler, driver for the Coca Cola Company of Denver—entered Carl’s Malt and Sandwich Shop, 2008 Larimer Street, and accused the proprietress, Miss Caryl Okuma, of having filed a complaint against Teapot and Hessler. . . . Hessler declared that his company had given him to Monday morning to rectify the charge and that if he failed he would be fined $100 and be discharged. . . . He and Kamano explained their accusation against Caryl’s was based upon the results of findings in an investigation they jointly had carried on upon knowledge of the complaint. They both declared that the Larimer district merchants had put their fingers on Caryl’s as the guilty informant. . . . Miss Okuma denied the charge.”

December 19, 1942  (Letter from Minoru Yasui, from Multnomah County Jail, Portland, Oregon, to James Omura)

“It is well-nigh libelous to assume that your Bureau is engaged in this work singlehandedly. . . . I refer in particular to the statement . . . ‘They represent the ONLY people of Japanese extraction to demand equal consideration and treatment as citizens of the United States and to fight for these rights.’ I wonder if you have heard of Mary Asaba Ventura of Seattle. . . .”

December 27, 1942  (Letter from James Omura to Hi Korematsu at Topaz [Relocation Center in Utah])

“Our stand against evacuation as set forth before the Tolan Congressional Investigating Committee in San Francisco and subsequently before the JACL mass meeting is still the same. . . . Though many of us saw the necessity of a unified front in the days of the evacuation, we particularly disbelieved in the JACL furnishing such leadership. The outcome of the evacuation possibly vindicates our stand.”
January 28, 1943  (Letter from James Omura to G. R. Frey, Commander, Hood River Post No. 22, American Legion)

“The forceful eviction of persons of Japanese ancestry from Pacific Coast states was the successful result of strong influences brought to bear upon constituted authorities. With a lily in one hand and a sword in the other, organizations such as the American Legion railed about national security and the preservation of the American way, while they conspired and connived to transgress upon the basic principles of our Federal Constitution.”

February 6, 1943  (Letter from James Omura to Lee Casey, Associate Editor of the Rocky Mountain News)

“We believe in the principles of American democracy and the common decency of humanity. We do not believe in the high-sounding phrases of social experimenters and demagogues who prate about ‘winning the peace’ and fighting for the preservation of the American way when the treatment at home is so remindful of Axis methods of persecution.”

February 8, 1943  (Letter from James Omura to Rocky Nippon English Editor)

“I have looked over the report written by Joe Masaoka, Director of the Associated Members Division of the National Japanese American Citizens League, on the Buddhist Rally held in Fort Lupton [Colorado] last Sunday evening.

“I have given particular attention to the following passage:

‘In the open forum which followed, James Omura directed questions which indicated the lack of unanimity among a certain Nisei population. Masaoka gently rebuked the attitude and lethargy of such lackadaisical groups. The announcement of the volunteering of the National Secretary of the JACL was roundly applauded and was more than adequate answer to would-be carping critics.’

“ . . . in the event this report is printed in full, we would like to request an opportunity to rebuttal in the following issue.”

February 10, 1943  (Letter from Senator Edwin C. Johnson of Colorado to James Omura)
“Congress has been told by the Army, the FBI and other informed agencies, that 75% of the evacuees are peaceful, sincere and loyal and that they are devoted to American traditions and institutions; that 5% to 10% are dangerous; and that 15% to 20% are questionable in their allegiance. I have no way of knowing whether or not these figures are approximately correct, but they sound reasonable from my knowledge of people generally.

“I hope that persons of Japanese extractions will prove their loyalty to our cause by joining our armed forces at the earliest possible moment.”

February 15, 1943  (Letter from James Omura to Senator Edwin C. Johnson of Colorado)

“. . . in view of your vigorous denunciation of Governor Carr’s stand on the evacuee issues . . . [I am] inclined to consider you an enemy to democracy and constitutional government. I recall that in the heat of the Great Evacuation, you protested the voluntary resettlement of Japanese in the state and advocated strict supervision and restrictions on all persons of Japanese ancestry entering Colorado.

“I would like your attention to the passage below, which I authored and which appeared in the November 24th issue of the Colorado Times, a Denver Japanese vernacular newspaper:

‘Governor Carr did not necessarily champion the cause of the Japanese evacuees. He believed in the essential principles of democracy and endeavored to observe the precepts of the Constitution from his executive chair. He stood for human liberty and justice. His name personifies unbending adherence to the doctrines of self-government. By an unfortunate coincidence, his name was to be attached to the great, living issue of the day, affecting the inland evacuation of 130,000 West Coast Japanese.’”

February 16, 1943  (Letter from Tom Sakai, at Poston [Relocation Center], Arizona, to James Omura)

“My brother, Bob Sakai ‘41’, often used to stay up till morning talking of this and that with a friend of yours, Kenny Murase, and also George Yasukochi and also that fellow [Charlie Kikuchi] who wrote about his experience in [Louis] Adamic’s book [From Many Lands]. I know you know him well. . . . I also know another friend of yours, Joe Oyama. Where is he now?
“Registration has also started and volunteers are being taken. So far the enthusiasm to join hasn’t been so good. There is a feeling of uneasiness and insecurity which is somewhat similar to pre-evacuation days.”

February 19, 1943 (Letter from G. R. Frey, Commander, Hood River Post No. 22, American Legion, to James Omura)

“No doubt you ‘enjoy’ our form of government, but, evidentially the Nisei consider the saving of ‘face’ far more important than the safeguarding this form of Government or the lives and liberties of its citizens . . . nor did the Nisei try to prevent it lest they lose ‘face.’”

March 3, 1943 (Letter from Barron B. Beshoar, Special Groups Consultant of the War Manpower Commission, regarding complaint filed by James Omura regarding difficulties at Robbins Incubator Company on March 2, 1943, and reporting settlement and recall of [nine] Nisei workers)

April 8, 1943 (Denver FBI Report, File No. 100-2887)

“June 10, 1943, at about 9 p.m., two men entered Caryl’s Malt and Sandwich Shop at 2008 Larimer Street, Denver, and latched the door, approaching me [James Omura] one said: ‘We have a report that a pro-Japanese statement was made in this establishment.’ I replied: ‘I wasn’t here.’ He said: ‘Yes, I know.’ But he kept crowding me and said they were from the U.S. Attorney Tom Morrissey’s Office. They kept crowding me so I attempted to enter my private quarters but one of the men blocked the door. I was crowded into a booth where I sat down.

One of the men departed shortly thereafter and never returned. After considerable sparring, I was asked to show my Selective Service card, which I provided. Then followed a tremendous amount of hassling. I repeatedly asked to contact my attorney to no avail. It was more than an hour and a half before he finally acceded. I called Attorney Robert McDougal and related the situation. He said he would call Mr. Morrissey and call me back. He called me back and said Mr. Morrissey requested that I and my wife [Caryl] Omura, neé Fumi Okuma] appear at his office in the morning at 8 o’clock. I agreed. Then, he talked to the detective who promptly departed.

“Next morning (June 11, 1943) we appeared at the appointed time. The FBI report states: ‘On June 10, 1943, Thomas J. Morrissey, United State Attorney, telephonically communicated with the writer (must be attorney Robert McDougal) requesting that subject James Omura and his
wife be requested to go to the United States Attorney’s Office on June 11, 1943. . . .’ (Isn’t there something unethical about my attorney listening in secretly and writing the FBI report?)

“Mr. Morrissey stated that (excised) and (excised) had related that subject and his wife were extremely uncooperative when an effort was made to develop information regarding Japanese matters and had exhibited a very defiant attitude on questions asked regarding subject’s use of several names. . . .

“During the course of the interview with subject, he at times became very belligerent and on occasion referred to (excised) and (excised) as ‘the big-headed gorillas.’ Subject at all times during the interview appeared to resent the fact that he was being interviewed, and exhibited a belligerent attitude.”

May 10, 1943 (Letter from J. M. Omura to Committee on Immigration and Naturalization in support of the bills to remove Chinese Exclusion)

“This nation is composed of people from many lands and of many races. It drew its strength from the resourcefulness of not only Caucasian immigrants but Asiatic immigrants as well. . . . If we cannot solve our own domestic problem of racism here and now, how much unlikely would it be for us to have the visionary wisdom and judicious aptitude to head the post-war council.

“China can certainly question the sincerity of our nation in the course of this war and in the future unless we right some of the injustices that have been committed. Mexico can wonder if she is not just a pawn in the global battle of giants. . . . The Chinese people, witnessing the treatment of American-born Japanese, can well imagine what their lot would have been had they been at war with this nation and not Japan. The Negro people, discriminated and persecuted as they are, can hardly be expected to believe in the altruism and noble idealism which our national leaders profess.

“We are all supposed to be Americans; not Irish, British, German, French, Japanese, Chinese, and Italian. Our armed forces are comprised of a heterogeneous collection of men, stemming from all nationalities and all races. . . . The house will not longer be divided; it will be united with one purpose, one thought, one goal, the winning of the war and the peace.”

June 23, 1943 (Report of Denver Special Agent, FBI, in San Francisco, written in Denver, File No. 100-18492)
(Report of Special Agent sent to San Francisco): “He was of the opinion that Subject [James Omura] was very Americanized and was also trying to impress the Japanese people that the United States is their home, that they make their living in this country, and that they should be loyal to this government. He pointed out that Subject appeared to be very intelligent, was a very good worker, and in his opinion, both Subject and his wife [Caryl Omura, né Fumi Okuma] seemed to be sincere in their loyalty to the United States. He recalled that Subject had been employed for the Amling Florist Company for several months.

“. . . and that she was greatly impressed by the fact that Subject appeared to be very intelligent, spoke very good English, and apparently was very nice. . . . According to (Excised) Subject was very popular among the other Japanese and was at all times trying to make the Japanese people contented and trying to make [them] appreciated the country in which they lived. . . . She had never heard him make any statements which could lead anyone to believe he had any subversive tendencies or that he was not loyal to the United States. . . . She could think of nothing whatsoever of a derogatory nature in regard to Subject or his wife.

“(Excised) recalled that Subject had been an excellent employee; that he was a very conscientious worker, and apparently both Subject and his wife were very Americanized. He recalled that Subject acted as interpreter on many occasions. However, he did not recall that Subject had ever spoken Japanese in his presence. Subject would interpret the Japanese into English, but when speaking to the Japanese people, would always speak in English.

“According to (Excised) so far as he knew, Subject and his wife had an excellent reputation, were of the very highest character, and apparently were very sincere in their work among the Japanese people.

“(Excised) recalled that Subject printed a pamphlet or magazine known as Current Life and it was through this paper that Subject tried to make the Japanese people appreciate the viewpoints of the United States and tried to make them take a loyal attitude toward the United States government. He knew of no derogatory information whatsoever.

“A review of the files of the San Francisco Office [of the FBI] indicated that Subject and his wife appeared at the San Francisco Office immediately after the war broke out and offered their services in any capacity that they might serve, stating that they were loyal to the United States; that they had never lived in Japan, and that as far as they were concerned, this was their home. . . . It was stated that they criticize the Japanese American Citizens League for the lack of a definite and forthright stand. It is point out that Subject had created bitter enemies among his own racial group for condemnation of the ‘Japanesy’ attitude of resident Japanese. He also state that he had denounced the Nisei exploitation of labor.
“There was nothing derogatory found regarding Subject and his wife. On the contrary, Subject and his wife had many times voluntarily furnished information to the San Francisco Office, most of it being very general in nature.

“Open receipt of referenced reports from the Seattle and San Francisco Field Divisions of the facts of instant case were discussed with U.S. Attorney Thomas J. Morrissey, who advised that there did not appear to be a violation justifying prosecution in instant case, and he therefore declined prosecution against the Subject.”

September 8, 1943 (Letter from J. P. Wolgemuth, Executive Liaison Officer of the Office of Censorship, to J. Edgar Hoover, FBI Director)

“We do not require a recommendation as indicated in our letter of August 24, 1943, because the publication has now been condemned.”

October 2, 1943 (Memorandum from J. Edgar Hoover, FBI Director, to Assistant Attorney General Tom C. Clark)

“A review of that file (Bureau file 100-154244) reflects that investigation concerning the publication ROCKY NIPPON was initiated as the result of the publication of a pro-Japanese poem entitled “The Day of Our Remembrance” which was contained in the June 8, 1943, issue of the ROCKY NIPPON, the publication of the Japanese Publishing Company, a corporation chartered by the State of Colorado on March 10, 1932. . . . As a result of investigation conducted in that case, SHIRO TODA [Issei publisher of the ROCKY NIPPON] was ordered interned by the Attorney General of the United States by order dated April 23, 1943.

“. . . and since April, 1943, the newspaper . . . has been known as the ROCKY SHIMPO.”

October 2, 1943 (Report by N. J. I. Pieper, SAC, San Francisco, File No. 100-18492)

“Subject [James Omura] registered at Local Draft Board #97, San Francisco, and classed 4-C as of 10-9-42. . . . Subject married FUMIKO OKUMA at Carson City, Nevada, 10-4-40. . . . Subject and wife said to be very Americanized and have good character and reputation. No indication of any subversive tendencies and no derogatory information in San Francisco file. . . . No criminal record.”
October 22, 1943 (Letter from J. Edgar Hoover, FBI Director, to SAC [Supreme Allied Command])

“On October 16, 1943, the Department Property Custodian had assumed control of this publication [ROCKY SHIMPO] . . . the control is sufficiently stringent to insure no further questionable material being published.”

November 17, 1943 (Denver FBI Report by Agent; Report apparently made on June 2, 1943, but summarized on November 17, 1943)

“Caryl Okuma, wife of Subject [James Omura], was interviewed at the Denver Field Office by Special Agent (Excised) and stated “that recently two city detectives had come into her place of business, Caryl’s Malt Shop, 2008 Larimer Street, and asked numerous questions and had been very abrupt and “nasty,” in conducting the investigation.”

November 22, 1943 (Rocky Shimpo newspaper presently published under supervisory number 185 of Office of Alien Property Custodian and Custodian’s letter of 8-23-43 with authority to engage in normal business operations. Dissolution of the Japanese Publishing Company not accomplished.”

December 31, 1943 (Letter from James Omura to Lincoln Kanai at Mukwonago, Wisconsin)

“On December 3rd [1943], I wrote a column on Nisei and Red Herrings, which has had its repercussions. Mr. Larry Tajiri of the Pacific Citizen has threatened legal action against the Rocky Shimpo unless public retraction is made. Tajiri’s idea is to completely discredit me and the authenticity of my writings.

“The newspaper [Rocky Shimpo] has determined to stand behind me for various reasons and is openly inviting legal altercations. I have also consulted with my personal attorney, and all in all we were confident of defeating Mr. Tajiri’s contentions. We are unanimous in the belief that Mr. Tajiri is bluffing and that primarily he is attempting to close the columns of Nisei papers to my little attempts at literary criticisms.

“However, our decision to contest Mr. Tajiri’s threat of libel is based on our desire for a test of strength between factions opposed to the JACL and the Citizens League. Even if the Tajiri-JACL group had fairly good grounds to bring a libel suit, we do not believe that the organization would proceed in the light of the black eye it would suffer.
“During Mr. Mike Masaoka’s tour, I clashed publicly with him at his Denver meeting. It appears to have hurt the JACL cause no little. Subsequently he appeared before a Buddhist group here and made discrediting remarks concerning me. Therefore, a group of non-JACL leaders went to Fort Lupton and from that trip various threats were voiced, among which was legal action against critics of the JACL. Of course, nothing has materialized to date.

“Subsequently, the Denver Buddhist invited me to speak before that body in rebuttal. This group is inclined to go along with me rather than the JACL.

“I am planning to initiate a new national organization, which would be more democratic in character and more sincere in advancing the cause of the U.S. Japanese [than the JACL]. I would think an appropriate title for such an organization would be the American Loyalty League. However, that is only my suggestion and the founding fathers or charter members of this organization must decide the best title.

“I would like to know whether you would be interested in such an organization and would either join with us or lend us your moral support. The ideas is to make the organization as representative as possible with agents spread over the United States in a truly national character.

“It would take time to build it up, to sell the organization to the Nisei. However, it could be launch[ed] with a handful of active, alive Nisei. Membership should be acted upon by nomination, but any interested parties may attend meetings as observers and if desirous of joining the organization may appeal for membership or have a member in good standing place his name for nomination to membership.

“Whatver suggestions or advice that you might have in mind will be appreciated. I am merely sounding out opinions among leading Nisei at present as to their opinion on an organization of this sort.

“It is my opinion that we who have opposed the JACL program and policy ought to band together now and bring our composite criticism to active realization. We cannot do anything with the JACL under their present leadership and attitude. The most effective way to proceed is to have an implement for advancing our cause. That implement is an organization. What do you think?”

January 17, 1944  (Letter from James Omura to L. A. West, Regional Director, U.S. Employment Service)
“On January 13, 1944, I was approached by representatives of a local Japanese vernacular [Rocky Shimpo] to fill the position of public relations man and English Editor. On January 16, I accepted dependent upon approval of my release from the U.S. Foundries. . . . The salary agreed upon for my multiple duties is $150 per month for a beginning. This would be a decrease in salary technically. . . .”

**February 10, 1944** (Letter from James Omura to James Kanemoto)

“This is to advise you that I am withdrawing active participation in The American Fair Practice Association . . . in view of the fact that I appear to be the stumbling block. . . . I am taking this step to help Mr. Harada and others who are working so hard for the materialization of a unified organization.

“Personally and frankly I cannot respect your desire for the perpetuation of the JACL movement in Colorado. . . . The JACL has not provided that; it is not capable of providing it. . . . You are aware of the fact that a great and overwhelming majority are opposed to your organization.”

**February 10, 1944** (Letter from James Omura to George Matsumonji, on withdrawal from American Fair Practice Association)

“I have already discussed my action with Ralph Young, author of the movement; Reverend James Sugioka and my staff assistant, Jim Yanari. Mr. Young has asked me to withhold my decision for three days, during which time he intends to confer with various state Nisei leaders.”

**February 12, 1944** (Letter to James Omura from Harry F. Tarvin, Relocation Reports Officer)

“. . . I believe you will agree that the wisdom of our policy was evidenced by the killing of the Anti-Japanese bill in the Colorado Senate.”

**February 15, 1944** (Letter from James Omura to James G. Lindley, Project Director, Granada Relocation Center)

“I do not always agree with them in the procedure that some of them follow or the extreme views that they sometimes entertain, but I do sympathize with their protests and dissatisfied
feelings. . . . I fear for the consequences. Generally in such matters there is a tendency to go to extremes. It is my understanding that [the] alternative is refusal to bear arms for the United States. I sincerely hope that is not true, but in the event it is we have much to worry ourselves about.”

February 22, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to C. J. Hedetniemi of the Office of the Alien Property Custodian)

“In regards to your objection to dealing with me and questioning [Acting Publisher, Rocky Shimpo] Miss [Tetsuko] Toda’s action in vesting full authority in my hand, I must say that I am greatly at a loss to understand your action. . . . I have a job to do and I am trying to do it to the best of my ability.”

February 23, 1944 (Letter from Edward V. Dunklee, attorney, to Charles J. Hedetniemi, Supervisor in Charge of The Japanese Publishing Company)

“However, under the circumstances, Mr. [James] Omura is the actual responsible party in charge and fully understands all the conditions under which the paper is operated, and it will be a great deal simpler for all concerned if the communications could be signed by him . . . unless there is some reason unknown to us we would appreciate it if this system could be adopted.”

February 23, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to Uji Harada, Rocky Ford, Colorado)

“Lee Murata was in this office last Saturday evening to protest Young’s method in securing membership [in the American Fair Practice Association]. Murata tells me that he has been hearing considerable criticisms that Young is black-balling the JACL. Now it was our understanding that we would not give the JACL a black-eye for the present at least. . . . In regards to my contemplated action to withdraw from this group I have reconsidered since your letter of the 14th.”

February 28, 1944 (Letter from Andrew M. Kawashita, of Poston Relocation Center, Arizona, to James Omura, commenting on New Jersey Republican Representative J. Parnell Thomas’ [remark] that Nisei soldiers are “lowering the morale that is seriously affecting the whole institution,” regarding Nisei hospital orderlies at Camp Grant Military Hospital)
“At the outbreak of hostilities on December 7, 1941, all the Nisei soldiers in the service were immediately placed under confinement, deprived of all military weapons, and finally placed in non-combatant duties of the most degrading nature, such as latrine details, mess attendants, hospital orderlies, etc., a type of duties that are most unbecoming of a soldier.”

March 4, 1944  (Evan A. Edwards, Information Specialist, Farm Security Administration)

“National Selective Service officials have ordered local boards to review cases of approximately 1,700,000 men of military ages, deferred because of agricultural activity. The order stated that hereafter 16 will be considered the minimum number of war units required for deferment and that deferments will be for six-month periods. While setting 16 as a national minimum, Selective Service said the rule is not inflexible and that local boards may consider the registrants’ health, age and other factors. Local boards have been using 8 units as a minimum in many cases when circumstances warranted. In view of farming practices in some areas, Selective Service also authorized State Directors to set the minimum at more than 16 units.”

March 12, 1944  (Letter from James Omura to Jack Carberry, Sports Editor, the Denver Post)

“To like or dislike another is a man’s own privilege. The Nisei do not plead for your compassion or for the small favors that the Caucasian world may be inclined to bestow upon them. But what we do ask is fairness.

“Is not American[ism] a matter of heart, not of race or creed or national origin? Is not loyalty a reciprocal act or feeling arising from the knowledge of justice received? Surely the color of a man’s skin is not the barometer of patriotism.”

March 23, 1944  (Letter from Toru Matsumoto, Assistant to the Executive Secretary, Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans, to James Omura)

“. . . though I think your own position on discrimination, etc., fair and just . . . I speak with ignorance of your knowledge of Japanese. Whether you read the Japanese language or not is immaterial when you are responsible for the English section only. And yet, I cannot help having a sense of misgiving about you as the editor of one section because I feel that the things in the Japanese language section do not seem to print the best materials available in the market, truthfully and without bias.
“To be more specific, I feel that whoever edits the Japanese section seems to do so with a view toward pleasing the readers whose attitudes toward this war are not those which agree with the aims of this country. . . .”

March 25, 1944  (Letter from James Omura to Uji Harada)

“In order that there will be no misunderstanding of the people generally on my participation in your organization, I request that my name be not introduced in nomination for any position in the association. I seek no office and am disinclined to run for any office. If my name is introduced, I shall decline to accept.

“Whereas, the purpose of the American Fair Practice Association seeks unification between pro and anti-JACL elements, the religious bodies and factional organization, the editorial policies of the Rocky Shimpo have been, are, and must be hewed to the line of opposition to the extension of the work of the Japanese American Citizens League and to its self-appointed, fascistic policies of presuming spokesmanship for all U.S. people of Japanese descent.”

March 30, 1944  (Letter from James Omura to C. J. Hedtniemi)

“. . . I have been informed that the W.R.A. is attempting to hamstring the English editorial policy [of the Rocky Shimpo] by requesting unfriendly individuals to write opinions criticizing our policy. I presume such affidavits are to be used in a back-stage effort to hamper and make ineffective my position as English Editor.”

March 30, 1944  (Letter from C. J. Hedetniemi to Tetsuko Toda, Publisher of the Rocky Shimpo)

“I am in receipt this morning of a lengthy telegram from a James E. Markham instructing us to ‘effect an immediate and unequivicable revision in the policy of the Rocky Shimpo’ on the question of Selective Service.”

April 5, 1944  (Letter from James Omura to C. J. Hedetniemi)

“It (Mr. Markham’s action) shows a lack of confidence in our prudence under his custodianship and raises a doubt as to our personal loyalty to our government. I would like to say here that
my reply to any question of loyalty is my public record dating back to the fall of 1933. I would not hesitate to lay down my record alongside that [of] any citizen of the United States.

“Mr. Markham’s order also implies enforced subjection. I somehow resent the thought that I would support the government of the United States only because I have been ordered to do so. I have always supported the theory of democratic government—not once, but many times in the public press.

“. . . the general tone and context of Mr. Markham’s telegram, are so peculiarly coincident with the views expressed by Mr. Saburo Kido, national president of the Japanese American Citizens League, and the views we know Mr. Harold Tarvin, reports officer in the Denver W.R.A. office, hold that I am somewhat puzzled. . . . I have fought the JACL for a matter of eleven years and have had my share of difficulties with the W.R.A. during 1942-43 while I conducted a free employee bureau for west coast evacuees.”

April 5, 1944 (Letter to Toru Matsumoto, Assistant to Executive Secretary, Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans)

“I do not blame you in the least for entertaining misgivings as to my position in the matter. These are very trying times when the loyalty of all Nisei are under question. I sympathize with you in your dilemma and rest entirely upon yourself as to how you will proceed in our relationships.

“Frankly, I have never supported any voluble protestations of loyalty and I do not intend to do so now in my own case. I believe a man should be judged upon his past record and upon his face value. I do not hold with those who consider ancestry as a basis for loyalty. I would always consider a man innocent until he is proven otherwise.

“I have been accused of near-sedition by the JACL and the W.R.A. I am not at all troubled by it. As you know, I believe in a strong editorial stand. I pursued a vigorous policy long before Pearl Harbor. I have no apologies to make. First and foremost I stand on a platform of constitutional democratic government.

“In times of war, it might conceivably be that faithfulness to democratic ideals and the willingness to sacrifice one’s own personal position in the pursuit of such ideals would be interpreted as an implication of disloyalty. It might also be true that democracy in peacetime is not the same democracy in times of national peril.

“However, I do not believe that that is true. I am a confirmed believer that rights conferred in times of comparative peace cannot be abridged in times of war. The test of a democracy and
democratic form of government is in the fire and brimstone of a great national emergency—not in the prosaic lives of a people at peace.

“The question seems to revolve to this—those who would support the vacillating and hang-dog policies of the JACL or those who would back a strong demand for a restoration of their rights and a proper regard and recognition of such rights by our government. I do not consider the government of the United States as omnipotent, separate and unchallengeable. I accept the definition of Lincoln that this government is ‘of the people, by the people and for the people.’ The Nisei are also people. They deserve no less from the government as the least of its citizenry. But history has adequately shown that no wrongs are rectified, no rights have been restored while its victims passively accept such conditions. John Philpot Curran, that great Irish patriot, has said: ‘Eternal Vigilance is the Price of Liberty.’ And if rights are worth having, they are worth fighting for.

“In all my journalistic career, I have never asked that others jeopardize their individual standing in their own community or in the world at large. I have never asked anyone to support me who at the same time did not believe in the principles involved. I am but a voice, a lone voice as plaintive as a seagull’s wail over storm-tossed waters.

“And yet, that voice is the echo of the thousand Nisei who are today incarcerated behind barb-wire in relocation centers, the Nisei who are hustled off to Tule Lake in violation of the due process provision in our constitution, the Nisei who were forcibly evacuated out of military areas on the West Coast for no reason other than that they were of Japanese ancestry. It is the cry of those who ask today for justice, fair play and humanity. It is the young lad, who designated as loyal and acceptable by the Army Review Board and deferred because of physical defects, turns his puzzled face to the world and asks why he cannot go back to the [West] Coast now that he has been found loyal.

“Has this lad, who otherwise would have been asked to bleed his life out on some foreign battlefields, the right to enjoy the guarantees of citizenship as enunciated in our Constitution in the same manner as his fellowmen? Has he the right to know exactly what this great nation presumably is fighting to protect? Does not reinstatement of constitutional rights precede reinstitution of selective service?

“I have perhaps strayed from my original purpose and if I have, I wish to apologize to you for this waywardness. The grievances of the Nisei are very close to my heart and there are times when I am inclined to indulge in it at too great a length. I have fought this battle upon principles—and on principles alone, and it is that factor that has thus far kept me above water. When I sink into the depth, those principles, too, will sink with me.”
April 6, 1944  (Letter from Seven Resisters at Denver County Jail, to James Omura, requesting copies of Rocky Shimpo English Section)

“We are here for a cause and consider ourselves right, not draft evaders.”

April 7, 1944  (Letter from James Omura to Ikuo Okuma, Glendale, Arizona)

“In re-reading your letter, I find that you make reference to sedition. I think it would interest you to know that the JACL and the WRA have already made such charges against my editorship [of the Rocky Shimpo’s English-language section]... Mr. Tarvin of the WRA, I understand, has been most industrious in that connection. I have even been reprimanded by Washington with telegram and long-distance phone.

“I am of the conviction, too, that we must fight to retain our constitutional guarantees and to have those which have been denied us restored. I find that the JACL and the WRA consider that the time to raise our voices is when peace returns... It is my firm conviction that our constitutional guarantees will be returned to us automatically when the war is won. The time to fight is now. We must know whether the government can legally abridge our rights on the one hand and on the other require us to perform our obligation as full citizens. We must know whether the rights bestowed on us in times of comparative peace can be recklessly and arbitrarily shorn from us in a period of national emergency.”

April 7, 1944  (Letter from James H. Curtis, Relocation Officer, Denver, Colorado, to Tetsuko Toda, Publisher, Rocky Shimpo)

“I do not know whether or not Mr. James Omura is acting in good faith, but I am positive that the stand taken by the Shimpo, whether wittingly or otherwise, has tended to encourage draft resistance at the [WRA] centers. I do not say that Mr. Omura’s editorials are seditious, but in my opinion they have had an unfortunate connotation. It would not be difficult for any Japanese-American who is inclined to resist the draft to point to certain editorials in the Shimpo as supporting his stand; indeed, that has already occurred, and I venture to say it is occurring every day.”

April 11, 1944  (Letter from Harry F. Tarvin to Tetsuko Toda, Publisher, Rocky Shimpo)

“I do not go so far as to claim that the editorials in question have been seditious, but certainly they have had a harmful implication. ... I’m sure that if you realized to what extent such draft
resistance at the [WRA] centers, and doubtless outside them, has been fomented by some of Mr. Omura’s editorials you would, as a good American citizen, embark upon a more constructive editorial policy.” [Response to Omura’s letters of clarification not made until his removal [as Rocky Shimpo English Editor] is effected, Bill of Particulars dated April 17, 1944, to Tetsuko Toda, Publisher, Rocky Shimpo; Letter of removal from C. J. Hedtniemi to Tetsuko Toda, April 18, 1944.]

April 11, 1944 (Memorandum by James Omura)

“For the purpose of securing permission to interview the seven Nisei from Granada Relocation Center held in custody at the Denver County Jail, I had Miss Tetsuko Toda, publisher of the Rocky Shimpo, contact District Attorney Thomas Morrissey by phone. Mr. Morrissey referred Miss Toda to contact Min Yasui, who we were informed, was working with the F.B.I. on this case. This confirmed my belief that Mr. Yasui was in the employ of the F.B.I. which deduction I had reached last week when Al Takata dropped the information that he had been approached by the F.B.I. to work among people of Japanese ancestry. Mr. Takata said he had refused. The activities of Mr. Yasui led me to the conclusion that he had finally been selected for this position. I had Miss Toda contact Mr. Rankin, whom she said she knew personally, in the F.B.I. Mr. Rankin is believed to have conferred with Mr. Duffy, new chief of the Denver bureau, and Miss Toda was instructed to call Mr. Morrissey back for, Mr. Rankin said, he was in top command of the case. Miss Toda called Mr. Morrissey back. Mr. Morrissey asked what our reasons for the request was. She told him we wanted an interview. He then asked who we intended to send for the interview. I instructed Miss Toda to merely say a representative. However, Mr. Morrissey asked for the name of the specific representative. Miss Toda gave my name. He said, ‘We don’t want Omura to go.’ She then suggested herself and then Jim Yanari. Mr. Morrissey said for us to call him back Monday on his decision. This occurred a few minutes after 2 p.m.”

April 15, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to John T. Kawahara at Poston [Relocation Center], Arizona)

“I am reliably informed that the JACL and the WRA are endeavoring to restrict my powers and they are doing this by representations to authorities, federal and state.”
April 17, 1944  (Letter from James Omura to Elmer Smith, University of Utah anthropologist, in response to Smith’s letter to the Rocky Shimpo publisher condemning Omura’s editorship)

“In your capacity as an anthropologist at Utah University and if you actually understood the Nisei mind as you profess to do, you must know that certain individuals will resist the draft irregardless [regardless] of any other considerations. I bore this in mind—and resistance had already begun before I took up the question—in initiating the policy which the Rocky Shimpo subsequently took on this issue. It is my conviction that it is more preferable to have such resisters act on a concrete basis—a constitutional exploration of the issue involved—than to witness reckless outbursts of disloyalty as was the case among the first draft-resisters at Amache, Colo. You perhaps feel that these boys should be left along to commit such rash declarations and through such actions to raise a doubt as to the loyalty of the whole Nisei. I feel I understand the reasons for such expressions and I do not condemn them wholly for their acts. I do not believe that these boys are actually disloyal.

“The situation at Heart Mountain is somewhat different. These individuals resisted the draft to simply test the law. The Fair Play Committee members will be represented by legal counsel at their trial in May [1944]. I am reliably informed that the case will be taken to the Supreme Court for final decision. To violate a law in order to test its validity is not considered any great crime. This procedure is generally recognized in American jurisprudence.

“I believe, and rightly so, that life is a sacred thing. The Army is asking the Nisei to fulfill his obligations as a citizen while holding in retention his constitutional guarantees. I believe, sir, that if you were to read the constitution of the United States you will find that the duty of the government to the people and the duty of the people to the government are reciprocal acts, each related to the other and neither independent and separate. I know that you do not hold very high respect for my legal knowledge, and for that reason I request that you read the constitution. I’m sure you respect the constitution.

“The only argument that persons of Caucasian descent has brought forth is that friction between the Nisei themselves is detrimental to the morale of those who would help the poor benighted Nisei. Let me say to those weak-willed individuals that the Nisei are far better off without their support. It is not the volume of support that we need; it is the quality of such support. The Nisei care not for bandwagoners, the fair weather friends, but people who truly and sincerely believe in democracy in action, in the principles of justice, tolerance and fair play. It would be unnatural if there were no friction in a sizeable society of any nationality or race. The Nisei are not the unfeeling savages that some so-called Americans are inclined to consider. They are as human as the next fellow. And being human, we have our share of friction.”
April 18, 1944 (Letter from Charles J. Hedetniemi to Tetsuko Toda, Publisher, *Rocky Shimpo*)

“Your present editor, Mr. James Omura, as indicated in my letter of April 17, 1944, had not hesitated to place his loyalty to a particular group in this country ahead of his loyalty to the United States as a whole. We have no wish to deprive any editor of the right to argue for the restoration to the Nisei of any civil rights of which he may feel they have been deprived. However, he cannot, either explicitly or by the slightest implication, urge or condone interference with the war effort, including the raising of an army, as a means [of] protesting against the situation which he may feel exists.”

April 18, 1944 (Letter from Toru Matsumoto to James Omura)

“I do not wish to argue with you concerning the civil rights and the editorial stand on civil rights that you seem to represent. There is no argument there; you are free to say what you want to say. And yet, I find there is too much verbal disunity among various organs of public opinion of the Japanese Americans at a time when I feel all should look at the major issues and forget small difficulties. I am not suggesting that there should be a compromise at the expense of principles, but I do want to sympathize that every Japanese American group should contribute its maximum effort to improving the democratic life of the whole nation, rather than seek its own benefit.”

May 5, 1944 (FBI Report, File No. 14-32, Denver)

“Case Marked ‘Closed’—It was also believed that Omura and his wife were loyal to the United States, but on the other hand did not always agree with the policy of this Government. (Memorandum from J. Edgar Hoover to Leo T. Crowley, Alien Property Custodian, March 20, 1944). Also add: . . . Omura never learned the Japanese language except for a few spoken words and a slight understanding of the simplest form of Japanese speech.

“Prior to the enforced dismissal of OMURA from the staff of the *Rocky Shimpo* on April 20, 1944, several protests were received by the Denver Field Office from officials of the Japanese American Citizens League in Denver concerning the editorial policy of OMURA and his apparently close cooperation with the Fair Play Committee at Heart Mountain as a result of which numerous Nisei boys had been arrested for refusal to report for their pre-induction physical examinations.

“A review of OMURA’s editorials from February 16, 1944, until March 27, 1944, reveals that most of these editorials had to do with the activities of the Fair Play Committee and the
reinstitution of Selective Service among Japanese Americans. It further reveals that his articles over a period of time were so slanted as to cause service in the Armed Forces by a Nisei to appear in an unsatisfactory light and it is noted that members of the Fair Play Committee have admitted that they were in contact with OMURA and furnished him much of the material he published.”

May 10, 1944 (Letter from J. Edgar Hoover, FBI Director, to SAC, Denver)

“As a matter of information you are advised that the Office of the Alien Property Custodian has informed the Bureau that as of April 19, 1944, that Office ordered that Mr. James Omura, Editor of the English Section of the Rocky Shimpo, be immediately dismissed from any connection with the newspaper.

“Apparently the action against Omura was taken as a result of appearance in the English section of considerable material condoning resistance to Selective Service regulations and the draft.”

May 12, 1944 (Letter from SAC to J. Edgar Hoover, FBI Director)

“United States Attorney Carl L. Sackett, Cheyenne, Wyoming, has requested that all available evidence showing correspondence and cooperation between OMURA of the Rocky Shimpo newspaper and other Subjects of this case at the Heart Mountain Center in Wyoming be obtained in view of the fact that Omura is one of the persons against whom indictments for conspiracy were returned by the Federal Grand Jury at Cheyenne on May 10, 1944.

“The only evidence against OMURA as a party to the conspiracy charged, aside from articles published by him in the Rocky Shimpo newspaper, will consist of correspondence of this kind between OMURA at Denver and various members of the Fair Play Committee at Heart Mountain, Wyoming.

May 15, 1944 (Letter from J. Edgar Hoover to SAC, Denver)

“In this connection the Bureau has lately received a memorandum from the Criminal Division of the Department, attaching a letter dated April 19, 1944, addressed by the Criminal Division to Mr. Thomas J. Morrissey, United States Attorney at Denver. Copies of this communication are being forwarded with this letter and you will note that the Criminal Divisions has advanced the suggestion that the United States Attorney give consideration to the possibility of prosecuting James M. Omura and the Rocky Shimpo under either Section 311, Title 50, U.S.C. (Selective
Service Act), or Section 33, Title 50, U.S.C. (the Wartime Sedition Statute). Additionally, the Criminal Division made reference to the Fair Play Committee at the Heart Mountain Relocation Center and suggested that additional thought be given to the possible desirability of commencing a conspiracy prosecution against the *Rocky Shimpo* and certain of the individuals associated with the Fair Play Committee.”

**May 17, 1944** (Interview [of James Omura?] with FBI, Denver)

“... in fact, [James Omura?] welcomed any prosecutive action because he was convinced that it would justify his stand and activities in that regard.”

**May 20, 1944** (J. Edgar Hoover, FBI Director, to SAC, Denver)

“It is noted from reference report that subject [Excised] states he was influenced to some extent in his Selective Service violation by the writings of James Omura, the Editor of the English Section of the *Rocky Shimpo*. . . . This data should, of course, be brought to the attention of the United States Attorney at Cheyenne, Wyoming.”

**June 23, 1944** (Excerpt from Denver FBI Report, File No. 100-2887)

“SELECTIVE SERVICE. Investigation in instant matter is predicated upon a request from United States Attorney Thomas J. Morrissey, Denver, following the receipt of a complaint by him from (Excised) that subject, whose true name appears to be UTAKA MATSUMOTO, had registered for Selective Service as JAMES MATSUMOTO OMURA, and was known to have used other aliases, for which there was apparently no explanation.”

**June 24, 1944** (14-1582-40, Denver)

“The Federal Grand Jury meeting at Cheyenne, Wyoming, returned a secret indictment on May 10, 1944, against the captioned subjects, charging them with conspiracy in counseling and aiding others to evade the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, in violation of Section 211, Title 50, USCA. No bench warrants were issued for the arrests of the subjects inasmuch as the Honorable Carl L. Sackett, United States Attorney at Cheyenne, Wyoming, desired the
indictment to be maintained as a secret indictment pending the completion of additional investigation in this case.”

July 6, 1944 (Included in Special Agent Report, Denver, 100-3451)

“(Excised) concludes he sees no objection to any of these articles but he does not favor any article that has as its object incitement for a strike or a violent exhibition of resistance to authority.”

July 9, 1944 (?) (Letter from James Omura, to Local Draft Board #97, San Francisco, California)

“I wish to go on record as protesting the Selective Service requirement which requires citizens of Japanese lineal descent to fill out a special questionnaire.

“This protest is based upon the fundamental principle of discrimination involved. It is my belief that no other minority people or race here in America has been required to undergo similar scrutiny in the form of a special form.

“Furthermore, it would seem to be an unwarranted intrusion into the private life of a citizen whose personal or individual conduct are and have been above criticism. The Statement of United States Citizen of Japanese Ancestry can be interpreted as further governmental regimentation and persecution of a helpless minority racial group. Its purpose is to pry into and probe the private life and record of people of minority segments on the doubtful and certainly most questionable thesis of race.

“However, it has never been my purpose to defy governmental regulation however much I may resent it. For that reason I have complied with your request and am enclosing the special form properly filled out. Nevertheless, I feel that I should exercise my personal privilege of registering a protest for whatever good it may result.

“In regards to Question 28, I have qualified my answer. It would seem to me that a straight “Yes” answer here would imply previous allegiance to the Japanese emperor. It is my strong conviction that to swear unqualified allegiance to the United States is sufficient. Would you not agree that the second part is redundant? I should think that would be the feeling or reaction of American citizens, who by the accident of birth are descended from a present enemy race, who have never known any country but our own great Union. The technicality in construction of words here may be of minor concern to those who are not affected in any way by them but to us who are vitally concerned, it is of vital concern.
“I wish to emphasize here again that I would like to serve in concert with and in companionship with other Americans rather than in a segregated Nisei unit—a program which I have publicly criticized and condemned to the extent that Secretary of War, Hon. Henry L. Stimson, has personally replied by letter on this issue. I am irrevocably opposed to Japanese combat units.”

July 18, 1944 (Letter from Jimmie H. Akutsu, Hunt, Idaho, to James Omura)

“I took my pre-induction physical, because D. S. Myers [sic] in a teletype letter to Stafford, our project director [at the Minidoka Relocation Center], on February 21, 1944, stated that as an American citizen one has the right to appeal or petition his grievances after taking the physical. At that time I was told to take my physical even though I did not have a 1-A classification. I didn’t even have a card. Since the letter sent by the W.R.A., the board hustled and gave a card of 1-A as a reclassification. How could they reclassify me when I didn’t have the original 1-A? This happened to many fellows here at Hunt. I took my physical back in February 24, 1944. Also, on the classification card there is a notice of right to appeal, correct? If I weren’t given a chance to appeal, I wouldn’t have taken the pre-induction physical but to get this chance, I did.

“Since I got these privileges as a citizen I petitioned, appealed and re-appealed to the board, Selective Service headquarters in Washington D.C. and to the President, but it was in vain. They are just passing the buck over there. Of all the letters I sent my board since February, they have not answered one of my letters of appeal. Then, if I can’t get any answer to my appeals, I am again denied of my right as a citizen, isn’t that right?

“Since our evacuation we were all made into a 4-C, denied our rights as a citizen, properties confiscated, put behind barbed wire fences, denied right to own land and not the least our evacuation and etc. These are the general grievances of most holdouts. To this mine are breaking up our family thru internment, treatment by the F.B.I. prior [to] evacuation, placing me on stop order on going out, but when I am to be inducted I can make out an indefinite leave. When I was dined of my leave clearance, I was not given any reasons for it (August 1942 to December 1943).

“If I couldn’t leave camp to go out to school or otherwise, why should I give any service? I had to make out a short term leave to take a physical at Boise and at that time the Selective Service did not carry out their duty. Trying to induct me without another physical. It has been five months since the first one. I fall under the former jurisdiction of 90 days ruling. . . . The dirty work of the W.R.A. in hurrying my induction accepted by the Selective Service board. Also trying to induct me before I had 1-A. There are lots [of] fellows here that have 4-C or otherwise who are being inducted.”
July 20, 1944 (Report of arresting FBI Agent stated on Denver FBI Report, “Summary”)

“At the time of the search of the premises of subject OMURA, there was observed by Special Agent (Excised) an order of the District Court of Denver, Colorado, Division 3, dated April 13, 1943, signed by Honorable Charles C. Sackman, reflecting a change in the name of UTAKA MATSU+MOTO or JAMES MATSUMOTO, to JAMES M. OMURA.”

July 24, 1944 (Summary Report, Denver FBI, 14-1582-54)

“FAIR PLAY COMMITTEE. The original investigation of this case was predicated on information submitted to the Denver Office by WRA authorities at the Heart Mountain Relocation Center, Heart Mountain, Wyoming. . . . In this connection, it may be noted that the United States Army changed its position concerning the acceptability of Nisei with an announcement of January 20, 1944.”

July 30, 1944 (Letter from Kazushi Matsumoto to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma])

“I have read Freedom of Speech in the United States by Zachariah Chaffee. It deals at length with the suppression of the freedom of speech during the last war [World War I] and the illegal Espionage Act under which it was enforced. Incidentally, this Act has been repealed because of its untenability. The Smith Gag Act has taken its place. There are such things as policy tyranny and Government persecution at all times, and more so during bellum.

“Law and Justice are not always the same as witness Justice [Oliver Wendell] Holmes saying in effect: ‘I am not here to dispense Justice; I am here to administer the law.’ When law is at all times based on Justice and not expediency, as so often happens, then the militant thinking and often outspoken champions of Justice will have his inning.

I find that there are very few people here thinking militantly on the left. Only one Japanese American leaning toward the left. Perhaps 6 white Americans that I am sure lean that way. These would be the sum total of the Freedom of Speech here. And they have their limitations, too. There are probably others of liberal leaning, but believing in suppression for the other fellows on free speech.”
**August 1944**  (Judge Louis Goodman of Ninth District Court, sitting at Eureka, California, ruling in dismissing complaint against twenty-five Nisei draft resisters at Tule Lake Segregation Center in California)

“It is shocking to the conscience that an American citizen be confined on the ground of disloyalty, and then, while so under duress and restraint, be compelled to serve in the armed forces, or be prosecuted for not yielding to such compulsion.”

**August 1944 (?)**  (Letter from James Omura to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma], through Mrs. Paul Nakadate, date not shown)

“Things aren’t so bad now that I have been moved in with the boys. According to the rules here we are permitted to write one letter per week on Wednesdays. However, letters are censored, opened and read by the sheriff’s office so that we have to be careful what we say. This letter, of course, is going through Paul’s [Nakadate] wife and without the authorities’ knowledge.

“We are permitted quite a few privileges here. Candies and some other eats are allowed. Even razors. Mr. Clark sent in a razor set for me Monday.

“The boys are not actually united as we were led to believe. We are all united in winning this case, but each may seek to find different roads. [Kiyoshi] Okamoto anyway I hear following his own counsel; I, of course, am fighting my case separately; Paul [Nakadate], Frank [Emi], Sam [Horino] might probably presume to . . . and Mr. [Guntaro] Kubota, being an alien, will present a different case. There will be a lot of surprises at the trial.”

**August 2, 1944**  (Letter from [Sidney] Jacobs to [L. C.] Sampson)

“I studied the question pretty carefully, of whether the statute concerning conspiracy refers only to conspiracy to evade the act by force and violence. Unfortunately, I find a Circuit Court of Appeals case which the United States Supreme Court refused to review on writ of certiorari to the effect that the conspiracy part of the statute does not merely refer to the words immediately preceding it, but refers to doing any other acts referred to in the penalty section of the statutes. Under the authority of that case, we would not get any place by contending that the charge of conspiracy to evade the act could apply to conspiracy by force and violence only. I have studied the indictment through pretty carefully, and am afraid we would not get far by attacking it be demurrer.
“I believe that we, legitimately, are entitled to a separate trial because the position of Mr. [James] Omura is entirely different to that of all the other defendants. I am afraid that he will be prejudiced by the introduction of evidence against the other defendants, particularly in view of the fact that there is such confusion among Japanese names.”

August 9, 1944 (Letter from L. C. Sampson to Sidney S. Jacobs)

“. . . and am of the opinion that your conclusion that it would be useless to proceed against the indictment was probably very well founded; and I think Mr. Wirin, by his multiplicity of motions, was groping at pretty slender threads in his attack upon the indictment.”

August 9, 1944 (Letter from Chester E. Rowell to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma])

“Dear Mrs. Omura:

“. . . if any assurance is needed with reference to the coming grand jury trial to be held shortly in Wyoming, I am very glad to make my personal statement as to the loyalty at all times of yourself and your husband. I base this on considerable knowledge of yourself and your family and on a shorter acquaintance but one which entirely confirms it, with your husband.

“If this letter can be of any assistance to you I should be very glad to have you use it. I am, as you know, editorial columnist of the [San Francisco] Chronicle and was at the time you speak of its active editor.

“Sincerely, Chester E. Rowell

August 9, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] through Attorney Sampson)

“Insofar as food is concerned, we are pretty well fed. The boys tell me our menu far exceeds food at Heart Mountain. We have meat loaf twice a week—Tuesdays and Saturdays; beans on Monday; wieners and cabbage on Wednesdays; a very good stew on Thursdays; macaroni and cheese on Fridays; and a very delicious Sunday dinner. The only item I miss is fresh vegetables which we never find on our plates.

“Paul is amazed at the attitude and actions of Japanese in Denver, hampering your efforts to raise the fund. It seems almost unbelievable that Kay should have been beaten up in the alley,
that George should have been threatened, and that others should have been scared into silence by these actions. Yes, as I told Mr. Sampson, my goose seems to be pretty well cooked in Denver. This more the amazing when you consider the fact that for one year, I served the evacuees in Denver without a mercenary thought in mind. But in times like these, we have people like Sugioka—a man of small convictions of a limited outlook. Yes, Mr. Sugioka at one time regarded with respect, if not with agreement, my work and my views. He was one of the JACL rebels who came to me to suggest that I join the organization and constructively reorganize from within. The absurdity of it, when he himself had not the means, the strength of conviction, the power to do it as national secretary. I see him now as a man of words and not of action. When I am released I shall write to him admitting to him that I heartily agree with him that he did not deserve the generous editorial salute I accorded him. After all we find our friends in adversity and we realize the characters of others under duress. The day of reckoning for the Sugiokas will come. For a Christian minister he represents the bigots and the hypocrites. This is not surprising to me. I have been heading away from Christianity because of this hypocrisy. . . . It is the same reason I resigned as Sunday School teacher and I have been more and more vindicated in my decision.

**August 11, 1944**  
(Letter from Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] to James Omura, through Attorney Sampson)

“Mrs. Toshiyuki: I met her at the Sedition Trial of the three Nisei [Shitari] sisters on Monday and at her request made arrangements for appointment with Mr. Jacobs. He has been attending the trial to study the leading criminal lawyer, Robertson, defend the girls. . . . Jacobs thinks the girls will be found guilty; Mrs. Toshiyuki and I believe they will be either exonerated or receive a very light penalty.

“However, the FBI called on Mrs. T. and told her that they have witnesses who will testify against her that she was the ‘go-between.’ She believes it is the *Rocky Shimpo* influence. . . . She says that as soon as the treason trial is over with she expects the government will throw another bombshell in the public light and pick her up. It is for this reason that she has been consulting Jacobs and giving him all the information, ideas and thoughts that will help your case and also to acquaint him with the details.

“He [Sidney Jacobs] knows who [Kiyoshi] Okamoto is and even told her after her talk that he did not think she was in the wrong nor is Okamoto. (I wish to make a correction: Jacobs did not say that Okamoto and she were not doing criminal acts.) Now I do not know whether this is to be kept under the table at present but it was said to me confidentially. The rest is up to you.
“I sincerely believe that both Wirin and Jacobs will get along nicely and Mrs. T. said that she doesn’t know how they couldn’t. Also she told Jacobs about the letter you received from a certain law firm that gave an opinion of your articles and I understand that Jacobs has been busy subpoenaing them. I’m afraid the rest will have to come out in conversations with Mr. Jacobs as I have not been present at the appointment with Mr. Jacobs and Mrs. T. But I think you will find that he knows more about the case than you think he knows. . . . She is [of] the opinion that Jacobs is certainly working for his money and that he is preparing his case while Menin did not ever prepare his case for the 63 boys.”

“. . . George was so nice and tried so hard to do things for me. He contacted Uji Harada for a loan but he refused.”

August 12, 1944 (James Omura to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] through Attorney Sampson)

“I was particularly buoyed in spirit by Chester H. Rowell’s generous and sympathetic view of my predicament and his willingness to provide me with a statement of character. I am forever grateful to Mr. Rowell for his kindly gesture. It is rather difficult for any man of public stature to come forth in behalf of a person of Japanese ancestry in these times and particularly so when such a person has been indicted by the Government for conspiracy. Mr. Rowell’s kindly gesture inclines me to feel that all the efforts of the government and the JACL to blacken my case and to assassinate my character are compensated greatly. And our disappointments in Denver are much easier to bear. Of course you will write to Mr. Rowell to thank him and I shall do the same when I am released either on bond or on exoneration. I feel that you ought to have Mr. Jacobs prepare information for Mr. Rowell so that we may be in a position to present a formal statement at the trial. I have a feeling that such statements, particularly from a nationally-known California newspaperman, tend greatly to guard against the prospect of a Wyoming jury being swayed by war hysteria and emotional pitch and would aid in mitigating the insidious efforts of such an occurrence. In this connection, it may be well worth while to secure similar statements from Lee Casey, Stuart Richardson Ward and others who know me personally. I am thinking also that Mr. Stimson might possibly oblige as my views on Selective Service, though not in complete agreement with War Department policies, are familiar to him. Of course I am fully aware the War Department wants me silenced, but we don’t want to miss any bets. On your part, I would like to have you write Mr. Rowell acquainting him with full details of the case so that he may be in a better position to pass on its merits. It would be helpful if Mr. Rowell would comment on the case in his column. I would also like to comment on the case for the Chronicle when I am able. I wish you would ask Mr. Rowell whether he would be interested in such articles. In my particular case I feel we shall raise the question of the Freedom of the
Press. The others are going to raise the question of constitutionality of evacuation, illegal detention, etc.

“In reference to Sylvia [Toshiyuki], I do not believe she will be indicted but rather would be subpoenaed as a witness by the prosecution. I am glad to note that she has confided in Jacobs, but I do not fail to recall that she took this step only when she believed her own liberty was threatened. Jacobs’ reaction after speaking with Sylvia is also cheerful news. However, I do not understand what you mean by my being overconfident. I do not believe that I have been anything but a realist throughout. If Mr. Jacobs feels there are materials he has uncovered which would convict me, I would have to disagree with him entirely. I have no guilty conscience in this matter and am proud of my own stand. I do not fear the future or whatever may transpire and I again assert my conviction that the prosecution has no legal leg in bringing this action. I am positively confident but in no degree what you term over-confident. I am glad that Mr. Jacobs is subpoenaing the Dunklee statement that much of it was drawn upon request of the office of Alien Property Custodian and which disputed Washington contentions. I had forgotten to mention that as I did not know at the time that Mr. Jacobs had started work in the defense. Even Mr. Sampson is not informed as to Mr. Jacobs’ progress. Naturally if Mr. Jacobs is shaping up the defense, there are materials he should know about. For instance, the [Jim] Akutsu correspondence copies of which should be home on top of the Current Life office sign—the glass one, on the third shelf below the stationeries. If they are not there, Mr. Rankin has these. My reply to Toru Matsumoto which you probably have; letters right down the line to agencies in Washington, to Senator Gillette; to McNutt, to War Department, to newspapers while I was operating the Employment Bureau. These are in your possession. He should also read my statement before the Tolan Committee. He should also subpoena Okamoto’s statement of exoneration and also Fair Play Committee exoneration. Has Rankin given you a list of letters? If he hasn’t, demand it. Has Jacobs read the file of Current Life? These and other matters should be gone over.

“It is also my wish that we broaden this issue from a simple conspiracy case to Freedom of the Press. The foundation of my case should be based on the solid groundwork enunciated in the Bill of Rights. We can do no less that to test the Freedom of the Press here and now in view of the Government’s action. That after all is the true issue. Conspiracy is a trumped up charge to eliminate my voice. No defense would be satisfactory to me unless Freedom of the Press is the fundamental central theme. I have spoken to Mr. Sampson and though he did not indicate over-enthusiasm, he considered my suggestion of certain merit.”

“Incidentally, Paul [Nakadate] tells me Rocky Shimpo circulation fell to one-half at Heart Mountain after my removal. Obviously the Shimpo has lost heavily all around because I was discharged. This is an indication of how important I must have been.
“One thing I have noticed is that there appears to be considerable variance of views among the leaders [of the Heart Mountain Fair Play Committee] but they all stick together on the broad issue. There is no personality when it comes to that. It’s all for one and one for all!

“. . . and say no Nisei has the courage and gumption to take an unequivocal stand and be unafraid. All the Nisei are cowards to make their stand known. However, thank him (Uji Harada) for his contribution. He has no conviction. The FPC fought for a great principle. That principle was recognized by such a big man as A. L. Wirin, who is one of the best constitutional lawyers in the country. And Wirin does not take ordinary cases. I am proud to be associated with these militant Americans whose courage and intestinal fortitude are as strong as their visions are farsighted.

“Ed Overbaugh, a deputy sheriff, has resigned to accept a position with the Highway Patrol. Overbaugh is the fellow who wouldn’t permit me anything. I am very glad he’s gone.”

August 16, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] through Attorney Sampson)

“Being confined in here without any literature or stationery to write on is very depressing. We have very little to stimulate our thoughts. Cards are our only recreation, but even that is of small comfort. I do not understand a regulation whereby an individual held simply for trial should be denied even the small comforts of confinement. I asked today for my pen, which was denied me without any explanation. It is one of the reasons why I am today the last person to get off a letter.

“In the Denver County Jail we were permitted newspapers, books, stationeries, etc. I wonder at the Justice of our treatment in here and perhaps it might help to make appropriate representations to Washington to the Federal Bureau of Prisons. When I am exonerated on the false charges on which I am indicted would the State make remedies and other repayments for this unjust confinement? Of course, it will not. Are we to be punished for crimes of which we are not at guilt? Obviously we are. Justice, like our other high-sounding ideologies, is not actually [what] it is purported to be. I fully intend to disclose the conditions under which we are held upon my release. I am storing away ideas now in my mind for future disclosure.

“I have learned through experience that it does not pay to be courteous and cooperative. I have been that, as you know, with the FBI in Denver. It was a mistake. The very officer which once came to me for information, now arranges to conspire to railroad me to the pen, simply
because I place the highest value on my rights as an American citizen and will not permit invasion of such rights without protests. It is indeed ironic that I was even on the Civil Service recommendation list, etc., one time to pass on qualifications of Nisei applicants because the Commission felt reasonably assured of my Americanism and loyalty.

“And this record was besmeared by the JACL, WRA, a cheap racketeering Jap jeweler, because I believed in standing up for the fundamental principles of the Constitution and did not enjoy the political reputations of my enemies. And Osumi for one was a Jap alien profiting on the unparalleled distress of his racial people. Look at my personal record. How many important people who at one time expressed satisfaction as to my Americanism and loyalty. That was prior to Pearl Harbor. Now they place race before truth; emotionalism before facts. But I am glad that a man like Chester Rowell, known nationally as a newspaper columnist and editor, is willing to keep on believing in me and without solicitation, express himself as prepared to formally attest to my loyalty on Americanism. But it is not upon that issue that I am indicted. Even the Office of Alien Property Custodian declared it believed I was fully American and loyal. The issue is conspiracy to cause the Nisei to resist the draft. This, of course, from every angle is false. But we know through U.S. District Attorney Morrissey that the War Department wanted my scalp but found no way legally to proceed. The Grand Jury of Wyoming, therefore, acted. But on what material ground? What can be achieved by assassinating my character on false premises? Resistance will continue as it has. The instigator is not I; it is the government and the treatment of these people in camp. But the government wants a scapegoat and what better meat than other Nisei.

“I am going to write a book with Paul’s [Nakadate] collaboration when this is over. It will make interesting and illuminating reading. My first effort will be to write articles for national publications. Paul had quite a few words down in his book before he was arrested. Now he wants me to write it with his collaboration.”

August 21, 1944  (Letter from Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] to Kazushi Matsumoto)

“Every letter from Jimmie is full of hope and determination of winning this case. He knows he is framed and I know he is, too. That is why there is justice to his fighting for his exoneration.”

August 24, 1944  (Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] to James Omura through Attorney Sampson)

“In regards to Sylvia [Toshiyuki], she told me that two weeks previous to indictment [Samurel] Menin told her of the possibilities of the pick-up. She informed [Kiyoshi] Okamoto to ask for
ACLU assistance. They said they would promise to help him. In the meantime after the indictment, Art [Emi] contact [A. L.] Wirin. But ACLU evidently looked upon the first contact as the more important. But since Art is the one out then he would be the most likely to contact. Art wrote to me asking if we would like Wirin to handle your case in view of the fact we might not get a new trial. I thought it over and I wrote back that since I had managed to raise the initial fee in Denver and not quite the sum in Cheyenne attorney, I did not feel that it was proper to do so. I had then a feeling that things are not going to go as planned. And so it is my belief that you will not get out on bail as expected. I mean that regardless of my contacts or yours the sum cannot be reached. I will try my best but really what Nisei is going to stick his neck out? . . . If it is not too late ask Art [Emi] or his brother [Frank Emi] to loan us a thousand, will you?"

**August 26, 1944** (Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] to James Omura through Attorney Sampson)

“J. Yanari told me over the phone that Pop Suzuki wrote back that his funds were tied up but that he will try to raise the fund. Also that Clark may yet come through. Yet I have not seen or heard from him and will not believe it until I see it. Kay is still in a bad way. If you are asking me to get financial assistance, forget it. All his bragging don’t seem to hold much water. Kiyo still doesn’t know the seriousness of it. . . .

“As you know, [Sidney] Jacobs has been working on my case but he is counting on me getting you out before he actually gets down to things. Every time I get in his office, my suggestions, etc. mean nothing as compared to the raising of the bail.

“When Sylvia [Toshiyuki] spoke of [Kiyoshi] Okamoto’s brilliance, Jacobs wanted to read his writings. After reading the documents he had written, Jacobs said that he didn’t think much of them. And he still believes that ours is a separate case.”

**August 1944 [?]** (James Omura to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] through Attorney Sampson, date unknown)

“Perhaps it would be interesting to note here that a case involving draft resisters at Tule Lake was decided in favor of the Nisei by a Eureka [California] court [presided over by Judge Goodman]. This case is similar to draft resistance of the sixty-three boys at Heart Mountain and the refusal to report for pre-induction physicals in other centers. As you perhaps know, the Heart Mountain boys are appealing and the Tule Lake decision which established a precedent will in all likelihood have very strong weight in over-ruling Judge Kennedy’s opinion.
“The time is coming when the courts of the land will appreciate and understand the real issues involved and turn back to constitutional American government. Our cause is not lost: we are simply far ahead in this matter and the courts are slowly catching up with us. It is odd that a California judge had to find the government in error on the question of Nisei draft resistance. For the reason that I stood for Constitutional American democracy I am imprisoned here in the Cheyenne jail, but I have never been disturbed as to whether I was wrong or right. I have always known I am right. I am comforted by the knowledge that I am not alone in this fight and that already we are being vindicated by judgments like that of Judge Goodman in Eureka.”

**August 21, 1944 (Letter from Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] to Arthur Emi)**

“The reason . . . relaxed . . . efforts in obtaining financial assistance from Denver was because of the terrific misunderstanding that had arisen—that James Omura actually is a Fair Play Committee member, which he is not. It was because of this, plans were made to have contributions from elsewhere.”

**August 23, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] through Attorney Sampson)**

“Wirin desires one of the boys to be bailed out. This request has everyone puzzled, but nevertheless Frank Emi was selected by acclamation. . . .

“The breach between Okamoto and the others has developed to what appears to be to a point that is almost insufferable. I first noticed this at the time Wirin arrived. Okamoto acted independently in conversations with the A.C.L.U. lawyer and arranged everything as he personally saw fit without consultation or approval. Then he began to withdraw himself from the fraternity of his fellow inmates from the time the six draft resisters joined us. The first actual break occurred Monday when Frank [Emi] received the phone call from Art [Emi]. He refused to participate in the selection of the representative from the group. He has drawn himself into a shell ever since and has virtually removed himself from our society. This morning while we were discussing about food to be sent in by Frank [Emi] when he goes out on bail, Okamoto voluntarily requested that he be counted out. This incident appears to be the final break. I have been told that Okamoto will be left alone to work out his own destiny. The others are going to count him out. I believe I will have a talk with Okamoto after he cools down a bit. It is after all his doing and not the fault of his comrades. Being more or less separate of the F.P.C., I am the logical person to approach him, although I myself have long ago ceased to
consider him as a leader or a person of respect. It will be for me, too, a difficult matter to approach him.

“Frank [Emi], who has acted as the spokesman for the group heretofore, has more and more turned to me for opinions in legal or technical phases. I have given them the best of my counsel, but this at best represents my general impression rather than specific or learned knowledge.

“What has become of the boys of the Denver County Jail? I would certainly like to secure their affidavits of what Min Yasui and Joe Masaoka attempted to do to me. They tried to sweat out statements against me. Yasui was then working under order of the U.S. Marshal’s office. Ask Mr. [Sidney] Jacobs if he would secure such an affidavit for me. The names, I recall at the moment, are Enokida and Oski’s brother-in-law, Harry Ioka. I’m sure the fellow who was the leader of a sugar beet crew in Nebraska—I’ve forgotten his name—would sign an affidavit.”

August 27, 1944  (Letter from James Omura to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] through Attorney Sampson)

“I am very much surprised to learn that Sylvia [Toshiyuki] had informed [Kiyoshi] Okamoto of the pending indictment. The boys tell me that Okamoto failed to notify his colleagues and as a result much damaging materials were confiscated by FBI agents at the occasions of their arrests. Okamoto’s failure here again is another count against him. In fact, Okamoto not only failed to advise the other leaders but lacked the foresight to remove his correspondences which were all impounded by the authorities. Okamoto did not inform his colleagues either that he had written to ACLU at the time Paul [Nadadate] contacted [Roger] Baldwin prior to his arrest and had been advised to keep him informed as to development [?] and that ACLU would act. It was then that Art [Emi] once more contacted ACLU and Wirin was retained as counsel. There are many ramifications in respect to all this that I have learned and it would seem that Mr. Okamoto is greatly responsible for much of what has happened. He has acted as an individual and not as an officer of the organization. The Menin number is one of these. For this initial case and their pending appeal, it has cost the committee about $85000 all to Menin. In other words, Menin bled the group. That is the reason that they are now short of finances.

“Judge Goodman is the first jurist to recognize this point. Judge Symes went so far as to say that if the boys remained in camp and refused to budge, they would have won their point.

“The Nisei are serving as guinea pigs. They are being sent overseas as cannon fodder. Study the whole situation and you will realize it. The government is attempting to rid themselves of the Nisei. Strange is it not that public and official reactions have not materially changed since
the boys went to Italy? Strange is it not that reports of so many casualties among the Nisei has not done much good? Think about it.

“Okamoto is an egoist. He seems to feel that he is destined to be a martyr. Paul [Nakadate] or rather Frank [Emi] tells me that he said he was going to be a dictator at the time the present FPC was formed. He was talked down. Paul was one of those who attempted to oust Okamoto, but appeasement resulted in his retentions. Okamoto is not the brilliant person that Sylvia [Toshiyuki] describes him as being. Sylvia has been spreading false propaganda and I would not believe her too much. She is an Okamoto supporter and is doubtlessly prejudiced. Wonder what’s between them? Okamoto is not a sort that anyone can know, appreciated or most important of all respect. Particularly for a woman is language is abhorrent. This can be divined through his letters. . . . I believe Okamoto may be against me for I conflict with his views. The others ask me for my opinion and my opinion is opposed to Okamoto’s. Okamoto cannot take contradiction or criticism.”

August 27, 1944 (Letter from Caryl Omura [Fumi Okumi] to James Omura, through Attorney Sampson)

“I took the initiative to phone the [Rocky] Shimpo to find out what is what. . . . I asked about your back pay. It was a dubious answer. . . . (she [Tetsuko Tada] said) that everyone here says you would not require them to pay. I told her that could not be true because she had promised to pay me. But she says that they thought it over and besides Hedetniemi says that they do have to pay either.”

August 28, 1944 (Letter from Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] to Chester Rowell)

“My attorney informs me that a Character Witness at the trial will be more important than a letter of character.”

August 30, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] through Attorney Sampson)

“There does not seem to be much that could be done about [Kiyoshi] Okamoto. I am told that that is how he is. I do not believe that Sylvia [Toshiyuki] could accomplish anything with him. It seems best to let him alone. However, his attitude is bad for morale among us and also injurious to our case.
[Guntaro] Kubota tells me that when he and Okamoto met with Art [Emi] and Mr. Kawamoto, Okamoto spoke by implication disparagingly of Wirin. In fact, he contended that [Wayne Collins]—counsel for A.C.L.U. in San Francisco—as the better of the two. Here again, it would seem that he is attempting to justify himself as a leader and thinker. Okamoto, as a result of his attitude, had been sidetracked in the negotiation with Wirin and that is what is rankling in his mind, I believe. However, I see no reason why Sylvia could not come to visit Okamoto. Mind you, I have no faith in Sylvia either. What she is apparently concerned about is her own particular position in this matter.

“Regarding the Toda [publishers of the Rocky Shimpo], they are simply trying to get out from under a contract. I did not say that if I was forced out by circumstances beyond the newspaper’s control I would not hold them to the agreement. That would have been a foolish sort of an arrangement for me to have made. The truth is however that I agreed that if the paper was closed due to circumstances beyond her [Tetsuko Tada’s] control I would not press for payment. The Rocky Shimpo was not closed. This point was specifically clarified before I agreed to accept the offer. . . . Also, it would be a good idea if you were able to persuade Jacobs to get an affidavit from Charles J. Hedtniemi, supervisor of the Japanese Publishing Company (Rocky Shimpo) for the Office of Alien Property Custodian. We never know where Hedtniemi may go. Tetsuko [Tada] informed him that she had a six month contract with me at the time of my discharge.”

**September 4, 1944** (Letter from James V. Bennett, Director, Bureau of Prisons, to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma])

“Our inspector’s reports indicate that prisoners in the Laramie County Jail are permitted to have reading material. We do not know why this privilege was denied in the cases to which you refer, but assume that the jail officials had reason to believe that special restrictions were necessary.”

**September 5, 1944** (Letter from A. L. Wirin to Sidney S. Jacobs)

“I am very much impressed by your opinion that it was a mistake for me to ask Judge Kennedy to step out. It occurred to me at the time I made the request that since he had ruled exactly contrary to Judge Goodman, that there was a fighting chance that a better chance than expecting Judge Kennedy to reverse himself.”
September 5, 1944  (Letter from James Omura to Kazushi Matsumoto)

“I suppose you know that A. L. Wirin, ace Civil Liberties Union counsel, is representing the other defendants. He has indicated he would like to represent me also. I am not impressed with his procedure and courtroom manner and though it is a financial burden to retain a private counsel, I am however glad I do have Jacobs and Sampson. Both of my counsels also differ with Wirin and disagree with his method. They do not regard Wirin too highly. I was disgusted with the manner in which he disqualified Judge Kennedy. I understand he would now like to disqualify Judge Rice of Oklahoma who heard the preliminary motions. I had preferred Judge Kennedy on my case but naturally the disqualification applies on my instance also. My co-defendants are heartily against Judge Kennedy, but after all I do not belong in the same boat with them, although I am being accused of being one of the key oarsmen.

“We do not enjoy much privileges here, but today I was told that certain types of magazines are now permitted. We had been confined 35 days without reading matters. This is an indication that the authorities are human after all and a sign for the better. This will promote a healthier atmosphere in here. It is pretty tough sledding without anything to read and such a condition breeds breakdown in morale and mental depression. Now if they would only lift the ban on writing materials, I could employ my time profitably in writing stories, essays and such and generally improve my mind. We have too much idle time and this leads to dangerous symptoms.

“When I was first committed to the Laramie [Wyoming] jail, I was segregated alone in a separate cell or quarter. I would not have minded this at all had I been provided with reading and writing materials. However, such were denied me. The situation was intolerable. I asked my counsels to secure removal of the ban or have me transferred with the others. I empathized, however, that I preferred the former and that in the event of transfer if it would injure my case I would hold myself together to continue in separate confinement. I had been alone over a week without any explanation. I was not provided with the simple necessities despite my repeated requests. I had no towels, no soap, no toothbrush and toothpowder. I was not permitted to bathe or shave. My oatmeals were brought up without milk, whereas in my present cell we have all the milk necessary. I was not permitted to write any letters; no stationery was provided me. Certainly this treatment was inhuman in the light of what are ordinarily permitted prisoners. I was told I could have nothing but cigarettes until I sought my lawyers’ aid.

“I suppose my wife has told you that I am permitted only one letter per week.
“However, I have been with the other nearly a month and I feel that I am out of focus with them. Except for one person, I am not in mental harmony here. In fact we had [a] disturbing incident last night which threatened to explode and I was nearly on the receiving end. I am now withdrawing myself more or less from my fellows and this is greatly aided by the fact that I have secured magazines through my wife to occupy myself. I cannot stomach some of the things that are going on here. This has been particularly emphasized since overcrowding of the place. We have sixteen prisoners in here when only twelve racks are provided. The floor is littered with mattresses and people lying and sleeping. I am hoping to get away from this group and I believe I’ll feel better.

“There are only a few who are standing by me, but among them I count the good wishes of Chester H. Rowell of the Chronicle in San Francisco. Rowell has informed my lawyer voluntarily that he was willing to give me [a] good character [reference] for the trial . . . this coming from a nationally-known newspaperman is of a certainty comforting to know. There still remains hope while I hold fast to my faith in the inherent goodness and integrity of all Americans.

September 6, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to Kazushi Matsumoto)

“I would wish to assure you that I am innocent of the specific charges in the indictment and cannot help but feel that I am being railroaded to the pen. Of course I hope for a fair and a just trial but I am not overlooking the element of racial prejudice and war hysteria which doubtlessly would prevail. I would like to leave this thought with you that in the event of my conviction, the prosecution would have secured this conviction on circumstantial evidences and probably for political purposes without regard to truth and facts in the case. Succinctly this would mean that once the government determined to get a man, that man is as good as doomed. This is not justice and democracy as we were taught in our formative years but is the situation that attains under a one-man rule and the deterioration of society. To understand it we must also take cognizance of the gradual economic change that has been taking place through the years and the reaction and relationship of society to this economic revolution.”

September 6, 1944 (Letter from [Sidney] Jacobs to [A. L.] Wirin)

I wish that we could have talked about the matter before it happened. . . . I would also rather have the trial at Cheyenne [Wyoming] than elsewhere if it is possible. I feel that the larger the place, the fairer trial and less prejudice. . . . I had Kennedy to rule to try it at Cheyenne even though the D.A. wanted it at Sheridan.”
September 8, 1944 (Letter from A. L. Wirin to Hon. Francis Biddle [U.S. Attorney General])

“I am advised that they are kept in quarters that are seriously over-crowded. . . . May I respectfully request that the matter be looked into and relief afforded if your investigation discloses the need for it.”

September 10, 1944 (Letter from Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] to Kazushi Matsumoto)

“I have written to the Department of Justice of the unfair treatment accorded the men in the jail and have asked for an inspection as well as conference (I hope) with the boys detained. . . . I was very hopeful when in Cheyenne that we might be able to have the bond reduced to $1000 and I can get Jimmie out. As you probably know by now or would have some indication that Nisei would not help out in the fund which I had hoped to raise for his release and the greater burden was placed on me to somehow arrange for his release.”

September 11, 1944 (Letter from Frank Emi to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma])

“I have enclosed a copy of a letter sent by Mr. [A. L.] Wirin to the Attorney General regarding the condition of the jail. Mr. Wirin also sent a copy of this letter to [U.S. District Attorney Carl] Sackett. There are sixteen persons in that one ‘tank’ which is only supposed to hold twelve. We also asked Wirin if he could possibly do anything to have reading matter permitted in there, but evidently he felt it was not worth mentioning in his letter.”

September 11, 1944 (Letter from Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] to Hon. Francis Biddle, U.S. Attorney General)

“The treatment accorded to the Nisei (all seventeen) has been questioned from time to time and so far they have not been treated fairly. . . . However, the treatment accorded by federal and jail authorities has been criminal. The head jailer told me that he had the right to punish them so that ‘they will not want to come back here again.’

“Another fact which I would like to present is the attitude shown by the federal authorities not only in Cheyenne but also in Denver that the men are guilty . . . food regulations, sanitation regulations, reading matter regulations and regulations pertaining to the welfare of the men detained have been treated worse than the other Caucasians. . . . And because they have made
complaints to the various departments of the Government, the Sheriff Norbert Tuck has
decided to place them on a 5-day meal of bread and water. I would like to question his
authority on this.

“Is it not bad enough that when six Nisei were held in jail that just 3 loaves of bread were
served them per day with a diet that is already 75% starch and then continue to serve the same
amount of three loaves of bread for 12 persons; and then still continue when there are 17 Nisei
detained? Is there reason for this undernourished and insufficient diet?

On Wednesday, September 6th, a large group of men were removed from their cells leaving
many cells empty. However, the jail authorities refused to allow the five Nisei sleeping on dirty
mattresses without blankets to move into these cells. When the U.S. Marshal[,] Mr. Sanders[,] and
jail officials were questioned about this, they said that the jail is full and they are doing the
best they could for the boys. How may I question can these men be right when the boys inside
can see the empty cells with their own two eyes? To date the cells are still empty and the boys
are still lying on dirty mattresses and without blankets.

“For the past month large quantities of foodstuffs have been stolen by the men in the office or
by the trusties. . . . The jail authorities claim that the Federal Government sent an inspector to
clarify the situation but my husband says that such a man has not been seen.”

September 11, 1944  (Letter from L. C. Sampson to Sidney S. Jacobs)

“. . . advising that I presented to the Court an application for reduction of the bond and was
denied this reduction. I got the impression from the remarks of the Court that Judge Rice had
relied upon the amount of the bond fixed by him in determining the amount for the other
defendants and that he was not disposed to reduce it further even in view of the overcrowded
condition at the jail. . . .”

September 11, 1944  (Letter from L. C. Sampson to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma])

“This morning I made application to the Court for reduction of the bond from $1500 to $1000
and was turned down. . . . The district Attorney resisted. . . .

“Judge Kennedy . . . was not disposed to give consideration to Mr. Wirin’s request that he try
the case. The Clerk told me that the Judge had gone too far with getting Judge Rice to come up
for the trial. . . .”
September 11, 1944  (Letter from Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] to James V. Bennett, Director, Bureau of Prisons)

“Several days prior to the arrival of your letter, I was in the Laramie County Jail and was informed that the sheriff had okayed the permission to send in periodicals. Also that all periodicals on the detective or love story [variety?] and newspapers were on the ‘stop’ list.

“However, I had the occasion to go up again several days later and this time found the jail authorities very much disgusted with the complaints that had been sent to the Federal authorities. It seems that many, not just a few complaints, have been placed against the Laramie County Jail authorities for the 75% starchy diet that the 17 Japanese-American boys detained are forced to eat.

“Also complaints were presented to the U.S. Marshal’s office to investigate the crowded conditions of the jail and why five Japanese-Americans were forced to sleep on dirty, unsanitary mattresses and also without blankets when the women’s quarters had so many vacant cells. Also that on Wednesday, September 6, a large number of prisoners were removed leaving many cells empty for occupancy. But the boys were still forced to sleep on the dirty floors.

“I inquired about this with the U.S. Marshal’s office and they told me that the jail was filled or overcrowded. However, a few minutes later I am at the County Jail and inquired again about the condition and was informed that there was plenty of room and that many cells were vacant. When the head jailer came in I asked the same question, this time the answer was that the jail is overcrowded and that the best was being done for the boys. When I asked my husband [James Omura] of this matter, he said that the jailers were quite mad about this situation and were deliberately refusing to settle the matter.

“Because so many complaints have been presented the jailers are intimidating and coercing the boys to keep their mouth shut. So far they have threatened to put the boys on a 5-day bread and water diet to make them quit complaining. And for every complaint that reached their department another 5-day diet will be tacked on and on until perhaps their diet will be bread and water until the trial.

“The head jailer stated that an inspector had spoken with the boys and that the matter had been clarified, but according to my husband that is false. It is also false as the statement given in your letter that reading material are permitted to the prisoners. It was only after some action by your department that forced the sheriff to enforce the reading matter restriction to be removed, I am sure.”
September 12, 1944  (Letter from Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] to Frank Emi)

“. . . the head jailer . . . warned me that someone had been complaining to the Federal authorities about the food and the restriction about the reading matter, and if this continued the boys will be placed on the ‘bread-and-water’ diet for 5 days.

“As you probably heard through some other sources, if not, that reading of periodicals is permitted by the boys. The Federal Bureau of Prisons wrote me that there is not supposed to be a regulation prohibiting this ‘unless the Sheriff feels or advises it is necessary.”

September 12, 1944  (Letter from A. L. Wirin to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma])

Although a large portion of my work is as counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union, I take on a small number of private cases—particularly those in which I deem myself to be especially qualified or trained. Accordingly, when Arthur Emi phone me inquiring whether I would represent the Heart Mountain defendants, I consented to do so.”


“However, Jimmie contends that he is not a member of the Fair Play Committee, that he had never met them personally, and did not know them until incarcerated together. . . . Our defense, of course, is going to be Freedom of the Press. Sam Menin thinks you know of a case in Arizona that was dismissed because of Freedom of Speech that might be helpful.”

September 13, 1944  (Letter from A. L. Wirin to Sidney S. Jacobs)

“Mr. [Frank] Cooper is willing to write bonds for a 10% premium without requiring any security other than a promissory note. . . .”

September 13, 1944  (Letter from A.L. Wirin to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma])

“I have contacted a bonding company in Phoenix which is willing to write bonds without security upon payment of a 10% premium.”
September 13, 1944 (Letter from Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] to James Omura, through Mr. Sampson, Omura’s lawyer)

“Mr. Wirin asked Jacobs by mail if we would let Mr. Sampson be our attorney as well as his. Mr. Jacobs wrote no. I knew he would ask us about that. I hope if anything comes up among the boys you will explain that this was arranged among the attorneys and not your doings. That you did agree to this matter since we were trying to keep the cases separate.

“. . . I am already making preparations to prepare defense with attorney at FBI. We spent 2 and one-half hours there and one-half hour was over the phone arguing with Sackett about letting us send the letters that Hedetniemi confiscated from you. Will you tell details as to how they obtained them from you? Sackett was told by court to produce them and let us have copies but he denies us making such a request. In regards to these batch of letters, I mean. We have obtained permission and have made request for many letters to be photostatic copies.

“Sackett was supposed to phone us back at FBI saying whether after a check with the clerk if he or she can be depended upon to tell the truth that the request was as we have stated. I will phone in the morning about it. Then I must go downtown and copy all or some of the valuable press columns out of your scrapbook.

“Mr. Wirin told Jacobs that he will present his demurrers again before Judge Rice. That he expects to come to Cheyenne three days before the trial and prepare case. I don’t think such a defense will be value to the boys. That man must be crazy to think that he can defend each boy separately. I wrote and told Frank [Emi?] that he better not be sold down the river by him. I suppose that was too hard and rough, but I am hoping that the defense will be prepared very solidly and no mess-ups at the trial.

“I also visited the Watanabe lawyer and had a fifteen minute talk. It seems that Sylvia [Toshiyuki] does not go there often. In fact, he said that one time she asked some legal questions about the case and he told her that he could not answer it for her because of its legality. What he tried to do was to stop all these questionings on her part and yet run to Menin and try to pull some more stunts.

“He also told me that my rumors of Frank [Toshiyuki?] buying a hotel are false. That it is Frank’s brother-in-law going into business with Frank’s father’s dough. He said that how could Frank have any more especially when he was disowned by his father for marrying Sylvia.

“Also that Taul [Watanabe] has yet to hear Doc talk against you. He says that he goes with Doc to lunch almost every day. He was surprised to hear what I told you that Sylvia has told me. Could be kind enough to put two and two together so that I can understand the puzzle? Taul said that for a long time Doc and Sylvia did not talk to each other because Sylvia did not
approve of his marrying the girl. That this is the only difficulty he knew that existed between them.

“Mr. [Roger?] Baldwin did not write me. I originally was sent by the Unity Council of Denver University to see Mr. Whitehead. On second visit he advised I contact Baldwin through Mr. Jacobs. Mr. J. as you know refused. However, I have mailed him a long airmail letter and should hear from him soon.

“Saturday when I returned from Cheyenne, I picked up the laundry at Tom’s. I really wished you were with me. I never saw such hypocrites. Mr. just said hello and went on checking some lists. Mrs. Gave me a sour smile and picked up the packages. I never said anything except ask for the two sheets that they failed to give us. I paid them and nothing was said. If I weren’t a woman I wished I could have had the nerve of telling him what a cheap guy he was. But they showed their shame enough they didn’t fool me any.

“I have not received replies from many of my letters among them Chester Rowell for his support in trial. I don’t know what has happened. There are many setbacks to be expected. . . . Write to me through attorney as I am not sending any more letters to you the other way. We are working on defense and we do not want to undo anything that is valuable. Jacobs is a hard worker and I will do anything to help him.”

September 13, 1944  (Card from James Omura to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma], on transfer to Laramie)

“[Kiyoshi] Okamoto is with me and two of the boys who are cited on draft charges.”

September 13, 1944  (Letter from Paul Nakadate, from Cheyenne, Wyoming, to James Omura, at Laramie, Wyoming)

“Q-bald is pulling out of here from friends’ help. The fellow shows it all over and yet trying to hide his innermost feelings. The place will be sadder yet. But the ‘students’ are rather glad.

“I spoke with Heart Mountain and Frank [Emi] and he inquired about your situation. I told him you needed $300 as a loan. He didn’t say yes or no, but he said Caryl [Omura] hadn’t mentioned it. I told him about the $4 an hour stuff and etcetera. Told him to contact Caryl.”

September 15, 1944  (Letter from L. C. Sampson to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma])
Jimmie [Omura] was moved Monday to Laramie [Wyoming]’ and I am told by the Marshal’s office that it will be possible for you to see him at most any time. . . .”


“I have attempted to get precise information concerning the directed verdict by Judge Ling in favor of [George] Fujii. Thus far I have not been successful in securing it.”

September 16, 1944  (Letter from James Omura to Paul Nakadate, from Laramie, Wyoming [apparently not mailed])

“Okamoto is not much changed. He is as tight-lipped as before although he appears happier and more congenial. When he first came here he tried to impress the others with his participation in engineering the transfer. I believe he wants to claim the credit. He conveys the idea that all the thought generated from him—ideas springing from the evacuation. I fear that these boys may be misled. I contradicted his statements that first night and he has said nothing since.”

September 18, 1944  (Letter from James V. Bennett, Director, Bureau of the Prisons, to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma])

“When your letter of August 28 [1944] was received we wrote to the United States Marshal to find out what restrictions upon reading material had been placed on the prisoners in the Laramie County Jail. The Marshal has reported that magazines and papers were temporarily withheld from all prisoners because several of them insisted upon burning papers in their cells to heat coffee and food brought in by their families. When the prisoners refused to comply with the regulations prohibiting the burning of papers in their cells, the Sheriff withdrew the reading privileges temporarily. These disciplinary measures were not discriminating but applied to all prisoners. It is our understanding that the prisoners have agreed to cooperate and the restrictions have been removed, so that they are now receiving reading material. We will inquire further regarding your report of inadequate diets and poor housing.”

September 25, 1944  (Letter from Frank Emi to James Omura)
“When I got back to Heart Mountain the situation was really sad. So far we are still about 800 dollars short on Wirin’s fee. No doubt we can raise it by trial time but the feeling here is far sadder than I imagined. It was real disappointing. Under those conditions there wasn’t a ghost of a chance of raising bail money for anyone. The money that is put up for my bail is included in Wirin’s fee. In other words, instead of paying Wirin, he said for us to use it to bail one out, then after the trial or whenever I surrender myself to the U.S. Marshall before the trial, we are to turn that money over to him.

“As to Kubota, I went to some of his closer friends and told them the different aspect of his case such as he hasn’t seen his new baby but one day and how he is not at all concerned with the Nisei problem, etc. That he helped out for the sake of the Nisei rights, etc. Thereby I barely raised the $150 for his bail. Even for his bail the people were hesitant—after all the efforts he put forth. But that’s the way people are as you know too well.”

October 2, 1944  (Letter from Kazushi Matsumoto to James Omura)

“I shall be interested in hearing about the various activities of the JACL since its inception whenever you are free to instruct me. The clarification over ‘Iwasa’ is interesting. I did not know that you were criticizing the JACL actively in ’43.

“Incidentally, Tremayne of the F.B.I., aside from asking me about the name ‘Iwasa’ again and again, asked me if you were communistically inclined. In fact, he asked me if you were a communist [more] often than the name Iwasa. I disclaimed any knowledge of either because I did not know of either. I did say that to the best of my knowledge you were neither. He did try valiantly to tag this Communist label on you through me, or so it seemed to me, but failed.

“When leaving he said that I had nothing to worry about insofar as you are concerned. He assured me that you were not in trouble—He implied that it was just [a] routine checkup. Perhaps it was just for the record at the time.

“This JACL outfit must be not too effective if the #2 (or is Joe M. among the culls) man cannot do an effective job against the opposition of one man. On the Record of the organization—past and present—doesn’t speak too well for the integrity and effectiveness of the JACL in its chosen field. When a one man ‘storm patrol’ necessitates ‘the turning out in full force of the Jackal tribe in rebuttal. This is the shortcoming of politics, Jim-boy. When one hasn’t anything concrete to show on the record one has to resort to words to bamboozle the Nisei and lesser public into believing in it.
“It isn’t so much what the JACL has done but what it hasn’t done which probably it could have done the strong representation that it might have made in the interest of the people it supposedly represented and didn’t; (This is from the record as I know it—I admit that my record is imperfect). These are the things that I have against the tribe. I think it is a phony—a rank compromise to thing (?) on the gullibility of the people exploiting Nisei collective ignorance.

“I have read U.S. Supreme Court decisions on major labor problems through the past fifty years. I have yet to see labor win a major decision without losing elsewhere. How does it happen that labor consistently loses? Are they always wrong? Where is the law of averages? Whenever there is even a remote chance of setting a precedent which might redound against the ruling class some day in the future, someone might be sacrificed. Tom Mooney is a case in point. Sacco and Vanzetti also.

“I am convinced that you are in the right, Jim, but I feel no optimism. You have unleashed a force against you that seems impossible of stemming. (They own the country). If you win, it will be akin to a miracle.”

October (early), 1944 [?] (Undated airmail letter from Frank Cooper to James Omura)

“Just got a call from our office in Los Angeles that I cannot write any more bonds in Mr. [David] Jacobs’ territory. That is the guy or I should say the S.O.B. that you met with me in his office. He wrote a very nasty letter to the head office in Maryland and they sent it to my boss in Los Angeles. He just called me. The bonds I have I shall be allowed to follow through [on].

“He [David Jacobs] told the head office that it was causing a bad feeling amongst the people in Denver and with his agents that I was taking out Japs. He said that he did not want anyone coming into his district and writing these bonds.”

October 6, 1944 (Letter from [Sidney] Jacobs to A. L. Wirin)

“... when it will be best to argue our motion for [a] separate trial. Judge Kennedy indicated to me that he would not be apt to grant it and I understand that Judge Rice made a similar statement to Mr. [L. C.] Sampson. . . .”

October 10, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to Frank Cooper)
“I am very surprised that Mr. David Jacobs would go to such an extent in a matter in which he is not personally concerned. If he himself is unwilling to write the bonds, he should have no objection to someone else writing them.”

**October 11, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to Kazushi Matsumoto)**

“In regards to your comment concerning return of Japanese to the West Coast, I would not be too optimistic at this stage. Of course it is true that Bonesteel refused to challenge the return of three Nisei in the initial instance. By refusing to contest their return, he was able to keep all other Japanese from returning. Had he contested and the court found no security reason now exists to preclude the return of the Japanese, it would have thrown open the gate to a mass hegira to the Coast. Refusing to contest the action—and there appeared to be very fine points in favor of the Nisei—Bonesteel required each Nisei desiring to return to submit his personal dossier. This is a long and tedious process and a discouraging one to the people vitally concerned.

“I have just received a news clipping in the Arizona Republic from Mr. Frank Cooper of the Arizona Bail Bond Agency—the gentleman who effected my release on a premium bond. In the case of Dr. George Ochikubo, a Nisei dentist, the federal court held that his return would jeopardize military security. Six other petitions are pending. Thus you see that Bonesteel could challenge the application of such persons whose records are not too clear and continue to refuse to contest petitions which are absolutely clear and thereby still continue to keep the great majority of Japanese from returning at this date.”

**October 11, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to Hon. M. S. Reynolds, U.S. Commissioner for Wyoming)**

“I have observed so much the intolerance and hypocrisy among high officials that it was tremendously refreshing to meet a person who honestly interpreted the doctrines of our Constitution in the spirit in had been intended. . . . I agree with you that a man should be judged as a person rather than in accordance with the war-brought philosophy of race.”

**October 11, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to Clifford Forster)**

“For your information, I was released from the Albany County Jail at Laramie, Wyoming, on September 19 [1944].”
October 12, 1944  (Letter from James Omura to L. C. Sampson)

“. . . I am somewhat disturbed because Mr. [Sidney] Jacobs has not yet got down to fundamentals. We have only eleven days in which to prepare the defense. . . . It is quite possible that Mr. Jacobs is an eleventh-hour artist. . . . I have had a few words with Mr. Jacobs but I have always yielded the point. I kept in mind your suggestion that I attempt to cooperate with him. . . . Mr. Jacobs simply argues against me instead of outlining the strategy to offset Sackett’s contentions. We achieve nothing. . . . I dropped in on Mr. Jacobs unexpectedly yesterday afternoon and found him in conference with Mr. [Kiyoshi] Okamoto.”

October 13, 1944  (Letter from Kazushi Matsumura to James Omura)

“I have heard it said: ‘The end justifies the means. I am opposed to this philosophy, Jim. Anytime a man uses corrupt method[s] to attain an objective, he will use the same means to retain the said objective. There is no reason to believe otherwise.

“Is Mr. Sampson a man of integrity to the extent that his Selective Service affiliation will not influence his decision?

“Yes, Jim, I understand what Bonesteel is doing. He either believes in it or else he is prostituting his authority to certain reactionary elements in these United States for political gains. I know what politics is, old man. Politics has no conscience.

“Remember Voltaire, Jim? ‘In this best of all possible worlds, everything is for the best.’ You may have lost everything, but you still have the ‘Bill of Rights.’ If you don’t believe it read the Constitution of the U.S. Never mind what is happening to you. It is merely incidental.

“Perused the P.C. rag yesterday and out of the 19 names of draft convictions of October 2nd, I know Saburo Numoto—Nushagak 1936—I think the Akutsu boys are from the Golden Shoe Repair of Seattle.

“I think that I have seen the one from Puyallup, 18 years old Yama . . . something or other. I passed through there and stopped at a house for an hour or two in ’35.

“Both of Seattle’s big commercial rags (the kept press) had reactionary articles on Japanese filtering. I don’t like the expression. Back to Seattle and vicinity and on Firland’s effort to get Japanese nurses from relocation, pardon me, Concentration Camps. Euphemisms will not change the essential nature of the camps. (Just lately in papers.)
“Auburn isn’t doing so bad with its Anti-Jap League either, claims to have 1000 signatures.

“I am sorry that you can’t get along with the poor draft delinquents, Jim. Because in their own way they are apparently aiming at the same goal, Jim, and they took extra-direct action. Can you blame that tempers will be frayed under duress such as this. I hope that all of you fellows are pro-Justice not pro-Japan and I hope your actions are based on the former. I hope that you are not demagogues as so many people believe but that your first and last consideration is altruism based on Justice for all. That you are [not] using this opportunity that you had to reach for personal fortune. If your actions of 1944, early are based on altruism, Justice and humanity, you have arrived, Jim. Based on the above premise, I’m proud of you.

“I see you listed (in draft plotter writeup) as a James Iwasa among your other monikers. When did you use it and where? Tremayne of the F.B.I., Seattle office, asked me about this name among other things more than a year ago on July 15, 1943. I had to plead ignorance. He certainly had a dossier on you.

“I am enclosing two clippings from the New Republic correspondence page. The one by Baldwin is from the issue of April 23, 1944, and the answer by T. Takahashi is from the issue of August 14, 1944. The letter than provoked Baldwin’s reply is not available. I have it put away in the attic.

“I am interested in the second part of the second paragraph; where would be in this setup, Jim, according to him. In the third paragraph, I would like to know which relocation center repudiated the J.A.C.L. as their spokesman. I read of it once but have forgotten. I would like to preserve these clippings, Jim. Incidentally, I read the New Republic for pastime, not bad. By the way is Mr. Takahashi familiar to you?

“I let Miss Rumsey read your letter and she must have shed tears because after she had left, I noticed the letter blotted. She took a long time to read it.

“I often wonder where is J.Y.? I saw him last in ’38. Might have seen him in first month ’39. Not sure.

“Saw Rev. Murphy. . . . Murphy had pretty good news. Read a post card from Mike Masaoka to a friend of his. It said in part: ‘It is cruel . . . the price we have to pay for the right to live.’ Slight bitterness there. He said also that one of his brothers is in the hospital with 18 wounds. I read the JACL rag [Pacific Citizen] every week.

October 14, 1944 (Letter from L. C. Sampson to James Omura)
“It is entirely possible that Mr. [Sidney] Jacobs works most effectively when assuming a more critical attitude and I personally predict that before the trial your ideas of presentation will be adopted in the main, so I would not be too discouraged with apparent lack of progress in this regard.”

October 15, 1944 (Letter from Frank Cooper to James Omura)

“I took it up with our head office in Los Angeles about [David] Jacobs and they are all aware of him and his tactics. They have no use for him. He dislikes anyone coming into his territory. His territory consists of Colorado, Wyoming and New Mexico. . . . I can get the authority to write [bail bonds] in Utah and Idaho.”

October 17, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to Kazushi Matsumoto)

“In reference to the alias of James Iwasa, I shall be glad to clarify the matter. However, before I go into details I am going to disown the alias for I have never used that name. The JACL enters the picture at this point. Back in early 1943, Joe Masaoka and Tad Hirota came into Colorado to organize chapters in the state and to raise a fund to replenish the depleted JACL treasury. Fort Lupton is and has been the stronghold of the JACL in Colorado. At the meeting there, I attended incognito so I thought. I was identified almost immediately. Thereupon, we were all asked to rise and give our names and places of residence. When my turn arrived I arose quickly, spoke quickly and not too audibly and sat down promptly. The name I gave was James Matsumoto, to which I am legally entitled. However, Joe Masaoka heard it as James Iwasa. The Joe Masaoka-Tad Hirota junket was a failure.

“This necessitated the appearance of Mike Masaoka. He arrived on March 14 in full force. In his group was Larry Tajiri. Joe Masaoka was present, too. It was at this meeting that Joe challenged my identity and claimed that I had used the name of James Iwasa at Fort Lupton. He was still smarting under the attack I had made at that time and which prompted him and Hirota to immediately rush back to Salt Lake City.

“Last March, at a state organizing convention called by the sterile American Fair Practice Association, Miss Sue Noma touched on this point, too. Miss Noma was then the personal secretary of Joe Masaoka in the Denver Office of the JACL. The fact that Tremayne of the Seattle F.B.I. questioned you on the name back in July 1943 is significant. It further indicates the JACL hand in the present indictment and brings the string closer together. Of course, I had known that the JACL was carrying tales to the authorities in an effort to eliminate my criticisms.
I have been the outstanding exponent of anti-JACL sentiments since 1933. There is a story told of how Kido called up Nomura of the Shimpo the evening of my arrest and chuckled over my predicament. There is a report that Kido came to Denver after my removal to Cheyenne and floated the rumor that I had done incalculable harm to the Nisei by appearing before the Tolan Congressional Investigating Committee in San Francisco in February 1942. This is rather a late stage for Mr. Kido to make this charge.

“I am also aware of the fact that Mr. Kido has sent out circulars to his membership since my removal as English Editor attacking me in an obvious effort to discredit me. I am also aware of the fact that he sent such circulars to community council heads in relocation centers for the purpose of discrediting me. The Amache Community Council had voted to consider it last April. I do not know what happened subsequently. The JACL is deep. They have for a long time refused to meet me in public debate but in the meantime have been working in the dark. The James Iwasa that enters into the indictment discloses their hand and they cannot effectively gainsay their participation in the instant case.

“I do not know this Kazuyuki Takahashi and I do not know what he had in mind when he referred to the two lines of criticisms against the JACL. I have never represented a group and I am not a reactionary and so that should put me among the well-meaning criticizers ‘who feel that the League has not been vigorous enough in all of its attempts to secure full citizenship rights for the Japanese Americans.’ However, I would not go as far as Mr. Takahashi to commend the work of the JACL or give it ‘whole-hearted cooperation.’ He is obviously attempting to justify his stand and in doing so is straddling the proverbial fence. Not a person of very strong idealism and convictions, I believe.

“The center which repudiated the JACL is Manzanar. The repudiation was buried in a mass of other matters and was not obvious. For that reason I editorialized the repudiation, for which Mr. Kido, et al, do not thank me inasmuch as they have no reply.

“I was also interested in Mike Masaoka’s postal to a friend. . . . ‘It is cruel . . . the price we have to pay for the right to live.’ Obviously, Mike regrets that he supported the idea of a Nisei Combat Unit at the time I was publicly denouncing it. Rev. James Sugioka returned from the east last spring and he brought me a message of how Mike felt then. He had met Mike in Chicago. I editorialized that statement, too. Mr. Kido has since charged that I made a contemptible attack on a man in uniform. Can you beat that. It was Mike’s own words. He was discouraged then. So I am further glad to know that he is repenting his mistakes.

“I expect to be in Cheyenne Friday forenoon, motoring there with my attorney. Mr. Wirin arrived there tonight. The motion for a separate trial, which we filed in August, will be heard on Saturday morning. Our contention is that my circumstance is entirely different from the others.
Both Judge T. Blake Kennedy, before whom I was arraigned last August, and Judge Eugene Rice of Oklahoma, the trial judge, have indicated they were not inclined to grant our request for a separate trial on the grounds that it is not possible to separate conspiracy defendants on the basis that one person cannot commit a conspiracy. We do not expect our request to be granted.

“On Saturday morning, Mr. Wirin is re-submitting his motions and demurrers. He has already submitted them once, but withdrew them while Judge Rice was studying the situation. Mr. Wirin felt that Judge Rice would overrule his motions and demurrers and at the time it was not certain that he would be the trial judge. Naturally, Mr. Wirin will amplify his arguments on the re-submission. Mr. Wirin does not expect a favorable ruling but he is making the gesture for the record.

“In my particular case, our defense will be based on the Freedom of the Press. I expect to win. However, I am not discounting the element of race prejudice and war hysteria which in all probability will attend the case. The fact, too, that it is a Selective Service case—or conspiracy to aid and abet resistance to the draft—makes the situation unfavorable to us. Nevertheless, we are all out to win.

“On the other hand, Mr. Wirin is attacking the indictment on the broad constitutional ground evidenced in the Goodman case that his defendants are not free agents and thereby are not accorded due process. The Goodman decision was rendered in behalf of 27 draft resisters of Tule Lake last July in the federal district court at Eureka, California. Mr. Wirin intends to delve deep into the question of unconstitutionality of the Evacuation. He has warned Mr. Jacobs that he is ‘long-winded’ and for that reason expects the trial to go two weeks. However, I am agreed with my counsel that Mr. Wirin obviously does not intend to defend each of the boys individually on the criminal counts as such. If that is the case, I expect them to be convicted. They will appeal, of course.

“We had not expected the trial to go beyond a week. If it does go two weeks as Mr. Wirin indicates, it would be an added financial burden to us. Mr. Sampson is being paid $250 per week to sit in. We had not calculated upon the additional $250 or whatever his further charges will be. Mr. Jacobs is being paid $1000 for his services and that stays stationary. The rules and procedures in Wyoming requires a sit-in attorney.

“We have two-thirds of the attorney fees up. In a one week trial, it would leave us something like $300 short, which we will be allowed to repay in installment fashion. In a two-week trial, this deficit will be substantially increased. My wife has sold the Dodge ’38 I owned and our prize Doberman pinscher. We have nothing else of any great value to sell.
“If an appeal is necessary, an appeal bond or a premium bond is as you remarked 10%. I was originally held on a $5000 bond. Mr. Jacobs was successful in reducing this to $1500 at my preliminary arraignment despite resistance to his efforts by the district attorney. Subsequently, Mr. Sampson asked for a further reduction but was denied. We were in a hopeless position when we heard about Mr. Cooper of the Arizona Bail Bond Agency of Phoenix, Arizona. Mr. Cooper promptly expressed his willingness to underwrite a premium bond, requiring only a promissory note. The premium on a $1500 bond is $150.

“Mrs. Omura is handling two jobs to meet the expenses. She gets up at 4 a.m. to go to work at the American Lady Bakers. After she finishes her stretch there at 4 p.m., she returns to Buttons’ where she is employed as a domestic. Ordinarily, she does not finish her work there until 8 p.m. She gets Fridays off at the bakery but has to put a full day in for the Buttons. She gets Sunday off at the Buttons but has to put in her regular full day at the bakery. This is naturally a great strain and I do not expect her to be able to continue such a dual capacity very long.

“Mr. Cooper is connected with the United States Fidelity and Guaranty Company of Maryland. It is to be noted that Mr. Cooper came out of his territory to underwrite the bonds. Mr. David Jacobs, chief of Colorado, Wyoming and New Mexico district, has made a strong representation against Mr. Cooper to the company’s head office. As a result, Mr. Cooper cannot underwrite any new bonds, but he can follow through with his present ones. The Arizona Bail Bond Agency is the first and, so far as I know, the only one to underwrite a Nisei bond. Mr. Jacobs, himself, declined to underwrite the bonds for the 63 Heart Mountain boys who were convicted on the basis that he felt it ‘unpatriotic.’

“Incidentally, Mr. Cooper is the brother of Duff Cooper, member of the British Parliament. He was also a democratic representative to the Chicago nominating convention. Arizona, I believe, had eight votes. Mr. Cooper, however, will vote Republican in the November presidential election.

“I noticed your question on Mr. Sampson. You must understand that Mr. Sampson was not forced upon me but that I selected him after looking over his record and conferring with Mr. Jacobs. I had quite a long discussion with Mr. Sampson on his views generally and particularly in this case before I agreed to retain him. I have full confidence in him. His Selective Service affiliation is an asset in our behalf and his other position as secretary of the Wyoming Bar Association is also helpful. You do not have to worry.

“You may also wonder why I retained Mr. Jacobs. Mr. Jacobs has been representing me legally ever since I evacuated to Denver in April 1942. I have been in several minor cases. There were several lawyers who were willing to undertake my case, but I decided upon Mr. Jacobs because
of my confidence in his sincerity and conscientiousness. Though I have had several differences in the instant proceedings, I know that he will do his level best to try to win this case.

October 17, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to Frank G. Cooper)

“Okamoto was in Denver for a few days. He came to see me and we had a nice long talk. I advised him to forget the others and do his level best to win his case. He seemed somewhat convinced. I believe he is back in Cheyenne now to intercept Wirin who is arriving there tonight. Okamoto has been doing some heavy thinking but indicated to me that he would make no decision until he had conferred with Wirin.”

October 18, 1944 (Letter from James Omura, after release on bond, to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma])

“Mr. Jacobs also asked him (Wirin) his opinion of the JACL. He promptly asked us not to strike at the JACL, saying he was the League’s counsel as well as the A.C.L.U.’s. Mr. Jacobs said he felt we could not very well leave that out because I was such a strong critic of the organization. Mr. Jacobs then asked him if he weren’t representing the boys as a private counsel and not as a counsel for the ACLU or the JACL. He said that was so and he was not objecting to either the JACL or WRA angle. That was that.

“ . . . in it he (Kazushi [Matsumoto]) discloses that Tremayne of the Seattle JACL questioned him concerning my alias of James Iwasa as far back as July, 1943. Get that! It was in the spring of 1943 that Joe Masaoka charged me with employing that alias at Fort Lupton. The strings are drawing closer. The JACL exposed its hand when that alias went on the indictment.”

October 18, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to James V. Bennett, Director, Bureau of Prisons)

“ . . . I cannot recall at any time during my confinement there that we ever had any extra coffee to heat or that any such incident took place. . . . The restrictions on newspapers have never been removed so far as American Japanese prisoners were concerned.”

October 21, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] through Attorney Sampson)
“The court was still in session when Mr. [Sidney] Jacobs, Mr. Sampson and I departed. . . . Judge [Eugene] Rice had just refused to grant a separate trial. However, Mr. Jacobs’ efforts seem to have drawn to the attention of the judge the uniqueness of my position. Mr. [A. L.] Wirin and Mr. Sampson both felt that it had placed me in a favorable position, although we failed to secure the objective.

“Mr. Wirin made a very good presentation and in my opinion sufficiently indicated the illegality of the procedure to secure suppression of evidence—perhaps not all but a large quantity of it. Mr. Jacobs does not think the court will grant Wirin’s request. . . . Mr. Sampson was sitting next to me when McMillen testified and he was of the opinion that his testimony or the material he seized would be tossed out. . . . The judge did give me the impression that he might possibly overrule the motion.

“Frank Emi has seemingly revised his story about [Samuel] Menin’s offer to represent the boys at $50 per day. He now claims that Menin did not write that letter. He says it was unsigned, but he recognized the writing as that of Sylvia [Toshiyuki]. Something [is] wrong here. This sounds very much like a lie.

“Frank [Emi] and the others also were unaware of the fact that Mr. [Frank] Cooper would not be able to write any new bonds. He claims he was not notified and when I told the story, they were dumbfounded. Also, he claims Cooper did not write to him regarding an appeal bond. Cooper has written me he has and that he still has not received an answer. I am going to check with Cooper about all this. In this matter Paul [Nakadate] supported my statements and put in a good word for Cooper to the boys. Doi began questioning Cooper’s motives and we stopped that.

“The hotel manager told us (me and Jacobs) that Mr. Sampson had inquired for me earlier and so we went to see him. Mr. Sampson had a lot of material indexed. Law that Mr. Jacobs had not looked up. In fact, in my opinion Mr. Sampson was better prepared. Mr. Sampson has been very nice to me. He points out law on this case to me, but Mr. Jacobs does not seem overly pleased to have me acquaint myself with it. In the courtroom, Mr. Sampson comes over and asks pointed questions as to the witnesses being examined or any other person in court called by the government. He also points out the weak and strong points whenever he is sitting next to me. I have a feeling that Mr. Jacobs wants to keep me in the dark about the law as much as possible.

“Mr. Jacobs is trying to make arrangements to keep Mr. Sampson out of court except when needed. Mr. Sampson seems to want to stick around until he can get a drift of what the defense is going to be. I feel much better with Mr. Sampson about, but what bothers me is the
fact that a long trial would run into further expenses which we could not pay Mr. Sampson at this time.

“Oh, by the way, I am told that there is a person who has intentions of beating me up. I have seen him twice and his face is familiar but I do not place him. I am informed that he went up to [Sam] Horino in an aggressive fashion and asked him if he were me. I was warned against him last night. This noon I learned that he was a stool pigeon. I have told Mr. Sampson and Mr. Jacobs about the incident. Mr. Sampson brought it to the attention of Mr. Pickett who suggested we take the matter to the police department. However, Mr. Sampson and I felt that it was sufficient to have advised Pickett. Seems like trouble is always coming my way unasked.”

October 22, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to Kazushi [Casey] Matsumoto)

I am afraid that Mr. [Sidney] Jacobs has not properly prepared my case and I am somewhat worried as to his ability to cope with the situation. It is a big case for him and he is not putting in the time he should in preparing it. We have been widely apart in the progress and procedure that he is following. In fact, he admit he is only generally acquainted with the case. The trial starts tomorrow and it does not speak too well of a counsel not to be quite thoroughly familiar with his defendant’s position. He is always saying he will get to it but so far he hasn’t. With arguments on a separate trial coming up yesterday, at the time he arrived here Friday he had not looked up the law on it. I know this because Mr. Sampson pointed out the law to him and asked him if he had read it. He hadn’t and he remained at Sampson’s office for several hours to read it. Mr. Sampson also pointed out other law on the case itself of which Mr. Jacobs was not familiar.”

October 22, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] through Attorney Sampson)

“Mr. [Sidney] Jacobs and I are still as widely apart on the various features of this case as we were in Denver. Between conference[s] this morning I had a few more words with him when he insisted upon bringing up the same old issue that I had the opportunity to clearly state my position on and did not. I put it to him rather strong. I told him we were simply wasting time on arguments and that it is too late at his stage to bring such matters up. He also intimated that I was holding back on materials when I told him that I had the editorial “Plea for Tolerance” at the hotel in my file of Current Life. I am not at all satisfied with Mr. Jacobs.
“Mr. Jacobs is not any more familiar with my editorials and letters than he was in Denver. He declares he intends to go over such materials with me before the trial and that he is going to go over all of that so that he can get a better grasp of the case, but besides his words I see nothing done in this direction. I think he should [go] into conference with me and Mr. Sampson on these materials. The three of us have not conferred together since our arrival in Cheyenne. The trial begins tomorrow, you know.

“Paul [Nakadate] was here last night. . . . He tells me he was in conference with [A. L.] Wirin and [Sidney] Jacobs was there. Mr. Jacobs has said nothing about it. Paul tells me that he asked the other boys if I were a member of the Fair Play Committee and if I had ever known them before. Of course, he seems to have qualified his question by first saying that he had confidence in my truthfulness but he wanted to know for his own information if I had told him the truth. Now can you beat that?

“The name of the fellow that has made a threat against me is Hiro Honda of Gilroy, California. If I recall correctly, he is a pretty strong JACL man. Perhaps you can get a line on him in Denver.”

October 24, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] through Attorney Sampson)

“The court granted to Wirin his motion to suppress evidence on the grounds of illegal search and seizure yesterday afternoon at 2 o’clock. . . . Mr. Jacobs then conferred with me as to our suppressing evidence also. He went into Judge Rice’s chambers to see what he could do. Judge Rice refused to permit entering of any such motion at this late stage. Mr. Jacobs had acted too late.

“Then on a street corner we had a few rods. We had once before discussed this illegal search and seizure phrase but I had to repeat the whole thing over. Mr. Jacobs expressed surprise at the manner in which the authorities had acted. Now he knew about it before but at that time he was not inclined to consider suppression of evidence. I don’t know. It’s these little things that he minimized previously and emphasized that gripe me.

“There were several hearsay [?] concerning me in [Ben] Wakay’s testimony to Lawrence to which Mr. Wirin twice objected. The first objection was overruled with reservations and the second objection was sustained and the court ordered the testimony to be stricken from the record.”
October 25, 1944  (Letter from James Omura to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] through Attorney Sampson)

“We excused Tetsuko [Toda] through stipulations. Sylvia [Toshiyuki] has obviously gone into hiding. The government has been unable to serve the subpoena on her and it has been returned here. That leaves the editorials and the articles in the Rocky Shimpo and the testimony of Hedtniemi.”

October 28, 1944  (Letter from James Omura to Kazushi Matsumoto)

“Friday morning, Judge Rice denied a directed verdict for me and thereby placed my fate in the hands of the jury. It was a bad break. Wirin had been so positive that I would be granted a directed verdict. Mr. Sampson and Mr. Jacobs, too, felt disappointed at the reversal. The reporter for the Wyoming Eagle, Vern Lechliter, had felt certain I would get a directed verdict. Attorney Doi of Los Angeles had felt the same.

“After the court recessed, Wirin remarked to me: ‘I’m sorry that you’re still in this trial. I was positive you would be a free man today. But you have a wonderful case for an appeal. You’ll win hands down in an appeal.

“Mr. Sampson felt the court had erred. Judge Rice had not gone in accordance with the law which specifically states that wherever the evidence of innocence is as apparent as the evidence of guilt, it is the court’s duty to grant a directed verdict of not guilty and the case should not be turned over to the jury. The judge acted in contravention of this law.

“The government presented a very weak case and argument against me. It did not produce a single oral witness. Lechliter wrote in the Wyoming State Tribune: ‘Calling his client a “man of ideals and a champion of Nisei rights” who allowed no one to influence his press, Jacobs said that Omura “did only what he had a right to do under freedom of the press, which is guaranteed him by the first amendment to the Constitution.’

“Lechliter further stated: ‘The judge, in overruling the motion, said that he considered the evidence presented sufficient to place Omura’s case before the jury.’

“I will probably take the stand Tuesday afternoon in my own defense. I am not very optimistic as to my chances. What I am afraid of is that I will be swept along with the landslide. The best we can hope for is a hung jury, I believe.

October 29, 1944  (Letter from Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] to Mrs. Buttons)
“Judge Rice has declared that if one is guilty of the charges then all are guilty of the charges regardless of the circumstances. One member of the defendants has been pointed out by a government witness as being guilty of the charges. The attorney for the boys, [A. L.] Wirin, tried very hard to make the boy contradict himself on the stand but the statements made were very damaging to the case.”

October 30, 1944 (Letter from Kazushi Matsumoto to James Omura)

“I have your letter of October 28th at hand and have noted the content. The news isn’t of the best. Still it isn’t anywhere as bad as I expected. I am glad to note that many of the people present shared your views on acquittal. Rather unfortunate that Judge Rice did not share this viewpoint. Perhaps his hunting trip will rest his tired (?) mind and permit him to see things in a different perspective, or is it too late? Reporter Lechliter seems to have made an objective report. Good to know this.”

November 1, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to Frank Cooper)

“I have been very shocked and sorry to hear that your license has been suspended for two months. It makes my blood boil to think that there are people who invariably attempt to obstruct the honest and sincere efforts that you and others like you give in common decency and justice to us citizens of Japanese descent.

“I am enclosing a clipping of an article concerning my testimony which appeared in this morning’s Wyoming Eagle. The reporter, Vern Lechliter, feels that I am innocent. He felt that I should have been granted a directed verdict. He feels that the jury should acquit me. He had this to say after I left the stand: ‘If you are convicted, I wouldn’t know what Freedom of the Press means.’”

November 2, 1944 (Letter from Toru Matsumoto, Assistant to the Executive Secretary, Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans, to ?)

“I disagree rather fundamentally with the editorial policy of the Rocky Shimpo, of which Mr. [James] Omura was the English editor. When I asked him if he knew what the Japanese-language section of the paper was saying, I was shocked to learn that Mr. Omura did not understand a word of Japanese, and yet he was in full custody of the entire paper. I could not
bring myself to approve the fact that Mr. Omura assumed responsibility for a paper while he did not even read it.”

**November 2, 1944 (Letter from Kazushi Matsumoto to James Omura)**

“From information at hand I would say that this case should not have gone on trial on its merit. . . . I think the Government’s Grand Jury indictment of you has served its purpose, Jim. It was not a failure. You were slowed down slightly when released from the Editorship of the Rocky Shimpo in April; then in the latter part of July you were effectively put out of circulation for about 2 months. The case probably cost you in the neighborhood of $15000 or more. Possibly more all expenses considered inconvenience and all.

“Perhaps the prosecution put a little fear into you and in the future you might take things slower. If all these things happened as a direct or indirect result of harassment by the powers that be, who can say that they failed. Perhaps, with the evidence available to them they didn’t expect to convict you except perhaps on the off chance of prejudice. Who knows?

“Whatever the underlying reason for prosecution, let’s be thankful that this is as far as it progressed. . . . Hero Miyagawa came over at 7:30 p.m. and told me that you had been acquitted. He saw it in tonight’s Seattle Star. It was good of him to come over and tell me thinking that I didn’t know. We never talked about it before but he must have followed in silence. When he found good news he came over to impart it to me. Good of him, wasn’t it? I saw Rev. U. G. Murphy today. . . . He told me twice that he was very glad that you were acquitted.”

**November 2, 1944 (Letter from L. C. Sampson to James Omura)**

“This will advise you of what you missed. Judge Rice has just sentenced [Kiyoshi] Okamoto, [Paul] Nakadate, [Frank] Emi, and [Sam] Horino to four years, [Guntaro] Kubota to two years and [Ben] Wakaye and [Min] Tamesa two years to run consecutively. He also denied bail and suggested that bail be fixed by the Circuit Court of Appeals.”

**November 16, 1944 (Letter from L. C. Sampson to James Omura)**

“The other boys are still in Cheyenne [Wyoming], as Mr. [A. L.] Wirin asked that they be retained here in order that he may attempt to arrange for bond for them pending appeal. . . . I have seen them several times and they are pretty disconsolate.”
November 17, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to L. C. Sampson)

“I was rather surprised at the severity of the punishment meted out by Judge [Eugene] Rice. Also, his refusal to set bail. I noticed in the clerk’s record that in the case of the 63 convicted draft resisters Judge Kennedy set the bail at $3000.”

November 17, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to Kazushi Matsumoto)

“Replying to ours of the 2nd [of November 1944], I must say that you seemed to have diagnosed the situation quite well. In fact, United State District Attorney Tom Morrissey of Denver, according to Mr. [Sidney] Jacobs [Omura’s defense attorney], warned that if I begin writing again he had enough evidence to put me away for sedition. This is not the first time he has mentioned that.

“He was rather surprised that I was acquitted. He said that a F.B.I. agent returned from Cheyenne and told him that the government had a pretty good case against me. He man must have been Rankin.

“My acquittal sort of stumps the government. Mr. Morrissey will not proceed against me because he has no evidence of sedition to file. If he had, he would not wait for me to begin writing again. He would file it right now and here. Morrissey and I have a personal feud. I called a couple [of] city detectives ‘gorillas’ in his office and he raised the roof. Authorities around here seem to think that a person of Japanese ancestry has no rights—particularly no right to talk back even if he is justified.

“Have you any more particulars concerning Tremayne’s questioning? That line about communism won’t stick. Seems like someone wants to get me by hook or crook. I have fought communism through my editorial columns. I refused to join the Writers Mobilization of America because there were too many doubtful characters. Someone has given the wrong cue.”

November 17, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to Frank Cooper)

“However, Mr. [Sidney] Jacobs said that Judge Rice told him after my acquittal that had the jury convicted me he would have sustained the conviction even though the higher court may reverse him. I certainly would not have stood a chance had I waived a jury [trial].”
November 28, 1944  (Letter from Paul Nakadate, Leavenworth Penitentiary, to James Omura and Caryl [Fumi Okuma] Omura)

“And well as you folks know, you know the heterogeneous gathering of men in a so-called conspiracy and their idiosyncracies. I’ve been annoyed by their so-called deductions, bickering, petty accusations on things pettily personal. Woe is me! . . . You can imagine how much dirt has gone under and I have made them dig into mine and have them bury their heads in shame. But haughtiness always has an excuse. I shall someday be able to talk with you folks and laugh o’er these days over a bottle of wine.”

November 29, 1944  (Letter from James Omura to Kazushi Matsumoto)

“I have not secured employment since my release. It is becoming obvious that despite my acquittal I am going to encounter difficulties in finding a suitable job. Just a moment ago I was turned down on a $180 a month job because of my involvement in the Wyoming trial. The monkey wrench was put in by Nisei employees with the company after I had been instructed to report for work. I was called into the superintendent’s office and he asked me concerning the trial and informed me that ‘feelings are pretty high against you.’ He was referring to the five Nisei which the company employs.

“I am going to keep trying for a job, however. I do not know what I can get. Obviously, I will not be able to secure work in large companies or in defense or semi-defense plants. I am beginning to understand just how much an acquittal amounts to and I can expect further difficulties down the line. I suppose that is the price one pays for sticking to principles.”

November 29, 1944  (Letter from James Omura to C. A. Black)

“I take this method to express to you and to each member of the special jury, which sat over the trial in the recent conspiracy case in Cheyenne [Wyoming], my deepest gratitude for the fair and just adjudication of the government’s case against me. I had been very much afraid that the jurors would include me in the landslide verdict against my co-defendants.

“The verdict of the jury in regards to me left unimpaired the Freedom of the Press, one of the most sacred of our constitutional grants.
“I have been a very forceful champion of a living democracy. I am not among those Nisei who profess loyalty to the United States simply for convenience but I believe enough in the principles of democracy to be willing to defend these principles at all cost.”

**November 29, 1944** *(Letter from James Omura to Art Emi)*

“Under ordinary circumstances, I would not be communicating with you in view of the ill-feelings that seem to have attended at the recent conspiracy trial in Wyoming.”

**November 29, 1944** *(Letter from James Omura to L. C. Sampson)*

“Incidentally, would you know anything about six new indictments being prepared by the district attorney’s office? Mrs. [Paul] Nakadate, wife of one of the convicted Fair Play [Committee] leaders, spoke over the phone about it with my wife.”

**November 29, 1944** *(Letter from James Omura to Vern Lechliter)*

“I was not a party to any conspiracy. I, at no time, urged others to resist the draft. Under the Freedom of the Press, I simply explored the various facets of the re-application of Selective Service to the Nisei and protested the apparent injustices and the doubtful constitutional aspects of this reinstitution of the draft. The government had to have a goat and I filled the bill because of my searching editorials.

“However, I do not believe that a conspiracy did exist, according to the testimony. I had considered that a hunged-jury would occur, but, of course, it did not.”

**November 29, 1944** *(Letter from James Omura to John C. Pickett, Assistant U.S. Attorney; notice of release forwarded, by SAC R. F. Kramer on September 21, 1945)*

**December 1, 1944** *(Letter from Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] to L. C. Samson)*

“We have received a letter from Paul Nakadate stating that the boys are not planning to bond themselves out and will plan on serving the term out until the appeal case comes to court. It seems Mr. Emi, Frank’s father, is against raising funds to let the boys out. However, there is still
a lot of bickering among the boys in jail and those interested in the case in Heart Mountain so they may make changes yet.

“He [James Omura] was turned down on his last application because of his former activities, and is still looking for a job.

“A week after our return from Cheyenne [Wyoming], I went to see Mr. [Sidney] Jacobs at his request and we had an hour’s conversation. One-fourth of the time was devoted to an incident with U.S. District Attorney Morrissey in which Mr. Morrissey said that Jimmie [Omura] had better stay away from the pen and typewriter or else he will file a case on sedition against him. Also that the Denver offices were very disappointed Jimmie won. They were very certain that they had him.

“The fact that all of his friends ([Sidney] Jacobs’) and family relatives tried to discourage him and that he stayed up until 12:30 at night several nights preparing the case shows that he was capable and was very well prepared.”

December 1, 1944 (Letter from Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] to Franny Yamamoto)

“Since he refused to retract, he lost his job.

“Jimmie is having a terrible time obtaining a job because he was indicted by the government. The fact that he was acquitted does not mean a thing.”

December 2, 1944 (Letter from Vern Lechliter to James Omura)

“He (Mr. McPherson) insisted your letter be used in a story for our paper today and, confidentially, I was happy he did—both for your sake and because of my pride in receiving it.

“. . . that your conviction on the charge would have been a mighty blow against Freedom of the Press. I assure you I was almost as happy as you were that night when I heard the verdict.”

December 3, 1944 (Letter from Kazushi Matsumoto, from Firland, Washington, to James Omura)

“Outside of the two points that he made (Iwasa and Communism) Tremayne’s other questions were generalized with no emphasis on any. He asked if you were radical and I didn’t answer in the affirmative because I was not sure of the word ‘radical.’ I answered that I did not know,
that I had heard you were radical, but that I had no personal opinion on the matter. Today, I
know what radicalism means.

“Tremayne gave me the impression during the questioning that he was definitely trying to get a
line on the three: Iwasa, Communism, and Radicalism. He did not seem overly interested in the
other questions, although he did check my answers with the dossier of 5-10 pages that he had
from the Denver Office.

“The wandering questions that he asked seemed a means of getting me loosened up—off my
guard so to speak. I had no trouble because I told only the truth as I knew it. I had no reason to
hedge because I knew of nothing that was not on the up and up.

“Truth is its own defense, especially when there are repeat questions. When lying one has a
proneness to stumble. I told him that you left home when about 10 years of age for about a
fortnight. Also that you made your own way since 14. These probably need not have been
said. In the light of today, I think they were superfluous. Shall we say that being unused to
questioning I let fall knowledge that only you and I probably rem-

“I doubt that those two hurt your case in the least, or you. They merely indicate youthful
radicalism. One might outgrow such things or ideology in later years, you know.

“Do you remember how the JACL highlighted the decision of the Japanese American politicians
of Hawaii to drop out of politics back in ’42? I think they were for it under the guise of unity.

“Just the other day they highlighted the other side, quoting a Chinese Hawaiian editor
editorially. Why don’t they stay with one side or [the] other?

“I am against working both sides of the street and the middle whenever it is expedient. Is my
memory faulty? I did not save clippings. Had no opportunity since I do not get this paper.

“I did not like the Pasadena case in the P.C. I did not like the handling of the news in the one
man objection and his subsequent reversal and another flip-flop to former position. The
handling of the news seemed too superficial.

“I heard Walter Winchell going to town in favor of a Nisei veteran from Hollywood tonight at 6
p.m. If I remember correctly he was on the other side recently. He probably slung as much
muck as anybody. What is he, another opportunist?

December 3, 1944 (Letter from Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma] tp Franny Yamamoto)
“He told me to say to you that he would be more than glad to exchange places with you. That he would rather be sitting in a foxhole missing the bullets instead of trying to fight for a job which his own race is denying him. . . .”

**December 11, 1944** (Letter from L. C. Sampson to James Omura)

“Hank’s name is Hank Ward; and the Sheriff’s name is N. E. Tuck.

“The ones in Laramie are to be removed to Leavenworth, I am told, within the next day or so as bail was denied them by the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. I do not know how strong an application was made. . . .

“It is unfortunate that Mr. Morissette seems to have taken such a personal interest in your prosecution that he has not considered the verdict in your behalf as final determination of your loyalty and has threatened further prosecution if you continue in your editorial work.”

**December 11, 1944** (Letter from L. C. Sampson to Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma])

“The remainder of the boys who were in the County Jail were released on Saturday on bail furnished from New York; and I am told that they went to Laramie Saturday afternoon and visited with the boys there who are to be transferred to Leavenworth.”

**December 12, 1944** (Letter from James Omura to Paul Nakadate at Laramie, Wyoming)

“I have just received word that the Circuit Court of Appeals has refused to grant bond for you boys and your fellows are to be removed to Leavenworth within a few days. . . . The personal bickering of the boys have been a keen disappointment to me and I have been too greatly disillusioned with them to entertain a very high estimate for them. I shall never forget, though I will probably forgive, what Sam said that night [“You spy.”]. Sam simply expressed the consensus opinion or feeling of the others.”

**December 14, 1944** (Letter from Paul Nakadate, from the Albany County Jail in Laramie, Wyoming, to James Omura)
“Life here is getting monotonous. Alls well except ostracization of Mr. [Kiyoshi] Okamoto. At least the food for us all should be offered him. My sympathies are with him despite his peculiarities.

“I hate to tell you but we have lost the privilege of cooking because [Gunataro] Kubota took a uniform without privilege from the line without permission. Sad isn’t it . . . more so shame. The trio was bound for some few notches being cut off since they are too cocky. Apologies have not been rendered as yet—probably never will.

“I hope you could keep up the fight for our civil liberties—not because we are Japs but because we cherish as Americans and fight for that which is the American way of life. Inasmuch as we have stood for the right of every citizen. I’m sorry that aside from Okie [Kiyoshi Okamoto]—the boys are shallow and cannot see beyond their nose.

“I wrote an article for the Colorado Churchmen and a Pacific coast paper. I’m afraid our own citizens of Japanese ancestry do not even have enough thinking power to see the reality of the problems confronting not only us but our nation.”

**December 18, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to A. L. Wirin)**

“Sunday afternoon, the rescinding of the exclusion order pertaining to persons of Japanese ancestry from the Pacific Coast was carried over a local network. In the evening, Walter Winchell also referred to it. It is the best piece of news since Pearl Harbor to the Nisei.”

**December 18, 1944 (Letter from James F. Bennett, Director, Bureau of Prisons, to James Omura)**

“As you know, the Federal government has no control over the operation of county jails, and this Bureau can only try to encourage local officials to raise the standard of conditions in their institutions. You may be assured that we will continue to do everything possible to bring about improved conditions in the Laramie County Jail and in all local institutions.”

**December 18, 1944 (Letter from James Omura to Clifford Forster)**

“. . . Mr. [Roger] Baldwin was in Oregon where he protested the actions of the Hood River American Legion Post in scratching from its list the names of sixteen Nisei soldiers. . . . It was back in early 1942 that I protested to the Hood River Post commander the action of that
organization to circulate petitions among other far western American Legion posts to prevent the return of people of Japanese ancestry to the Pacific Coast and to urge their deportation.”

**December 29, 1944 (Letter from Kazushi Matsumoto to James Omura)**

“So some of the mis-educated Niseis are putting obstacles in the way of your economic well-being. Imagine that!

“Don’t these misguided brethren know that one worker pitted against another, or whatever Race, Creed or Nationality, tends to weaken the strength of the ‘exploited class’ as a whole?

“Why is it that so many peoples including Niseis aim for immediate gains at the expense of long range perspective? In my opinion, it is the first, or one of the steps on the road to more economic slavery than we at present have. Would you care for security at the expense of Freedom? I am sure you don’t either but they are heading that way unknowingly.

“If the ‘bigshot parasite’ don’t discriminate against you for radicalism, it is your fellow worker in the same economic bracket who are your worst enemy. Stupidity! I call it. What can you expect?

“Good thing you knew just what to expect. Otherwise you would been very disappointed. I take it you are not doing too well yet; I have not heard from you.”

**January 1, 1945 (Letter from James Omura to Kazushi Matsumoto)**

“I have been very much disturbed over your use of the word radicalism in your letter of December 3rd. I do not like the word. I do not consider myself a radical, though on occasions I have been charged with it.

“I prefer to be called a liberal progressive. I think the word is more apt. The incident of my leaving home was not ‘youthful radicalism’ as you put it. It was individualism and an expression of independence. I’m inclined to believe that your reading of the *Pacific Citizen* may have induced you to the use of radicalism to me.

“The F.B.I. is shooting in the dark when it attempts to dress me in the garb of communism. I have been a militant foe of Nisei communism. During my San Francisco newspaper days, I took several shots at the growing trend of communism among the Nisei. Just prior to Pearl Harbor, I refused to permit my name to be used by the Nisei Writers Mobilization of America [group]
because the membership was dominated by doubtful characters. Isamu Noguchi, the man who designed the A.P. mural over the entrance of the Rockefeller Center, can attest to this.

“It wasn’t much over a year ago that I attacked the editor of the *Pacific Citizen* for his left-wing affiliations. This prompted a threat of a libel suit from Lawrence Tajiri. I called the bluff and to date nothing happened.

“I am also perturbed concerning the *Industrial Worker*. I do not read it and have often considered cancelling it. I cannot agree with its philosophy and am inclined to consider it as communistic. I am a firm believer in Laissez faire and in private enterprise. Though I realize the benefits accomplished by unionism, I also consider its dangers. I am not too strongly for unionism, for it often leads to the destruction of individual initiative and of equal opportunity.

“I have made my report to the A.C.L.U. in New York as to the treatment of Nisei prisoners in Cheyenne. I have been advised that it is to be reported in the next bulletin. I am working on additional material in connection with the case for the A.C.L.U.

“It will probably interest you to know that the Circuit Court of Appeals has refused to grant bond for the Fair Play Committee leaders. They have been removed to a federal penitentiary, but I am not informed as to which. In all probability, it is Leavenworth.

“You may also be interested to know that there are considerable ill-feelings between the Fair Play [Committee] leaders and me. This cropped out during the recent Wyoming trial. Those on my side were Kiyoshi Okamoto, chairman of the committee, and Paul Nakadate, vice-chairman. Opposing me were forces led by Frank Emi and including Kubota and Horino. In fact, Horino had the gall to call me ‘a spy’ at one point.

“Of course, I am deeply disappointed in these boys. I had been led to believe that they were committed to a great principle but instead found them small and selfish. I am glad now that I had no connection with them. However, the cause still remains and whatever motivated these Nisei we cannot overlook the fact that publicly they are related to the great cause for which I also gambled my good name and good repute. I am still hoping that in time that a group of Nisei leaders will come forth to fearlessly and unselfishly champion the rights of the Nisei—which in turn is the inalienable rights of all citizens.

**January 1, 1945 (James Omura to L. C. Sampson)**

“First of all, Mr. [Sidney] Jacobs consistently refused to follow out my suggestions on many matters . . . indicated to my wife that he would have to make additional charges for going over the correspondences in the case unless I was able to come out on bail to do the job myself. . . .
Furthermore, when I was released on bail Mr. Jacobs had not time to see me and instructed me not to bother him for one week. In the meantime, he had time to speak with Mrs. [Sylvia] Toshiyuki on my time and Mr. [Kiyoshi] Okamoto. He constantly rushed me out of his office . . . and refused to go over the case properly with me.”

January 1, 1945 (Letter from James Omura to Vern Lechliter)

“I must add I was greatly surprised that Mr. McPherson published the contents of my letter of thanks to the Wyoming Eagle. . . . I feel very strongly that your reporting in particular had a great deal to do with my acquittal. I base my opinion on the fact that newspaper comments were accessible to members of the jury and that an adverse reporting could have colored their opinions.

“I observed certain gems in your accounts of the trial that were decidedly helpful and showed brilliant reporting. For instance, Judge Eugene Rice’s reply to Mr. [Sidney] Jacobs in refusing a second request for a directed verdict. There was also Okamoto’s afterthought about ‘Oriental monkeys.’

“I have been thinking of writing a detailed account of the events which eventually led to my indictment and the effort the authorities expended in its attempt to either throttle my editorials or to railroad me into oblivion. I do not think that the last chapter has been written yet.”

January 12, 1945 (Letter from Kazushi Matsumoto, from Firland, Washington, to James Omura)

“I am inclined to agree with you that you are hardly a radical in the full sense of the word—for that matter I doubt that you are a liberal progressive even. It may be more apt than ‘radical’ but still a misnomer.

“Yes, Jim, I erred when I termed your leaving home ‘youthful radicalism,’ but you also erred when you term it broadly, ‘individualism and an expression of independence.’ For what is this action of yours? I consider it self-seeking individualism. You did not do it to help others; it was all for yourself actually. I often wonder if your so-called altruism isn’t a self-seeking individualism. To me it seems so. I will need better arguments than I have been getting to believe otherwise.

“My reading of the Pacific Citizen has nothing whatever to do with my judgment of you, Jim. The P.C. is a liberal rag but like all liberalism it is weak—(wissy-washy)—It is also a political rag
and it necessarily leans every which way the wind blows in its brand of political philosophy. It is just another appendance of the ‘system.’ I am sorry to say it cannot add one useful principle to my ideology.

“I do not know what the F.B.I. had in mind on the Communist angle or any other angle because I have not the whole story, not even an adequate part of it for any sustained judgment. By the way, I listened to the ‘Town Meeting of the Air’ program last evening. The theme was ‘Is Communism a Threat to the American Way of Life?’ If you didn’t hear it, this is it. Principal speakers (4): Pro—Henry J. Taylor, a very anti-labor spokesman for reactionary big [business?] interests. He attacked collectivism—the implication of the term—not just the Communist form of it. He called it anti-social. What do you reckon he meant by it? He must know (unless he’s stupid) that the very basis of society as we know it is collectivism. The opposite is Anarchy according to defined terms—usually any creature of the system.

“Next speaker—William Henry Chamberlain, onetime for about 4 years, probably more red than the Bolsheviks themselves. Now anti-Soviet. He had a pretty good argument.

“One the other side were Gideon, President of Brooklyn College, and Roger Baldwin, Director, American Civil Liberties Union. Baldwin gave a very good argument. We did not hear the last half hour of the program so missed the probably ‘rigged’ audience opinions on the question. Baldwin’s argument was liberal.

“Your attack on the Editor of the P.C. [Larry Tajiri] for his ‘left-wing affiliations’ smacks of reaction rather than progressivism. I notice ‘affiliations’ is plural. Progress comes from the left of center, chum!

“So you don’t read the Industrial Worker—too bad! It is probably the only paper you have read that has real basic principles. Its basic principles [are] that you as a creature of this political setup cannot possibly have. Politics as we know it today is a philosophy of expedience.

“I ask that you qualify the word ‘Communistic’ in regards to the Industrial Workers [of the World]. That is too general to be given consideration. ‘Though I realize the benefits accomplished by unionism, I also see its danger.’ That sentence, the last time I read it, was in the syndicated column of that Brass-checker Westbrook Pegler, as irresponsible a writer as I’ve ever read. No integrity. The fellow has purchasable conscience and principles.

“I hate to have to class you with Pegler and I hope I don’t get too many reasons to do so. The A.F. of L. and C.I.O. brand of unionism is a definite danger to real progress. Dictatorship from the top. The rest of society is also a dictatorship from the top. If you understand economics as it is, you will know the above to be true.
“When you classify the I.W.W. along with the above two forms of unionism, then you are very ignorant of the wobbly movement or just plain stupid. Shall we say it is the first? The I.W.W. does not believe in saviors and leaders. They believe in rank and file leadership, direct action.

“They believe that by direct action they achieve what they need and want. They know that a leadership if it can lead them out of trouble can also betray them. No man (worthy of the name man) will knowingly betray himself.

“I think you will note, if you give it any consideration at all, that the opposite of unionism (unless it is Anarchism of the libertarian variety) is predatory opportunism. Do you believe in preying on your fellow men and vice versa? That is what your philosophy amounts to. There is sure to be individual initiative of a cooperative type in a free society, more so than in a pseudo-free society of the type we have. As for ‘equal opportunity’ have you got it? You know very well you haven’t. It is theoretical only. Laissez faire is a stand-still philosophy broadly speaking. What identity of interest could a progressive have with such a philosophy?

“Private enterprise is a predatory philosophy. It perpetuates itself by monopoly. Although the basic idea is competition, the ones who get to the top first must monopolize to hold their position. It comes about that the strong preys on the weak. Also ‘the mountain at the top has less dimension than at its base.’ Please keep this truism in mind. Theoretically, everyone has a chance to get to the top. Actually there is room for very few up there. Theoretically, you can be president. How many presidents have we had in the United States since [George] Washington?

**January 16, 1945** (Letter from Kazushi Matsumoto at Firland [Washington] to James Omura)

“You don’t especially like Jews, do you? In a parasite economy, if they perchance are the best parasite, can you blame them? In financial dealings I have gotten rooked more often from Japanese than any other people because I had more dealings with them. Cheap tactics are not exclusively the characteristics of the Jews. Others have it, too.

“You should not look at other minorities from a personal viewpoint only. You should study the history of the Jews in the last 1900 years in this world. Their treatment by other people as slaves to begin [with]. Then their life in ghettos like the Little Tokyos of the west coast. What causes this segregation?

“You probably know the Jews’ plight when they first came to New Amsterdam (America) in the days of Peter Sturdevant [?], Governor. How he discriminated against them. Perhaps you also know that in Maryland until at least 1850 no Jews were permitted to own real estate. In North
North Carolina until 1870 they could not run for political office. In Boston and parts of Pennsylvania they are being persecuted today. Do you recognize the similarity in the treatment of the Jews and that of the Japanese? You should! The Japanese have the advantage of having come from a nation of power. The Jews on the other hand are not a nationality group. They have no national home. They are a religious group. Jew is religion, not nation.

“To be fair, we judge anyone on his or her merit, not on the supposed merit or demerit of that group to which he belongs. We do not stigmatize the Japanese or their descendants because of the actions of a few. Some do!

“It is a distinct annoyance to me that fellows with apparently the same sets of principles cannot get along but bicker among themselves. Yep! Ill feelings, eh? I wonder who’s at fault. There is usually reasons for difference of opinions. You do not tell me why he (Horino) called you a spy. Information is too skimpy. When you wait for Nisei leaders to come forth and champion the rights of Niseis, you will have a long and disappointing wait. While the Niseis depend on leaders they will get as far as the other minorities and even the majority. Since the majority has not the so-called ‘inalienable rights’ how can you expect the minorities to have them?

“Tell me about your feud with P.C. Rag and Company. I shall illustrate by an example just what you put me in mind of with your agitation.

“You are like a man battling an octopus. You don’t like a tentacle so you bash it. Another tentacle tends to obstruct your effort and the third one temporarily or permanently puts you out of commission. Others probably battle the Octopus in the same fashion. How useless! The Octopus needs the tentacles to exist. So it grows others. Cut one off and it grows another. If you were to bash the basic evil out of existence (Octopus) the tentacles having no support will perish.

“You jeopardize your standing and name for what! Reform? And nothing but. Reform to me is not basic progress, not the back two feet, forward one feet variety. In the earlier stages of society here, there was even more freedom in spots and less education. We have more education and less freedom now. More education, more restrictions it seems.

“In the King James version of the Bible I find this significant passage: ‘Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine lest they trample them under their feet and turn again and rend you.”

January 28, 1945  (Letter from James Omura to A. L. Wirin)
“I have a feeling that some day the courts will hold that to draft a person whose civil rights have been divested by a presidential order is unconstitutional and not within the tenets of a democracy as we understand it.”

January 28, 1945 (Letter from James Omura to Kazushi Matsumoto at Firland [Washington])

“I notice that you do not think highly of Westbrook Pegler. I realize, of course, that Pegler’s enemies are legion. I am not a Pegler man, but I admire certain of his qualities in exposing union racketeering. Lee Casey, veteran Rocky Mountain News commentator, criticizes Pegler because his policies are not impartial in that he does not attack capital in the same manner he attacks unionism. Pegler’s pet gripe is labor. I am somewhat inclined to agree with Lee Casey.

“However, the views I have reached in regards to unionism are more from actual experience than from reading other people’s opinions. Such unions as the C.I.O. and the A.F.L., except perhaps for the fact that the A.F.L. is not as communistic as the other two. Surely you would not deny that the C.I.O. leans strongly to the left. In my opinion, the Industrial Workers [of the World] likewise.

“You ask me to define communism. Communism, as I understand it, is the advocation of common ownership of property to be secured through class struggles ending in a revolution. I don’t believe we have different ideas about that. It is a radical departure from state socialism.

“I don’t quite understand you when you declare that the Industrial Workers [of the World] do not believe in ‘saviors and leaders’ and that they ‘believe in rank and file leadership, direct action.’ It seems to me that you are blinding yourself to the obvious. The organic structure of the I.W.W. is in no ways different from that of other unions. Perhaps you could enlighten me as to its differences. Systems of government at best are theoretical. We do not have pure democracy in the United States. We are supposedly capitalistic, but we are closer to state socialism. We are not going to achieve ‘equal opportunities’ simply because of the Industrial Workers [of the World]. We do not have it now, either. And communism is no solution. Russia is an example, the Russia of today. It is a dictatorship.

“Certainly you are privileged to take the Pacific Citizen—JACL stand that I am seeking self-promotion and self-aggrandizement. Certainly you can say that it is not altruism. But don’t you think that if such was true that I certainly am making it tough for myself beyond normal consideration? Wouldn’t you say that I could achieve much more and a great deal more rapidly were I to engage in apple-polishing and politicking? Surely no intelligent person would question the actions of the government if he were attempting to promote himself. Surely he would not champion a cause which would explode in his face. Surely he would not contribute a year’s
service and his life’s savings to help fellow unfortunates of the evacuation. There are better ways to achieve a selfish purpose.

“You have asked me about things as Horino’s ‘spy’ incident. . . . I intend to write you a very long and detailed letter . . . the road that led me to the Wyoming conspiracy trial at Cheyenne last October [1944] and my subsequent acquittal.”

January 21, 1945  (Letter from Alice Nakadate, to James and Caryl Omura)

“He [Paul Nakadate] has never once mentioned the other boys and I don’t even know whether they are together or not.”

February 4, 1945  (Letter from James Omura to Kazushi Matsumoto at Firland [Washington])

“I have just been reliably advised that I am once more the subject of F.B.I. search and that inquiries are being circulated on Larimer Street as to my present whereabouts. I am also told that the F.B.I. is also seeking Mrs. [Sylvia] Toshiyuki, who disappeared shortly prior to the opening of the Wyoming conspiracy trial and on whom the government relied to convict me. Coupled with the dual inquiries the fact that the F.B.I. has failed to act upon my request for return of illegally-seized materials not included as part of the trial record, the report takes on a special significance.

“I am not afraid of the F.B.I., but at the same time I do not expect to convenience them in the least. In time, they will be walking into this apartment with their silly innuendoes and Gestapo procedures. There will be more political persecution and a further attempt to railroad me to cold storage. This is what they call justice and safeguarding American principles and ideals.

“To understand the reason for further action against me, there are certain factors that must be considered and taken into account. Primarily, any further action would be predicated upon personal grounds. Nothing actually would be achieved than self-satisfaction.

“It is important to keep in mind that the government attempted to convict me last November on the basis of a very weak case in the hope that war hysteria and racial prejudice would prevail. It is also important to remember that despite the obvious inadequacies of the government’s case, the United States District Attorney here in Denver, Tom Morrissey, expressed surprise at my acquittal. In so doing, he claimed he had sufficient evidence to indict me on another charge—probably sedition—and would promptly prosecute me if and when I resumed further writings. I have not been concerned over his threat, because I do not believe
he has the evidence and because had he had it he would proceed immediately without waiting for me to resume my writings. . . .

“It was a little over two years ago that I had a little difficulty with Mr. Morrissey. Mrs. Omura and I had been called into the district attorney’s office for questioning. The reason for the questioning was again personal and an over-exercise of authority.

“To begin from the beginning, it seems that a Caucasian customer entered the grill which Mrs. Omura operated and made some pro-Japan statements. Subsequently, another customer reported the matter to the authorities and probably embellished to our disadvantage. Shortly thereafter and daily for a week we received reports from other merchants that the police were making inquiries concerning us. Of course, we knew they would eventually come directly to us.

“This happened. I answered the door. Promptly, the two detectives from the police department took and arrogant and brutal attitude. I knew nothing about the circumstances of their investigation and informed them as much. The line of questioning was not proper and I asked that I be advised as to the purpose of the visit. A detective virtually stuck his finger in my face and said:

‘Now look here, we’re asking the questions and you’re going to answer them.’

“That was enough. I promptly refused to answer any questions. The detectives ranted and threatened, called up the F.B.I. and unsuccessfully attempted to reach Morrissey. The next morning, we were called up before Morrissey on a charge of illegal draft registration. This, of course, was untrue.

“I was pretty made by then and spoke my piece to that extent and the District Attorney promptly jumped on me. He threatened to put me away on a 72-hour investigational custody. After the questioning we were permitted to go and nothing further developed as we knew [it] would not.”

February 13, 1945 (Letter from Frank G. Cooper to James Omura)

“. . . A very nasty article appeared in the paper here yesterday about 650 Tule Lake Japs. The article was about these boys trying to influence loyal Japs to renounce United States citizenship. I do not like to read this for it has a very bad effect on the Jap people who believe in this country. I believe in a people standing up for their rights, but I do not believe in anyone denouncing the country or the government. It gets real folk like yourself in bad in the citizens’ view.”
February (mid) 1945 (Letter from James Omura to Kazushi Matsumoto)

“I was what in your consideration would be a damn fool and contested Mr. Jacobs’ suit. In fact, we went further and filed a cross-complaint. The jury listened to the testimonies for five and one-half hours and returned with a verdict in five minutes. Mr. Jacobs was awarded the judgment.

“Mr. Jacobs took the stand and told a series of lies. I still cannot understand how any sensible person could have believed what he claimed. Primarily, it is unbelievable that a person in our modest circumstances would have agreed to pay $1000 without stipulations as to what was to be done and that we would have agreed to pay the full amount at the conclusion of the trial when we were without adequate funds. That would have been agreeing to something that was impossible. Still the jury believed Mr. Jacobs.

“In view of the fact that Mr. Jacobs won his judgment on false testimony, we are not inclined to recompense him. We have decided on filing bankruptcy but at the moment are unable to so so because of prohibitive charges. It would cost us roughly between $120 to $230 according to a rough estimate of Mr. McDoubal who represented us through the Legal Aid Society.”

March 4, 1945 (Letter from James Omura to Vern Lechliter)

“For your information, I was among the first group to be cleared by the Western Defense Command and am now able to return to the Pacific Coast if I so desire. However, we are electing to remain here for the present.”

April 1, 1945 (Letter from James Omura to Vern Lechliter)

“I have observed since I made the acquaintance of Mrs. [Paul] Nakadate at the trial that she is disinclined to discuss her husband’s participation in the Fair Play Committee and his subsequent conviction. Seemingly she regards his confinement as a cross to bear in shame and in silence. She strikes me as a sensitive person to whom all this is baffling—who cannot understand how Paul could have so far forgotten his obligations to his wife and child to allow himself to participate in the F.P.C. program and thereby jeopardize their future.

“. . . it was Paul’s error that he permitted himself to be identified with the F.P.C. as a speaker and as an official despite the fact that he was not in full accord with the organization’s activities and with its leaders. It is perhaps true that he apparently did not know what was actually
taking place, though it would seem incredible to us that he did not. However, from my association and discussions with him and with the others, I am sufficiently convinced that he was not among the inside planners and was in fact persona non grata as a plotter and was simply being used. The fact that he was on the opposite side of the fence throughout his confinement in Cheyenne and throughout the entire trial is the strongest argument in his favor. He was distrusted by his fellow ringleaders.

“In much the same position we find Mr. Okamoto. There is no question in my mind that Mr. Okamoto was badly used by the real ringleaders. He was not guilty of the charge to conspire but because he permitted his name to be used as the organization’s chairman, he jeopardized his own position and placed his liberty in the hands of the actual plotters. He was a recalcitrant leader, going his own way and refusing to cooperate with his fellow leaders. Mr. Okamoto had his delusions of grandeur throughout and doubtlessly still holds to it. He felt that since he fathered the Fair Play Committee that he should be its elected head and its dominant voice. Despite the fact that he had no organizing ability and no true leadership, he was unwilling to relinquish even in a small part the position he felt he was entitled to. He was going to use the organization, but in the end he was outwitted and used instead.

“It is an ironic twist that the lone alien among the group. Mr. [Guntaro] Kubota, should have received the lightest sentence. I am of the feeling that Mr. Kubota was in a large measure responsible for the actions of the Fair Play Committee. He was certainly a dominant figure in its activities. He it was who put over the financial drive which encouraged them to take the steps which they did. He it was that persuaded the F.P.C. leaders on their road to disaster. With my own ears I have heard him indoctrinate his fellow leaders. Justice? Ah, but I do not think that justice had its day in court when Judge Rice sentenced Kubota to only two years. Nakadate and Okamoto were pawns at best, while Kubota was a guiding genius.

“I find in my own mind that equally guilty with Kubota were Frank Emi and Isamu Horino. Kubota, Emi and Horino were the actual ringleaders. And to give greater weight to this contention, this trio stuck together through thick and thin. Paul [Nakadate] and Okamoto were left out and were regarded with suspicion. Furthermore, this trio was most gravely concerned as to their penalty, whereas both Paul and Okamoto throughout their confinement refused to allow themselves to become overly worried. Also Kubota, Emi and Horino were all judo experts, whereas Okamoto and Nakadate were unacquainted with this science. Furthermore, Kubota, Emi and Horino had visited Japan, Emi and Horino just prior to the war, and Nakadate and Okamoto had not been in Japan, at any rate not within recent years. And what is the situation at Leavenworth where these people are now confined? Paul does not associate with the others; Okamoto has been ostracized.
“It was my misfortune to have my name dragged into this trial, not because I was guilty of the charge [of conspiracy] but because I had been the most dominant voice among the Nisei. The issues I have been raising were proving embarrassing to the administration. Overtures were made, asking me to desist, with the threat of political persecution as a consequence if I failed. I refused. Then a series of political persecution[s] began. The W.R.A. began a press campaign, vilifying my name. A national official of the Y.M.C.A. began a tour of the country and before a Denver University group roundly condemned my editorship. A professor at a Utah University [Elmer Smith of the University of Utah] was prevailed upon to communicate with the publisher of the Rocky Shimpo in effect requesting my withdrawal as editor.

“Pressure was brought upon the War Department, the F.B.I. and other governmental bureaus to check the editorials I was writing. I have been told that the War Department communicated with Thomas Morrissey, United States District Attorney, to bring an action to halt my editorials. Three times such a representation is said to have been made. Mr. Morrissey could not act. The editorials were not seditious. He finally suggested that the newspaper be closed; the War Department declared the suggestion was unfeasible. As a last resort, my removal was demanded on the threat that alternative action would be the closing of the shop. No valid reason existed for my removal. The Office of the Alien Property Custodian had to concoct one. It issued an order which I could not properly comply with and while I was negotiating for a less drastic approach to the situation, it sent its representative to Denver and demanded my discharge on the basis that I had failed to cooperate with the Washington office in carrying out my duties as editor. This was a direct lie. The record shows that I had again and again indicated my willingness to reach an understanding with Washington. The Office of the Alien Property Custodian had ignored four successive representations I had made. Then it acted.

“And thereby I became a party to the trial in Cheyenne. This [These] briefly are the facts in the case. And it was the government’s intent to silence me and to discredit me before my racial group, and in a measure they achieved this end.

“... we were not willing to see injustices committed without raising our voice in protest, and though we lost a great deal we still prefer the rough, hard road over which we travelled to resignation and voluntary relinquishment of our civil liberties. We would rather go down fighting than not to fight at all, for after all defeat is no shame.”

June 25, 1945  (Letter from Frank Cooper to James Omura)

“Well, Jim, here is the dope on the Poston boys. They had their case about a month ago. Three of them stood trial for the ninety-eight and whatever verdict was, it would be the same on the other ninety-five.
“Well, they were found guilty and sentenced to one year. They appealed the case to the circuit court at San Francisco and this will take at least a year. They are out on one thousand dollar appeal bond, the three of them, and the rest will have to put up a five hundred appeal bond when their bonds run out. You see I only bonded out some of them last April so they will be allowed to carry on on this bond and when the year is up they will be expected to post a five hundred dollar bond.

“[A. L.] Wirin got them a New York company that will take the bunch for two per cent. So a person with a thousand dollar bond will only have to pay twenty dollars.”

July 1, 1945 (Letter from James Omura to Vern Lechliter)

“I have always been sorry for the Nisei, because I am one of them. In my little ways I have attempted to crusade for the improvements of their lot. How little appreciated all this effort turned out to be and I know that I shall never forget the ridicule of my predicament and the false friendship of those who professed to believe in me.

“We are eternally grateful to the few people—strangers then—who constantly bolstered our flagging spirits in our dark hours, the moral support that came from unexpected sources and which were so sincere and well-meaning. Sadly enough these were not Nisei but of other extractions. You were one of these and another was Frank G. Cooper of the Arizona Bail Bond Agency.

“Paul [Nakadate] never mentions his fellow Fair Players and obviously does not associate with them. I am, of course, persona non grata. . . . Paul was the only one in the group that I considered as having any degree of common sense and who were not either idealistic fanatics, self-glorifiers, or ambitious opportunists. The group was always tugging and pulling at each other and each suspicious of the others. It was a peculiar setup. I couldn’t stomach them myself.”

July 1, 1945 (Letter from James Omura to Kazushi “Casey” Matsumoto)

“The fact that we are in bankruptcy is not commonly known. The Japanese consider us well-to-do, a fact which interfered with our efforts to raise financial support for the trial.”
**August 7, 1945 (Letter from James Omura to Kazushi Matsumoto)**

“In your July 5th [1945] communication, you ask whether the Nisei who have since resisted the draft predicate their action upon principle or personal safety. I could not really tell you. However, I shall hazard an opinion. Naturally among any group of people there would be a certain number who would resist simply to avoid the risk of death. It would not be unusual if some of these Nisei did act with that thought in mind. Such individuals prefer to sit out the war behind prison bars. After all, there isn’t really a great deal of difference between confinement in the so-called relocation centers and a federal penitentiary. The transition from one to the other causes only the slightest social and economic ripple.

“Then, of course, we must concede that a few perhaps based their action on moral principles.”

“I observe that you take an active interest in left wing publications and labor activities. I could never stomach the I.W.W. organ because of its style of writing. Though I do not object to an occasional reference to any type of writing and activity for the purpose of a balanced knowledge, I do not care too much for radical movements and class-conscious pogroms. Labor papers of the I.W.W. standard describe the bourgeois element and the capitalists as arch-enemies—the ghouls. They are constantly attacking the employers in cheap, provincially inspired vitriol. I have no quarrels with certain basic objectives of labor, being a workingman myself, but I believe labor should be rallied and could be rallied with a more objective education—not the type of language employed by communists, radicals and fellow-travelers. War Commentary, from my cursory examination of it, appears to be a less vitriolic organ. The style is more moderate. However, I cannot tell you how well I will like it at this early date. I have read only two articles. William Godwin’s article on law was of special interest. I read it out loud to my wife before I picked up your letter in which you point out the article to me.

“Insofar as the news of the world is concerned, I have been particularly interested in the French trials, especially as to the disposition of the Petain and Laval cases. It is almost certainly beyond doubt that both will be convicted of treason to the State, but somehow I cannot reconcile myself to the thought that Petain is a traitor to France, simple because it became his duty to seek an armistice with Hitler in those dark days of France. Surely Petain acted with the best interest and welfare of France at heart, for without capitulation what would have been the fate of France? England was being pushed back, the United States had not entered the war, Russia was being beaten to its knees.

“Capitulation was the only course for a weak and unprepared France, and for this they would paint as an arch-enemy of its country the aged hero of Verdun? What will French justice be? Of course, all the facts of the cases are not before me and we from this long range observatory can merely interpret the trials form scanty dispatches. But on the point of capitulation—which the
government is making a great deal of—we do not need minute details to draw the line between traitorous intent and military necessity.”

**September 18, 1945 (Letter from James Omura to Frank Cooper)**

“The appeal was heard by a panel of three judges on the 7th of September [1945]. Present were A. L. Wirin and L. C. Sampson for the defendants and U.S. District Attorney Carl Sackett for the government. Mr. Sampson was a bystander. Also present were Sam Menin, criminal attorney for the F.P.C.; Mrs. [Paul] Nakadate, and quite a few other interested individuals and attorneys.

“Wirin depended principally upon the Supreme Court decision in the Bundist case for his appeal. Sackett was uninformed on this decision—a recent one—and studied the case during the noon recess. He, then, attempted to assail it on the ground that two judges of the Supreme Court did not participate in rendering the decision and that therefore the majority opinion was not the majority of the Supreme Court. He drew a rebuke from one of the judges for his attempt to discredit the majority opinion.

“The Supreme Court reversed a lower court ruling in the Bundist case by a 5 to 4 decision. The Bundist case or the Keegan Case as it is listed in legal literatures is a parallel of the F.P.C. case. It dealt with the German-American Bund on the same count of conspiracy to aid and abet others to refuse to report for induction or physical examination until their status is clarified. The Supreme Court found that there was insufficient evidence to sustain conviction.

“The backbone of Wirin’s appeal was based upon Justice Roberts’ majority opinion in which the Supreme Court held that it was proper for any individual to challenge a law which he felt illegal and to refuse to obey it for the purpose of bringing a test case and to counsel others to refuse to obey it until the law was clarified, so far as he acted with innocent motive and not with evil intent.

“Mr. Sackett emphasized the fact that whereas none of the Bundists disobeyed their draft board orders sixty-three of the F.P.C. members however did refuse. Prior to the arguments, Wirin had considered this his main weak point. He had called my attention to it before the case went to court.

“It was apparent that one of the judges was hostile to the defense. Previously he [?] had informed me that the court was not liberal. Also the fact that the court had sustained the conviction of the 63 Heart Mountain draft resisters, and this fact may hurt. However, Wirin favorably impressed one of the jurists and the third jurist seemed friendly at least.
“Personally, I am inclined to believe that the appeal court will reverse the decision and at least remand the case back to the lower court for re-trial if nothing better. I expect to see a 2-1 decision for reversal or re-trial and possibly a unanimous decision. This is, of course, rather optimistic.

“Wirin, of course, is hoping for the best, but he is not committing himself on the verdict. In fact, he informed me that he had his papers drawn for presentation to the Supreme Court. There, too, he feels that the retirement of Justice Roberts would injure the case and seems particularly bothered by the fact of the only discrepancy of the F.P.C. case with that of the Bundists. That is, the refusal to report for pre-induction.

“However, I do not consider that such a vital point.

“Paul [Nakadate] is very hopeful of returning by Christmas. He has been advised that his case will be reviewed by prison authorities. We do not know what that really means, but it could mean a parole.”

December 31, 1945 (Letter from James Omura to Kazushi Matsumoto, written from Hillsborough, California)

“The appellate court held that it is no conspiracy to question the constitutionality of the law until it has been held valid by the courts. The court declared that the question whether a relocate could be drafted while living in the center had not been ruled upon.

“This decision vindicates the position I took and completely clears my name. The court acted on the same reasoning which I time and again emphasized as editor of the Rocky Shimpo. I felt that my own acquittal was not enough and that I needed this decision to attest to the propriety of my action. It was a long time in coming, but it has come at last.

“What should this decision mean to those who recklessly and viciously maligned the leaders of the Fair Play Committee and damned my name—principally the JACL? It is an error they committed that they can never wipe off. The JACL and its sympathizers crucified me in the Pacific Citizen and convicted me without a hearing and heaped infamy upon my name. . . . I have been the single outspoken foe of the JACL and my long, bitter public clash with the organization is all too well known.”

January 1, 1946 (Letter from James Omura to Alice Nakadate, written from Hillsborough, California)
“The decision of the appellate court is a vindication for Paul [Nakadate] and for all those who associated themselves in whatever manner with the program of the Fair Play Committee. I never ceased to believe that justice did not prevail in the district court in Cheyenne and that the judgments would be ultimately reversed. Free speech, free assembly, free press and the right of an individual to petition his government for a redress of grievances and until such grievances were acted upon to refuse to submit were successively ignored in the trial of the FPC leaders.

“Those who have an appreciation of their constitutional rights will honor the memory of these courageous FPC leaders. They had the courage and intestinal fortitude to defend a lost cause when others feared when the test came to even stand up and be counted. Those who will chronicle the events of the evacuation cannot honestly ignore the truly noble attempt the FPC made in its militant fight in the name of justice, democracy and freedom. The FPC had illustrated at least a handful among the Nisei entertain within hem the same pioneering spirit, the same flame of freedom-loving people that has marked the progress of this nation with its multitudinous pageantry of races and nationalities toward a more perfect democracy.”

January 1, 1946 (Letter from James Omura to Francis Yamamoto)

“The decision of the appellate court in setting aside the conviction [of the leaders of the Heart Mountain Fair Play Committee] is of great importance to me and I thought I would share this great news with you. Despite the fact I was acquitted in the district court in Wyoming of a complicity with the Fair Play Committee, I have never felt free that in the eyes of the Nisei public I had been completely absolved. The leaders of the Fair Play Committee had been convicted. I had editorially supported the FPC and had been a spearhead in the crusade for democratic acceptance and treatment of people of Japanese ancestry. My acquittal simply meant that I had acted with propriety and within the law. The acquittal of the FPC leaders now means that I had not erred in my judgment in backing the FPC program. The appellate court’s decision vindicates the position I took and the position taken by the FPC.”

January 16, 1946 (Taken from diary of James M. Omura, written while at Hillsborough, California, south of San Francisco, following the funeral for the mother of Caryl Omura [Fumi Okuma])

“Caryl [Omura, né Fumi Okuma] went to see Phil Stroupe on the day we accepted employment in Hillsborough [California]. That was two months ago. The other night she told me that Phil had told her the F.B.I. had trailed her to Denver after the Evacuation and had a recording of her conversation with Mayor Stapleton.
“That while she was operating the malt shop, Nisei operatives made frequent visits to the shop. That they made efforts to embroil her in arguments so she would make disloyal statements in the heat of anger.

“That the F.B.I. had quizzed him, Phil Stroupe, to such a point that at one point he slammed down several copies of *Current Life* on his desk and pointing to an editorial told the agent to read it and asked him whether that sounded disloyal.

“This information of F.B.I. activities was relayed to Stroupe from a Nisei operative and personal friend—probably working with the Naval Intelligence or some other branch. Very interesting.

“Also, Phil said Caryl’s letters were opened by the F.B.I. and contents noted before being sent to her.”

**January 31, 1946 (Letter from James Omura, in Hillsborough, California, to Kazushi Matsumoto at Seattle, Washington)**

“The information concerning the F.P.C. defendants was much appreciated. I have subsequently learned that the Department of Justice is considering a retrial of these boys and that [Al] Wirin has appealed to the Supreme Court for dismissal. It is obvious that the defendants have not yet been released. However, I am confident that the case will not be retried.”

“I quite agree with Floyd Schmoe. Okamoto is too radical. He is a very peculiar person and I am inclined to think that he tried to martyr himself with the F.P.C. His own co-leaders could not stomach him. I certainly could not. I do not blame Mr. Schmoe one bit for his refusal to align himself with Okamoto, et al. Okamoto is not a practical person. Inwardly he must consider himself a genius. Instead of working together with his co-leaders, he attempted to do everything in his own way. He could say and he did say on more than one occasion that the FPC was his inspiration and that he outdated his contemporaries in seeking redress from grievances and therefore considered himself as enjoying a unique position. He enjoyed the title ‘Father of the Fair Play Committee.’ He browbeat his co-leaders in this fashion. But he could not browbeat me. I thrust in his face the fact that I had been fighting injustice publicly from before the war and at a time when not another voice dared to join with mine. He had no retort.

“What is that about Mike Masaoka considering a position in a re-organized JACL? No re-organization would be possible or expedient without the removal of all wartime leaders and spokesmen of the organization. The five most prominent national leaders who should step down are Mike Masaoka, Joe [Grant] Masaoka, Saburo Kido, Larry Tajiri and Teiko Ishida. I understand Teiko Ishida has already stepped out. However, I could say this much. Other
chapter leaders should be eliminated and an entire new regime set up. Experience has proven that hardly any JACL leaders, little shots or big shots, are equipped to intelligently lead the Japanese minority and that from the top to the bottom they are of the same ilk. I once made the fatal mistake of attempting to understand the Colorado JACL leaders. I went so far as to write a litter of commendation to the head of this group and in turn was repaid by him with a threat of bodily harm to a person attempting to raise funds in his area for my release in the government suit.”

February 14, 1945 (Letter from Kazushi Matsumoto to James Omura)

“Jacob’s suit is apparently a harassment proceeding. . . . As I said before he is probably being encouraged. After all, there is an open season on you, apparently. The strong always oppose the weak. The unprotected always gets the dirty end of the stick. . . . As for the American Gestapo I did not think that they were through with you. I did not think it to be that simple.”

April 1, 1945 (Letter from James Omura to Kazushi Matsumoto)

“The Takashi Fujii you mention is not the same person you are thinking of unless I am mistaken. I do not know for certain myself. It was good to know that someone recalled the Blackhawks. The case of the 63 Heart Mountain boys who were convicted last summer was appealed to the Circuit Court through the name of Takashi Fujii, one of the principals. The appeal was lost.

“Nineteen more Nisei were scheduled to go to trial on March 26th. I do not know what became of this case. I have been advised that the district attorney was offering to drop the case if the boys would go into the army. The situation is the same in Arizona where a number of Poston Nisei are awaiting trial. It seems that the government is disinclined to pursue prosecution of the case any further and is willing to drop it if the Nisei would change their stand.

“Today, I completed reading Irving Stone’s Clarence Darrow for the Defense. It is a very illuminating work. I know you would doubtlessly be interested in it, for there is much of labor spread through its pages. Darrow represented labor and fought for the common people. There is a section about Eugene Debs and the American Railway Union. The Anthracite Coal Strike in Pennsylvania is given generous space. The trial of Big Bill Haywood in the Steunenberg assassination in Idaho takes a prominent space. This case, of course, was slightly familiar to me as I read something about it in the back files of the Idaho Statesman when I lived in Pocatello. Then there is the bombing of the Los Angeles Times.”
February 23, 1946 (Letter from James Omura to Caryl [Fumi Okuma] Omura at Hillsborough, California)

“The Rocky Shimpo appears to be a daily now. It does not publish on Sunday.”

March 2, 1946 (Letter from James Omura, from Denver, Colorado, to Toshio Mori, at San Leandro, California)

“I feel that the evacuation has provided the necessary background and source for many ambitious Nisei writers to attempt short stories, articles and novels. It would not be at all surprising to me that in the decades to follow, there will be an encouraging literary renaissance among the Nisei, and that names we have never heard of will address themselves to the Nisei literary world.”

“Currently, the ninth biennial convention of the Japanese American Citizens League is being held here in Denver. The JACL is capitalizing upon the exploits of Sergeant Ben Kuroki. It is unfortunate that there is no rival Nisei organization and that none has been born out of the evacuation. Perhaps something should be done about it. The wartime leadership of the JACL engaged in numerous despicable things in its attempt to silence its critics and to break the back of individuals and organizations opposing its policies. During the war we did not have any Nisei publication daring enough and courageous enough to expose the pernicious and vicious behind-the-scene activities of the JACL. I have always felt that there is a great need for a militant and crusading periodical among the Nisei to expose the truth and to champion the Nisei cause. Unfortunately, no one has arisen from the Nisei rank with the combination of vision and intestinal fortitude that are needed to establish a truly Nisei free press.”

March 5, 1946 (Letter from James Omura to Caryl [Fumi Okuma] Omura at Hillsborough)

“On my way back, I stopped in on the Taniwakis. Mrs. Toka promptly suggested that I take a vacant room upstairs and to eat with them. I turned the proposal down but thought that it was very nice of her to advance it. As she has frequently said the Nisei do not appreciate what I attempted to do and I am foolish for trying to do anything more for them. She added that she has heard a great deal about me from other people and that they consider me a trouble-maker and do not appreciate at all the sacrifice I made for the principle of the thing. I suppose she extended the proposal to express in some concrete fashion her personal appreciation and regard for my unsuccessful crusade. It is at least good to know that not everyone thoughtlessly condemn me. There are still a few people who think kindly toward my unfortunate self.”
March 9, 1946  (Letter from Caryl [Fumi Okuma] Omura, at Sea Cliff, San Francisco, California, to James Omura in Denver, Colorado)

“I am wondering and thinking about that day back in 1944 when you approached me about working for the Todas [publishers of the Rocky Shimpo]. I remember distinctly how I fought you and finally gave into you. And all through the remainder of that year your thoughts were on principles, not a thing for your own welfare or even for your wife. You repeated so many times and in the presence of others how much you would rather fight for your convictions first. Now that the die is cast and years are flowing by you are facing reality alone. How much better it would have been to heed the opinions of more experienced men as [Ken?] Tashiro who, I believed, said: ‘You can’t fight a thing alone. You must be organized.’ Now after your valiant fight you have nothing but your integrity. True that is a high virtue but money is a necessity, too.”

May 10, 1946  (Letter from James Omura, while at Littleton, Colorado, to Caryl [Fumi Okuma] Omura, in San Francisco, California)

“When I was a little boy, we lived in a large house on a bluff overlooking a harbor. Behind the house was a large stand of orchard trees. My brothers and I use to climb those trees to pick the fruits or we would wander about the large acreage with Rover or play ‘Three Pigs’ in the huge hay barn on the property. This was in those years when the nation was recovering from the effects of the First World War. One day in our enthusiasm, we set fire to the barn and leveled it to the ground. We were compelled to move. It seems to me I have been on the move ever since. Perhaps it is axiomatic that our family fortunes dwindled and all but disappeared. From a position of high respect in the community, I saw my father steadily decline in position and in financial stability. In the years that led up to the stock market crash of 1929 and prior to my fleeing the confinement of home, we lived in abject poverty. I left home when I was 13 years and 4 months old to make my own way in the world, confirmed in the belief that my lot would be none the worse in the strange outside.

“Life was harsh and hard in those formative years and people were cruel. The faith I began with in the essential goodness of humanity took a terrific wallop. I was kicked around freely and in my youthful inexperience unconscienceless individuals took advantage of my ignorance and idealism. But however difficult those earlier paths tuned out to be, I nevertheless learned an invaluable lesson—to stand up and fight back no matter the odds and regardless of the hopelessness of the situation. Stubborn, some people characterized it. No, it is not
stubbornness but rather perseverance. It is the ability to recognize the right and to persist in it to the end whatever the cost. That is character.

“Trials and tribulations and constant buffeting have not induced me to substitute cleverness for plain old-fashioned honesty and straight-forwardness. I may not own a single sou today and it is true that I am in debt, but I have my self-respect which is a consolation far exceeding any material gain.”

October 10, 1946  (Letter from Frank Cooper to James Omura)

“The boys were all fined one cent. Wirin wrote the boys and asked them for another hundred dollars if he got them off with a suspended sentence. I told most of the boys not to pay. . . . Some of the boys did not pay him. It was nothing but a shakedown. . . . Wirin got about another seven thousand dollars last Monday that he was not entitled to.”

November 24, 1946  (Letter from James Omura to Frank Cooper)

“I am very glad the Poston boys were dealt with leniently. It is only unfortunate that the boys in the other centers could not have received the same lenient treatment. The situation into which these boys found themselves made their cases entirely different from draft dodgers as such. There were very important contributing factors of which the government was guilty and though the courts refused to accept them as legal defenses, no one can deny that these factors morally affected the actions of such boys.”

July 1947 (?)  (Letter from Jean Weiner, Major, Wac. Director of Personnel, Military Intelligence Service Language School [MISLS], to [James Omura])

“Lieutenant Yeiji Kono, in charge of our recruiting team in the Denver area, has written us regarding your cooperation in the present drive for students to be trained as interpreters and translators of the Japanese language.

“We wish to thank you for your valued assistance and feel sure that it will be a great help toward fulfilling our mission—that of providing trained personnel for Japanese language duty in the Far East.”
**November 25, 1947** (Memorandum from James Omura to Edward V. Dunklee, attorney for Rocky Shimpo)

“Minoru Yasui on November 25, 1947 threatened to file suit against James M. Omura, English Editor, and the Rocky Shimpo for calling him a liar for alleging that I stated that none of the Nisei leaders were any good at all, a statement I denied. Yasui disclosed that he had retained Sidney S. Jacobs as counsel. Mr. Jacobs represented me at Cheyenne in 1944 and subsequently filed suit to collect attorney fees. Yasui demanded retraction agreement by 9 a.m. November 28 or else.”

**July 29, 1947** (Letter from John S. Hamamura, Recruiting NCO, MISLS, from Presidio at Monterey, California, to James Omura)

“Your kindness, hospitality, and whole-hearted cooperation have made it possible for us to perform our recent recruiting assignment satisfactorily and effectively. We extend our sincere appreciation to you for your generous support.”

**October 1947** (Denver Charter Convention Human Rights Provision: equal use of Municipal Facilities; Licenses and Permits; Discrimination Prohibited in Local Government; Discrimination in contracts Prohibited)

**Undated Items**

1. “Let us discard all this quibbling about this man and the other man, this race and that race and the other race being inferior, and therefore they must be placed in an inferior position. Let us discard all these things, and unite as one people throughout this land, until we shall once more stand up declaring that all men are created equal.”—Abraham Lincoln

2. Section 3(a) of the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, as amended, provides as follows: “---That no man shall be inducted for such training and service under this Act unless and until he is acceptable to the land or naval forces for such training and service---.”
3. “The Selective Training and Service Act does not provide for forcible induction upon failure to obey the directions of the statute. In the Declaration of Policy, set out in the Selective Training and Service Act [of 1940], Congress declared:

‘The Congress further declares, that in a free society the obligations and privileges of military training and service should be shared generally in accordance with a fair and just system of selective compulsory military training and service.’

“It is clear to me that defendant is, under the circumstances, not a free agent, nor is any plea that he makes, free or voluntary, and hence he is not accorded due process in this proceeding.—Judge Louis Goodman

4. “The issue raised by this motion is without precedent. It must be resolved in the light of the traditional and historic Anglo-American approach to the time-honored doctrine of ‘due process.’ It must not give way to overzealousness in an attempt to reach, via the criminal process, those whom we may regard as undesirable citizens.—Judge [Louis] Goodman

5. “Get from Loan Library:

U.S. vs. Murphy, 253 Fed. 408
Moore vs. U.S., 60 Fed. (2nd) 794
McClintock vs. U.S., 60 Fed. (2nd) 839 at page 842
Parnell vs. U.S., 64 Fed. (2nd) 324 at page 329

Other cases material to the case:

U.S. vs. Pelly, 132 Fed (2nd) 170
U.S. vs. Keegan, 141 Fed. (2nd) 248
Stager vs. U.S., 233 Fed. 510

These last three citations are upon other issues in the case.

6. “Where claims of oppression arising from Congressional legislation are not regarded as making the legislation invalid, the claimant should look to Congress for his remedy.” —Judge Denman

2 Editor’s Note, The Open Forum, Los Angeles, California, August 12, 1944: Judge Goodman, in the noteworthy and precedent-breaking opinion which we refer to above, has shown a profound understanding of the deep sympathy for the tragic lot of America’s most ill-treated minority racial group. The ACLU did not participate in the defense of the cases. . . . Nonetheless, to Judge Goodman, for the exercise of judicial courage in the face of wartime prejudice and hysteria, goes our “Bill of Rights Award of Merit.”
7. “If by the mere force of numbers a majority should deprive a minority of any Constitutional right, it might, in a moral point of view, justify a revolution.”—Abraham Lincoln
