

ASIANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS FOR JESSE JACKSON

244 S. San Pedro St., Room 411

Los Angeles, CA 90012

The following excerpts of Jesse Jackson's speeches address the important issues of our times. They are examples of the kind of new leadership that Jackson would bring to the White House and the nation.

IMMIGRATION

Since the Chinese Exclusion Act was first passed in 1882, you have seen 100 years of immigration policy based on racial bias. Families of every Asian nationality has been separated and victimized by discriminatory immigration laws. Until 1952 Japanese born in Japan were considered ineligible for citizenship no matter how long they lived in the United States. Not until 1965 were Asians allowed to immigrate to the United States on an equal basis with Europeans. In 1984, we have an immigration service that "sweeps" the Silicon valley twice a week checking each worker of Latin or Asian origin, despite the protest of local authorities against the harassment of their citizens. And in 1984, we have a new racially biased immigration law that does not leave the principles of the Chinese Exclusion Act far behind. The Simpson-Mazzoli bill would allow for sanctions against employers that would make them even more reluctant to hire those who already suffer from discrimination in employment policies. The Simpson-Mazzoli bill would make it even harder to achieve the reunification of Asian families.

We must tell the world that we have had enough of immigration law based on race and racial bias. We must tell the world the truth---the truth that racial divisions are used by those who would exploit the labor of the peoples of the earth for their own benefit. The story has been repeated over and over again, with Chinese people brought to this country in gangs to build the railways, with slaves from Africa brought to work in the cotton fields, with Japanese and Chicano agricultural workers imported and exploited for their labor in the fields. The labor of the Chinese and Japanese and the Chicanos and the Black people of this country has made a handsome profit---not for us, but for those who ran the railways and owned the cotton fields, the vineyards and American agribusiness. They have used us and they have used our labor. They have used our desperate poverty, the unspeakable conditions from which we fled or into which they drove us to systematically pay us less than other workers.

-Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, May 17, 1984.

BUILDING THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

In our 1983 Southern Crusade and our 1984 campaign---and with the help of countless organizations and thousands of individuals---we were able to register and revitalize 2 million new voters, who voted Democratic. We formed the Rainbow Coalition. In 1980 and 1982 the Republican Party registered a net gain of 12 Senate seats. By 1986, with the Rainbow Coalition providing the margin of victory in no less than 9 races, the Democratic Party had reversed Republican gains and once again was in control of the Senate 54 to 46. An expanded Democratic Party---that makes room for old wine and new wine---is the key to victory in 1988 and beyond.

An expanded Democratic Party is why Senator Joseph Biden chaired the Bork hearings and now Senator Strom Thurmond. A Democratic Party that made room for more people is the reason Robert Bork will soon become a trivia question instead of a threat to basic rights that most Americans hold to be precious.

...in 1984, despite President Reagan's landslide victory, we cut Mr. Reagan's coattails in the Senate. We were the difference for Senators Levin of Michigan, Heflin of Alabama, and current Presidential candidates Gore of Tennessee and Simon of Illinois. The Rainbow Coalition stuck to the true principles of the Democratic Party, and to the true principles of America. The pendulum has now begun to swing in our direction.

In 1986 we cut President Reagan's coattails even more. He is now wearing a waiter's jacket. The Rainbow contributed to Senate victories for Mikulski in Maryland, Sanford in North Carolina, Graham in Florida, Fowler in Georgia, Shelby in Alabama, Breaux in Louisiana, and Cranston in California. The result was the return of the Senate to Democratic control.

Now is the time for bold leadership and a new direction.

-Announcement of 1988 Presidential candidacy, Rainbow Coalition Conference, Raleigh, North Carolina, October 10, 1987.

WORKING TOGETHER

I cannot make promises about what I can do for you as Asian Americans. I can only ask you to join me as equal partners in our crusade to change the whole direction of American politics.

You do not need special promises, from me or any other politician. You want the same things all people want: a

decent job, a chance to make real contribution to the world around you, a chance to bring up your children with some hope for the future. These are the goals of the Rainbow Coalition for all people. These are the goals we can achieve when we build a movement strong enough to elect a Congress that will cut the defense budget, when we elect a President who will start investing our nation's resources in putting our people to work and meeting human needs. I can promise you only what we can achieve together, nothing more or less. But I can also promise you that this election year represents a great opportunity to redirect the course of history, an opportunity to convince the Democratic Party to become the party of peace and jobs and justice. That is the job of the Rainbow Coalition as we look forward to the Democratic Convention in July, as we look forward to all the work we have to do in the years to come.

-Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, May 17, 1984.

REDRESS AND REPARATIONS FOR JAPANESE AMERICANS

From the treatment of the 120,000 Japanese Americans interned in concentration camps during World War II, suffering the loss of all they held dear...homes, businesses, farms, communities...to the death of Vincent Chin, you have witnessed the terrible results of government policy based on racial prejudice. The ways in which racial divisions are exploited by the few to rob the many. We must, of course, do all in our power to seek reparations for the victims of such policies. I call on all members of our Rainbow Coalition to join with me in seeking full redress and reparations for the Japanese Americans and Aleut interned during World War II. The legislation to this effect must not continue to languish in Congress, pursued only by Japanese Americans themselves. The message of the Rainbow Coalition is that an injury to one is an injury to all. Fighting our separate battles, none of us is strong enough to see justice done. Together we can. But we must do far more than achieve reparations for the victims of past policies. We must set this nation on a new course, a course in which we work together to realize our common goals.

-Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, May 17, 1984.

Victories such as the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1987 are important. They give us a sense of national character and purpose.

In the next few weeks the U.S. Senate is expected to pass its own redress and reparations bill. I call upon President Reagan to heed the voice of Congress and the people and sign this historic legislation putting an end to one of the most shameful episodes in U.S. history. Generations of Japanese

Americans have suffered long enough from an unfair burden of guilt and shame, unjustly accused of disloyalty for no other reason than the color of their skin. Over 120,000 Japanese Americans were uprooted from their homes and forced to spend up to five years in prison camps in the hot deserts of Topaz, Arizona, the freezing cold of Tule Lake, California, and other barren, forsaken places. Let us begin to heal the wounds.

It is a tribute to the perseverance of Japanese Americans and all people who cherish justice and equality that redress and reparations be recognized as the law of the land so that this experience never be repeated. Redress and reparations can never fully repay the Japanese Americans for the loss of loved ones, the dispossession of farms, businesses and homes, the hurt and pain of false imprisonment.

Let us mark the passage of HR 442 as a first step in healing a deep wound, removing a scar upon this nation's history and setting a signpost toward a more just society.

-On the occasion of passage of HR 442, the Civil Liberties Act of 1987. September 1987.

PEACE

The approach of no-talk policies, preemptive strikes, starvation, and asphyxiation through trade embargos, superpower intimidation through threats and money-market manipulation must give way to the most basic link in civilization--communication.

...History teaches us that ultimately might is not right; right is might. Peace is possible, peace is imperative. We must not choose a foreign policy which is foreign to our values.

...We must choose negotiation over confrontation and choose developed minds over guided missiles. We must spare Europe the role of being the world's permanent site of the missile-countermissile chess game. And we don't need to shift the missiles from Europe to outer space. We need to destroy them before they destroy us.

As opposed to star wars and moon monuments, there must be earth wars where we use our best economic thoughts and techniques and the energy of our youth to wipe out our poverty, ignorance and disease. We must be aggressive for peace. We must study war no more...

As I leave I would hope that all future leaders that come from America and around the world would come to Hiroshima and Nagasaki first and then go to Tokyo, for we should get our

human values in place first before considering economic possibilities and coalition. We should be measured by the love we share and not just by the wealth we accumulate.

-Hiroshima Peace Memorial Visit, Japan, December 11, 1986.

TRADE, LABOR, AND ASIAN SCAPEGOATING

Today we see Asians and Asian Americans blamed for the state of the United States economy. We see politicians, Republican and Democrat alike, stirring up hatred, suspicion and distrust of everything Japanese. Since the 1880s, you have borne witness to the terrible results of this kind of scapegoating, the racial violence that results. We must tell this story over and over again until every person in this country understands that promoting division among the people has never gotten anyone a job--except the worst of our country's politicians.

...We need new political leadership that will stand resolute against all attempts to blame the mistakes of corporate America on the people of other lands. Not leadership that pats corporate America on the head with content legislation and looks the other way while the American people are told to "blame the Japanese."

-Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, May 17, 1984.

American workers deserve a living wage. They cannot be asked to compete with slave labor abroad because multinational corporations export jobs and escape human rights. The Taiwanese are not taking our jobs. G.E. and G.M. are taking our jobs to Taiwan. U.S. Steel makes steel in South Africa. They shut down plants here because they can make more money off of apartheid. Raising the standard of living for workers everywhere protects workers everywhere.

-Labor Day Statement, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, September 7, 1987.

EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS

There is nothing more important than education to a nation's development. Education is the cornerstone to democracy itself. A functioning, vital and alive democracy presupposes an educated populace. That is why I and others ...are fighting President-Reagan's proposed spending for education. The Education Department's budget request for 1988 is \$14.0 billion--a 28% cut over the 1987 funding. That amount is \$400 million below the 1980 appropriation. Thus, the Reagan administration is neither moving ahead nor maintaining its own in education--it is, in fact, retreating and losing ground. Education must be seen as a right and not a

privilege in our nation. Anyone who has the aptitude, the ability and the motivation to pursue an education must not be denied the opportunity because of the lack of money.

..It was no accident that during slavery the highest penalty that a slave or slavemaster had to pay was if he or she were caught teaching a slave how to read or write.

Youth. There are 400,000 men and women in America's jails. ...They are disproportionately occupying our jails; languishing on the corners unemployed; or going to early graves--when they ought to be in school or employed and becoming productive citizens. It costs more to incarcerate our young people than it does to educate them. If a young person is sent to jail in Illinois for four years, it will cost approximately \$52,000, and the chances are that he or she will only become a hardened criminal. If you send that same young person to the University of Illinois for four years, it will cost approximately \$20,000, plus you have a taxpaying, law-abiding, productive citizen. The choice? Education and employment or ignorance and incarceration.

-Speech before the Republican National Committee, meeting in Washington, D.C., on January 20, 1978. (from: Jackson, Jesse L., "Straight from the Heart." Philadelphia 1987, p. 29.