

Chapter Title: Grassroots Leadership and Afro-Asian Solidarities: Yuri Kochiyama's
Humanizing Radicalism

Chapter Author(s): Diane C. Fujino

Book Title: *Want to Start a Revolution?*

Book Subtitle: Radical Women in the Black Freedom Struggle

Book Editor(s): Dayo F. Gore, Jeanne Theoharis, Komozi Woodard

Published by: NYU Press. (2009)

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qgjjp.17>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

NYU Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Want to Start a Revolution?*

Grassroots Leadership and Afro-Asian Solidarities

Yuri Kochiyama's Humanizing Radicalism

Diane C. Fujino

Life magazine's coverage of the assassination of Malcolm X bore a striking photograph of the slain Black leader lying prone, his head resting gently on the lap of a middle-aged Asian woman.¹ The visibility of Malcolm's gigantic impact juxtaposed with the invisibility of this woman is symbolic of the erasure of Asian American activism. That the woman in the photo is Yuri Kochiyama, one of the most prominent Asian American activists, though obscure to all but certain activist and Asian American circles, speaks to the continuing invisibility of Asian American struggles. Asian American participation disrupts two conventional narratives about Black nationalist movements. First, the caring pose of Kochiyama in *Life* is suggestive of a deeply humanizing practice, one that enabled her to disregard her own safety to rush to help others. Her practice promotes an alternative form of leadership, one that embodies nurturance and what Karen Sacks calls "centerperson" skills.² Second, Kochiyama's presence as an Asian American in the Black Power movement contests the common equation of nationalism with racial exclusion. To the contrary, significant portions of the Black Power movement exhibited commitments to unifying allies across racial divides, particularly deploying Third World solidarities.

In this study of Kochiyama's political ideas and practice, I seek to present a gendered analysis of leadership and to discuss the role of race, in this case of Asian Americans, in the Black Power movement, questioning the meaning of exclusion, self-determination, and autonomous organizing. In



Yuri Kochiyama (right) with Muhammad Ahmad (Max Stanford, leader of the Revolutionary Action Movement) and Diane Fujino at the founding rally of the Jericho movement for political prisoners, Washington, D.C., 1998. At the rally, Kochiyama was swarmed by veteran black radicals and younger activists alike.

doing so, this study offers an expanded view of the Black Power movement by contesting conventional narratives about gender, race, and leadership in the nationalist movements of the 1960s.

Transforming the Political: Kochiyama's Political Development

Based on Kochiyama's early life, one would predict a strong opposition to Black Power politics. In fact, at the moment of her introduction to Malcolm X, Kochiyama, a newly baptized civil rights activist, criticized Malcolm for his "harsh stance on integration." Born Mary Yuri Nakahara in 1921 to middle-class Japanese immigrants, Kochiyama was well integrated into her largely working-class White community in San Pedro in South Los Angeles. While her Nisei (second-generation Japanese American) peers experienced an uneven racial reception—with some integration into schools, some interracial friendships, and some harsh discrimination—Kochiyama was unusually assimilated into American life. She became the first female student body officer at her high school, was active in a

multitude of integrated extracurricular activities, and even broke the romantic barrier of interracial dating. Kochiyama's racial experiences contrasted sharply with those of Malcolm X, whose autobiography is filled with vivid stories of racism and the hardships of poverty. Still, both their fathers died prematurely surrounded by racialized violence. Malcolm's father, a Garveyite organizer hounded by the Ku Klux Klan, had his body almost split in two across streetcar rails. Kochiyama's father, like other Japanese American community leaders, was falsely imprisoned by the FBI on the day of the attack on Pearl Harbor and died six weeks later.³ Whereas Malcolm reacted with anger and hatred for his father's White supremacist killers, Kochiyama responded rather blandly, all but dismissing any governmental culpability. This coincides with her responses to other racial encounters. When Kochiyama and other Nisei women were asked to leave an organization shortly *before* the bombing of Pearl Harbor, they left without incident. She recounted: "We wrote a nice letter saying we understand that our Japanese background makes us suspect. We wished all the women good luck and thanked them for our short-lived experience."⁴ On the eve of Pearl Harbor, Kochiyama's apolitical views, nonconfrontational style, and integration into mainstream activities enabled her blind spot to racism.

She was awakened to racial inequality, though only gradually, through the forced removal and incarceration of 110,000 West Coast Japanese Americans during World War II. From inside the former Santa Anita race-track, with its horse stables hastily converted into subpar housing, Kochiyama listened to other internees discuss the political and racial context of incarceration and the long history of anti-Japanese racism. Still, as is typical with any process of change, her transformation from a color-blind to a race-conscious worldview was precarious and uneven. From behind barbed wire she wrote, "But not until I myself actually come up against prejudice and discrimination will I really understand the problems of the Nisei."⁵

After the war, she moved to New York City to marry Bill Kochiyama, a strikingly handsome Nisei soldier she had met at the Jerome, Arkansas, concentration camp.⁶ Along with raising six children, Kochiyama's experiences living in low-income housing projects and waitressing in working-class neighborhood restaurants schooled her in the realities of U.S. racism. From customers, she learned of Jim Crow segregation; from her mainly Black and Puerto Rican neighbors, she heard stories of everyday racism. This new understanding of racial injustice prompted Kochiyama to

rethink her own experiences. Yuri and Bill spoke openly about their concentration camp experiences years before it became fashionable to discuss within Japanese American circles. They wrote in their family newsletter in 1951: "As we look back to Christmas of 10 years ago, we of Japanese ancestry can recall with almost vivid painfulness, the uneasy, frustrating, insecure experiences we were forced to undergo."⁷ At the time, her recognition of discrimination did not detract from a patriotic faith in U.S. institutions. To the contrary, she saw these institutions as able to remedy any deviations from its professed goals of "democracy and justice for all." Their article concluded: "A grateful nation's thanks, her recognition and acceptance of an equally grateful minority completes the wartime saga, and opens the way whereby Niseis may continue their campaign for rights still denied."⁸

Kochiyama's social consciousness continued to evolve as the media covered the unfolding civil rights movement. She began inviting civil rights speakers to her family's weekend "open houses," formerly exclusively social gatherings. But it was not until 1963, a couple of years after her family moved to Harlem, that she developed an activist practice. Given her proclivity for interracial unity and nonviolent tactics, it is surprising how quickly her initial entry into civil rights turned to radicalism. The day after she met Malcolm X in October 1963, Kochiyama heard him speak for the first time on a radio debate among civil rights advocates. It was Malcolm—and not the traditional civil rights leaders—who captured her imagination. She felt compelled to write, though her letter reveals the influence of civil rights ideology on her own beliefs: "It may be possible that non-Negroes may wake up and learn to treat all people as human beings. And when that time comes, I am sure that your pronouncement for separation will be changed to integration. If each of us, white, yellow, and what-have-you, can earn our way into your confidence by actual performance, will you . . . could you . . . believe in 'togetherness' of all people?"⁹ It is significant that, while striving for integration, she locates the source of the social problem not in people of color failing to adapt to the mainstream, but in "non-Negroes" failing to treat Black people humanely.

The mythology assumes a close relationship between Kochiyama and Malcolm X. But my research reveals that she actually had few direct interactions with Malcolm, who spent half of 1964 in Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. But Malcolm's visit to the Kochiyama's home in June 1964, to visit survivors of the Hiroshima atomic bomb and peace advocates, and Malcolm's eleven postcards sent to the Kochiyamas during his travels

abroad provoked a process of radical transformation in her. She began attending Malcolm's Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) Liberation School every Saturday. After hearing a tape recording of the vicious jailhouse beating of Fannie Lou Hamer and after OAAU teacher James Campbell depicted racism as this country's "congenital deformity," Kochiyama began viewing racism no longer as an aberrant mark in a society otherwise committed to democracy and equality but as structurally embedded in its very history.¹⁰ As she learned about the partitioning of Africa by European leaders at the 1884–1885 Berlin Conference without regard to geographic or cultural boundaries or the desires of African people, she came to locate domestic and global oppression in the context of "racism, colonialism, capitalism, and imperialism."¹¹

In honor of Malcolm X, Kochiyama began an annual eight-page political newsletter. More than a "family news-sheet," as she modestly called it, the *North Star* chronicled the revolutionary nationalist movement in Harlem in a period of historical significance (1965–1969) and disseminated the ideas of Black Power to Black, Asian American, and other progressive audiences. This activity built on her interests as a journalism major at Compton Junior College in the prewar years and her family's production of an eight- to twelve-page socially oriented Christmas newsletter (1950–1968). The *North Star* captures the rapid changes in Kochiyama's politics since her introduction to Malcolm X. More than a personal political transformation, her ideological development reflected the nationwide tectonic shifts in the Black freedom movement. The front page of the 1966 *North Star* shouted the call for "Black Power," popularized by Stokely Carmichael (later Kwame Ture). In a dramatic reversal of her denouncement of Malcolm's "harsh stance on integration," Kochiyama now agreed with Black Power's condemnation of integrationism as a major "frailty" of the civil rights movement. Quoting Carmichael, she wrote: "Integration is irrelevant to the freedom of Black people. Negroes have always been made to believe that everything better is always white. If integration means moving to something white is moving to something better, then integration is a subterfuge for white supremacy."¹² Kochiyama advocated Black Power as "an idea to inspire a new image; assert a Black self; create basic changes; govern one's own destiny; achieve not for personal attainments, but for all Black people."¹³ When the Asian American movement began in the late 1960s, Kochiyama's words would inspire many of its young activists to adopt the politics of self-determination and autonomy over integration into Martin Luther King's beloved community.

After Malcolm's assassination in 1965, Kochiyama continued her political education under the tutelage of social critic Harold Cruse at Amiri Baraka's (LeRoi Jones's) short-lived but significant Black Arts Repertory Theater/School in Harlem, became embroiled in political prisoner and other antiracist and anti-imperialist solidarity work, and transformed her family's weekend "open houses" into gatherings for Black radicals. When the Republic of New Africa (RNA) formed in 1968, advocating a separate Black nation in the U.S. South as the pathway to Black liberation, Kochiyama saw in the RNA's emphasis on nationhood and land the clearest strategy for implementing Malcolm's politics. That Malcolm himself no longer supported Black nationalism by 1964 did not deter those in the RNA from claiming Malcolm's vision as the basis of their ideology.¹⁴ Out of respect for Black self-determination, Kochiyama initially joined the Friends of RNA. But when the RNA began accepting non-Blacks in 1969, she was quickly invited to join. It was then, at the age of forty-eight, that she began using her Japanese middle name, Yuri, in solidarity with political and cultural self-definition and the RNA's practice of adopting African and Muslim names.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Kochiyama's life was an invigorating and exhausting whirlwind of political activities—attending weekly RNA classes on nation building, revolutionary first aid, and gun control; working with the newly formed Asian Americans for Action; speaking at antiwar rallies, supporting Puerto Rican freedom fighters; staying up until the wee hours of the night corresponding with political prisoners; writing articles for numerous movement publications; and making leaflets and picket signs. On top of this, she also maintained a family life and worked part-time as a waitress. By integrating family life with political activism (though not always smoothly) and by bringing a culture of caring to Black militancy, she came to exemplify the women's movement's famous axiom, "the personal is political," even as she rejected identification with the feminist movement.¹⁵

"Centerperson" Leadership and a Culture of Caring

Anthropologist Karen Sacks, in her study of Duke Medical Center clerical workers, argues that social networks are critical to building social movements, in this case a unionization campaign. Aware of the gendered nature of leadership, she labeled these leaders "centerwomen"—as opposed to "spokesmen."¹⁶ Sacks used the latter term to refer to public and

masculine forms of leadership associated with power and visibility and emphasized in the social movement literature, namely, charismatic speakers, confrontational negotiators, decision makers, and those with official titles. By contrast, the centerwomen in her study emphasized talking to coworkers, usually one-on-one, signing them up for the union, and asking them to organize others. They brought people together, raised critical consciousness through personal conversations, and disseminated information through social networks. As one woman expressed to Sacks, “Women are organizers and men are leaders.”¹⁷

Sacks’s concept of the “centerwomen” allows us to discuss Kochiyama’s activist contributions as a form of leadership, though she was not an official leader, theoretician, strategist, or spokesperson for the radical Black movement. Instead, Kochiyama exemplified the dedicated activist, willing to do the behind-the-scenes work, with little public recognition or reward. Mutulu Shakur, RNA activist, stated: “I done spent many a cold night when it was just me and Yuri walking the streets of Harlem and Brooklyn trying to get things done. [She was there doing] the mundane small things, consistent in being there, that’s the practice.”¹⁸ Indeed, her practice involved being an on-the-ground grassroots organizer who talked to people one-on-one, recruited through personal networks, and welcomed people into her home. Some may interpret Kochiyama’s activism as emanating from a position of weakness, one that reproduces stereotypes of submissive women and passive Asian Americans. I admit being disappointed to discover that she had not played a more formidable and dazzling role in the Black Power movement. In doing so, I was inadvertently privileging spokesmen over centerwomen leadership and erroneously equating political leadership with power and visibility. Ella Baker is renowned for her sharp criticism of the charismatic leader model, asserting that such hero worship reinforced dominant society’s emphasis on individualism and narcissism (usually personified by the male body) and, most significantly, diminished ordinary people’s belief in their own power to effect change. Baker insisted, “Strong people don’t need strong leaders.”¹⁹ Kochiyama demonstrated in practice, though less often in words, her understanding of Baker’s ideas.

Kochiyama is famed for her unparalleled hospitality and the relentless flow of visitors into her home, dubbed “Grand Central Station.” In 1962, the year before she plunged into political activism, a complete stranger, a teacher from a school near Kochiyama’s hometown, had heard of her family’s generosity and wrote to ask if they would host a terminally ill

teenager with a dream of visiting New York City museums. In her typical fashion, Kochiyama enthusiastically offered to house him, enlisted the help of friends, and organized an engaging schedule of activities.²⁰ Kochiyama relied on her centerperson leadership to fulfill this teenager's dream. Those around her were unusually receptive to her requests for help in large part because they recognized her generosity to others. Over the years, hundreds of overnight guests—medically ill children, single mothers and their children, soldiers passing through town, vacationing friends, students, and even strangers—stayed at the Kochiyamas' modest apartment, sleeping on the floor or anywhere they could find a space, even on a mattress in the bathtub. She recalled regularly leaving her home so others could stay: "Our friends would say, 'Gee your place is so crowded, why don't you [sleep] over [at] our place and bring the youngest one.'"²¹ In addition, scores of people, half of whom were newcomers, would drop by their weekly Friday and Saturday night "open houses."²² A neighbor recalled: "Yuri was the key person who made things happen. Bill made sure everyone was comfortable and had a drink But Yuri was the one who brought people in from all over."²³

Kochiyama has a long history of exhibiting centerperson leadership, whether working as a Sunday school teacher in the late 1930s, arranging housing for Nisei soldiers during World War II, or opening her house to overnight guests and social events in the 1950s. When she gained a critical consciousness, she did not subsume her nurturing ways to what might be seen as hard-core political causes. Instead, she understood the need to nurture the individual in the process of creating societal change. In this, she moved the feminist slogan "the personal is political" beyond rhetoric into the realm of practice. The frequent meetings at the Kochiyamas' turned from organizing services for Asian American soldiers to hosting numerous Black militant groups. They continued their massive open houses, now overflowing with activists—the famous like Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture), poet LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka), and Malcolm's sister and OAAU leader Ella Collins, as well as the unknown.²⁴ Kochiyama was also a magnet for messages, an important function in a period before e-mail and answering machines and in a community where not everyone had reliable access to a telephone. One RNA activist recounted: "Yuri used to waitress at Thomford's. That became like our meeting place. Everybody would come in and talk to Yuri. So when you'd come in, Yuri would have the most recent information for you. If we wanted to set up a meeting, she would set it up. If you had a message for someone, you'd

just leave it with Yuri. She must have received fifteen, twenty messages a day.”²⁵ Since she was known for traveling throughout town, dropping off flyers or running errands, people would leave messages for her at various Harlem establishments—a highly unorthodox practice indeed.²⁶ This extraordinary ability to cultivate social relations made her a central figure with up-to-date movement news and a valuable source for recruiting new members. Just as the centerwomen in Sacks’s study organized baby showers and biweekly dinners that built the social networks that fueled union organizing, Kochiyama’s efforts to nurture individuals and create a community were vital to the arduous work of sustaining activists and movements over time.

Nowhere did Kochiyama’s work as a centerperson shine as brightly as in the political prisoner movement, where she became the “central figure” to many political prisoners.²⁷ “Yuri was our internet in those days” proclaimed an RNA activist, referring to her ability to disseminate information and connect people.²⁸ Kochiyama was the first person many turned to when arrested or when released from prison, either calling her home or dropping by her work. “When we were captured by the enemy, our first call went to WA6-7412,” recounted political prisoner Mutulu Shakur, rattling off her telephone number from memory thirty years after his first postprison phone call to Kochiyama. “Everybody just remembered that number. Anybody getting arrested, no matter Black, Puerto Rican, or whatever, our first call was to her number. Her network was like no other. She would get a lawyer or get information out to our family and the movement. You knew she wasn’t going to stop until somebody heard from you.”²⁹ Mtayari Shabaka Sundiata wrote to Kochiyama in 1975: “After visiting with you Sunday, I felt so good knowing that someone beyond this cement grave knows that I am alive and very much a part of the movement for a better life for all oppressed people . . . You are the only person on the outside that I have any contact with. Everyone else seems to have considered me legally dead.”³⁰ These words of Sundiata, head of the Brooklyn RNA when Kochiyama joined and a Black Liberation Army member, strengthened her resolve to support those facing adversity.

Kochiyama also functioned as an informal archivist. “You should have seen the files she had on political prisoners,” remarked one activist. “She had everybody’s case, when they went to the parole board, their whole file. So if you wanted information on a political prisoner, say to organize a conference or a tribunal, all we had to do was go to Yuri.”³¹ Another remembered the clutter of papers that Kochiyama’s packrat behavior

produced: “She had little cardboard boxes [of files] stacked up everywhere. One of her back rooms was just filled with these boxes. And there used to be boxes in the hallway and in the kitchen. The kitchen table always had bunches of stuff on it, and underneath it. But . . . it was amazing how quickly she could put her hands on information.”³² Not only did she save countless movement documents, but her razor-sharp memory, in decline only after a stroke in 1999, enabled her to remember facts about events and cases that eluded most people.

Her tendency to focus on the individual at times eclipsed larger debates about strategy and theory. During the planning of an international political prisoner conference in 2001, for example, a divisive debate emerged: Are political prisoners those targeted and imprisoned because of their activism, or can they also include those who become politicized as a result of harsh prison conditions? This was a troubling debate to Kochiyama, who feared that such conflict would lead to irreparable divisions, as she has witnessed during her many years of activism. So after one particularly contentious meeting, rather than engaging a political discussion, Kochiyama chitchatted with people from “both sides” of the issue, inquiring about their families and health. While Kochiyama has been criticized for sidestepping political debates, and rightly so, her strength as a center-person lies in building community and emphasizing the common social bonds and political causes that unify those working for justice.³³ Though it sounds clichéd, she is someone who actually practices the method; as she puts it, “There’s more that unites us than divides us.” Few are as masterful at humanizing the struggle or at maintaining optimism about the potential for change as Kochiyama.

In gendering centerwomen and spokesmen styles, I, like Sacks, do not intend to essentialize or polarize these sets of skills. I am not advocating that nurturance and networking are essentially feminine or that public speaking and hard-hitting negotiations are essentially masculine. As discussed later, Kochiyama also emerged as a public speaker and writer—skills usually considered more masculine. Historically, the idea of “separate spheres,” centering on women’s domesticity and men’s breadwinning roles, arose as industrialization created factory and other work spaces away from the household.³⁴ Because this historic context continues to govern the conventional thinking about femininity and masculinity and serves to devalue the feminine, it becomes necessary to discuss it through a gendered lens. Women often did the unheralded, unglamorous, hard everyday work that enabled organizations and movements to succeed and

enabled men to become visible leaders. While recognizing women's contributions, this view reproduces a hierarchical relationship between men as leaders in the public sphere and women as nurturers in the private sphere, as in "behind every great man is a great woman." Instead, I am arguing that networking, communicating, and the nurturing of activists, communities, and social movements are equal in importance to speaking, theorizing, negotiating, and holding formal titles when creating societal and personal transformation. Both centerperson and spokesperson skills ought to be valued and recognized as leadership.³⁵

Afro-Asian Solidarities and the Politics of Self-Determination

Despite her own internment experience, it was from living in working-class Black communities in postwar New York and listening to her neighbors' stories of daily subjugations that Kochiyama became consciously aware of widespread U.S. racism. After becoming radicalized in Harlem through the influence of Malcolm X and learning about the long and vigorous history of Black resistance, Kochiyama became convinced that Black Power was the most revolutionary U.S.-based social movement at the time. Black radicalism exerted such a strong impact in part because in 1963, when she plunged into activism, the Japanese American activism that existed was less visible and, to Kochiyama, less urgent than the Black activism encircling her in Harlem and exploding in the South.³⁶ So when the Asian American movement emerged in the late 1960s, Kochiyama was already firmly embedded in the Black Power movement. In that movement, she was mentored by advanced organizers, eloquent spokespersons, and sophisticated theoreticians. In the nascent Asian American movement, young activists looked to elders like Kochiyama, who had experience beyond her relative short life in the movement. It is not surprising, then, that to her Black Power was the most advanced movement and contained the potential for far-reaching revolutionary transformation. Thus, even as she worked intensely in the Asian American Movement, she placed her priority with the radical Black movement.

Kochiyama's behind-the-scenes work in the Black movement reflects her strong belief in Black self-determination. In the *North Star*, she explained: "We realize the urgency and need for the privacy and intimacy of Black people. We hope we have not ever trespassed. We have tried to help only when asked; and especially in the periphery role of support, fund-raising and notifying."³⁷ Though my analysis places centerperson

leadership on a par with spokesperson leadership, Kochiyama saw the two sets of skills in hierarchical ways. She would help with “notifying” and “support” rather than primary leadership and with “fund-raising” rather than decision making.

Kochiyama’s work on the periphery, beyond exhibiting centerperson leadership and a respect for Black self-determination, also stemmed from an internalization of cultural style. While this self-effacing style is often attributed to Japanese or women’s culture, it also reflects the ways subordinated groups exhibit their options and power. Since childhood, Kochiyama displayed a tendency toward modesty, collectivity, and behind-the-scenes work, even as she held positions of institutional power (first female student body officer) and was widely respected for her selfless support of others. She befriended new students, provided candy to the poor at Easter, wrote notes to cheer up athletes, and inspired optimism and a sense of purpose to Japanese American teenagers confined inside concentration camps. In continuously meeting new people through her broad networks, Kochiyama played an important role in recruiting people to radical Black organizations. One RNA comrade recalled that after meeting a potential member and providing background information, Kochiyama would call a Black leader to “do a workshop” for them at her home.³⁸ She saw herself as being able to contribute, but in a peripheral way.

The common association of Black nationalism with racial exclusion raises the question of how Kochiyama as an Asian American was received in the Black Power movement. The overwhelming response is that she was “absolutely accepted,” as exclaimed by Black activist Nyisha Shakur.³⁹ Kochiyama’s respect for Black self-determination and her tireless work for Black liberation endeared her to Black activists. Many were awed by her dedication to, in their view, a community that was not her own. Her willingness to do support work and to readily relinquish decision making and power to Black activists reduced potential conflicts with fellow activists and rendered her less threatening to this movement’s leadership. That she was seen as a Third World (read not White) person further facilitated a positive reception by Black nationalists. In Malcolm X’s Organization of Afro-American Unity, A. Peter Bailey observed: “Yuri didn’t try to out Black everyone, like many Whites do. So many Whites—Right, Left, or center—interacted with the Black movement with such paternalism. They’ll do anything for you as long as they run it. That’s why most Black people didn’t trust alliances with Whites. But people came to trust Yuri, to respect her as a strong supporter of the Black movement.”⁴⁰

But did her willingness to do support work and her self-effacing ways simultaneously reinforce stereotypes of model minority passivity ascribed to Asian Americans and internalized by Black activists? The multiple and at times contradictory layers of racial politics in the Black Power movement require a complex response. Laura Pulido, in her racial comparative study of radical organizing in Los Angeles, found that many Black and Chicano activists viewed Asian Americans as model minorities.⁴¹ This perception interfered with the formation of Third World solidarities because in assuming the nonexistence of anti-Asian racism, Blacks and Chicanos saw little common ground around which to unify. Moreover, in internalizing the model minority logic—which promotes hard work, frugality, and self-reliance, instead of protest, as pathways to upward mobility—they could not see the Asian American activism that did exist. By ascribing to the model minority image of Asian Americans, popularized in 1966 in two nationally respected and widely read magazines, some Black activists viewed her humble work as evidence of culturally prescribed practices.⁴²

But more so, by living in a Harlem housing project unit and participating in the militant Black struggle, Kochiyama was seen as outside of the model minority construct. To those who saw her as exceptional, her presence did not change their overarching view of Asian Americans as model minorities and non-allies in the struggle for justice. But others developed complex thinking about racial politics, moving beyond the militant minority versus model minority divide. For Black radicals, including the revolutionary nationalists with whom Kochiyama worked, the enduring presence of Afro-Asian alliances forged at the 1955 Bandung conference and the revolutionary fervor occurring in China, North Korea, and Vietnam in the 1960s, compelled a view of Asia that contrasted sharply with the model minority image. This view extended, in uneven ways, to Asian Americans. Kochiyama, with her unrelenting devotion to Black liberation, reinforced the view of Asian Americans as resisters.

From her earliest experiences in the militant Black movement, Kochiyama saw Black radicals express alliances with Asians and Asian Americans. Her first extended contact with Malcolm X took place at the Kochiyamas' home when Malcolm accepted an invitation to speak to Hiroshima atomic bomb survivors and peace advocates. She recalls Malcolm saying to the Hiroshima survivors: "You were bombed and have physical scars. We too have been bombed and you saw some of the scars in our neighborhood. We are constantly hit by the bombs of racism." He went on to express his admiration of Japan, recounted Kochiyama:

He explained that almost all of Asia had been colonized by Europeans except Japan. The only reason Japan wasn't colonized was because Japan didn't have resources that Europeans wanted. All over Southeast Asia, European and American imperialists were taking rubber and oil and other resources. But after World War II, Japan did provide valuable military bases for America, especially on the island of Okinawa. It was because Japan hadn't been colonized that Japan was able to stay intact and become so strong until her defeat in World War II.⁴³

Malcolm X's sentiments echo the earlier ideas of Black internationalists, who viewed Japan as the champion of the dark nations against the rise of U.S. and European imperialism and global white supremacy.⁴⁴ While Kochiyama noted that Malcolm's one-sided admiration of Japan overlooked its history of anti-Korean oppression and heinous military treatment of Asian nations and people, she also understood that Malcolm was expressing commonalities between African American and Japanese experiences and liberation struggles.

When she attended the OAAU Liberation School, Kochiyama was surprised that at her first class the instructor, James Shabazz, who spoke some Japanese, Korean, and Chinese, wrote the characters for Tao on the board. When he explained that "the spirituality underlying these martial arts . . . were exercises to help one move towards God similar to how Islam did," she, as the only non-Black in the room, appreciated that Shabazz emphasized parallels, rather than separateness, among various cultures.⁴⁵ A few months earlier, Max Stanford (later Muhammad Ahmad), leader of the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), had approached Kochiyama to enlist her help in building his organization in Harlem. While Stanford mistakenly thought that OAAU meetings were held at Kochiyama's home, he did not overestimate the importance of her centerperson leadership and networks. Stanford credits Kochiyama with facilitating the formation of the RAM Black Panther Party in Harlem: "Yuri opened up her apartment as a meeting place, where we met for lunch two or three times a week. She'd fix sandwiches and we would listen to Malcolm's unedited speeches . . . She could introduce people to us. She would circulate any information that we had to a whole network of people . . . Yuri was a constant communicator, constant facilitator, constant networker."⁴⁶ In those early months of her budding activism, and with uncertainty about her racial location in the nationalist movement, Stanford's invitation signaled her relevance to the local Black movement.

By 1969, Kochiyama was promoting Afro-Asian solidarities in, for example, an article she wrote on Robert F. Williams for the newsletter of the newly formed Asian-Americans for Action. Williams was renowned within activist circles for his daring actions to arm southern Blacks against Ku Klux Klan attacks, including establishing an all-Black chapter of the National Rifle Association and teaching self-defense to no less than members of the NAACP, known for their polite resistance through legislative means. As Williams gained strength and notoriety, the police ran him out of town in 1961. He fled to Cuba and later China.⁴⁷ After the Republic of New Africa selected Williams as its president, despite his location in exile, Kochiyama began corresponding with him and distributing his banned publication, the *Crusader*. Based on his relationship with Mao Tse-tung, Williams solicited two statements from the Chinese leader in 1963 and 1968 in support of Black liberation.⁴⁸ Aware of Williams's importance to Afro-Asian solidarity, Kochiyama focused her article on, as she titled it, "Who Is Rob Williams, and What Is His Relationship to Asians?" She wrote, "Williams moved Mao to publicly vociferate support of the Black people's struggle in America, and also reciprocally, he helped Black people to better view the Chinese people's revolution and goals."⁴⁹ Williams told the American public: "China impressed me as a variety of worlds with a variety of people bound by profound human qualities, some of which the Western world must cultivate if it is to survive. I think that the greatest human qualities being manifested in China today are those of morality and selflessness."⁵⁰ In stating that Williams "symbolizes the internationalism of people's struggles globally," she was expressing her own position on the need for global unity in struggle, particularly Afro-Asian alliances.⁵¹ She quickly learned that, contrary to the widespread view that Black Power singularly promoted Black issues and racial separatism, this movement, particularly its revolutionary wing, drew heavily on Bandung's promotion of anticolonialism, antiracism, self-determination, and Third World unity.

Such an ideology was appealing to the Asian American movement as it developed in the late 1960s and 1970s, so much so that Black Power and Third Worldism—more than civil rights—exerted the strongest influence on this budding movement.⁵² Richard Aoki, for example, brought ideas developed as an early Japanese American leader of the Black Panther Party into the Third World Liberation Front strike for ethnic studies at UC Berkeley.⁵³ Berkeley's Asian American Political Alliance used hard-hitting language to advocate Third World unity and the principles of self-

determination: “We Asian Americans refuse to cooperate with the White Racism in this society, which exploits us as well as other Third World people,” and “We Asian Americans support all oppressed people and their struggles for Liberation and believe that Third World People must have complete control over the political, economic, and educational institutions within their communities.”⁵⁴ In New York, I Wor Kuen’s twelve-point platform and program, modeled after the Black Panther Party, stated: “We want liberation of all Third World peoples and other oppressed peoples”; “We want community control of our institutions and land”; and “We want a socialist society.”⁵⁵

Though Kochiyama was not distinctive in forging Afro-Asian solidarities, it can be said that she, more than any other activist, infused Black Power politics into the Asian American Movement through her writings, speeches, everyday conversations, social-political networks, and frequent gatherings at her home.⁵⁶ From its start, Asian Americans for Action, founded in New York City in 1969 by longtime activists Kazu Iijima and Min Matsuda, recognized the Black struggle “as the most critical struggle at this point;” accused U.S. foreign policy of being “imperialistic” because it gained “profits accrued from the people and materials of . . . the Third World;” and indicted U.S. domestic policies as “token, minimal gestures used as pacification devices which serve only to perpetuate the oppressed condition of the poor and minorities.”⁵⁷ In such a radical space, Kochiyama found comrades to help forge Third World alliances, to organize Asian American support for Black liberation, and, for the first time, to develop her own politics around Asian and Asian American issues. Though not a core leader, Kochiyama regularly attended meetings, frequently contributed to its newsletters, and was often a featured speaker and public representative of the organization.

While Kochiyama promoted Black liberation within Asian American circles, she has been criticized, particularly by Asian American activists, for failing to develop Black support for Asian American liberation. This stems from Kochiyama’s view of the pervasiveness and brutality of anti-Black racism and the revolutionary potential of the Black freedom struggle—ideas that parallel the position of Asian-Americans for Action. In the post-Bandung movement, Kochiyama’s location as a Third World person enabled her to see identity as well as solidarity in the struggles for Black, Asian, and Third World liberation. Her steadfast support for political prisoners, her most intense area of struggle in a life filled with support for a multitude of issues, was motivated by her own experience of incarceration

during World War II. She reflected: "I cannot help but feel strongly about this because I can never forget what we, peoples of Japanese ancestry, experienced during World War II because of hysteria, isolation, and absolutely no support . . . Yes, we were also political prisoners."⁵⁸

To respond to the increased arrests of many of her comrades—those "captured" in the "anticolonial" war of national liberation—Kochiyama helped form the National Committee to Defend Political Prisoners (NCDPP) in the early 1970s. "Yuri, out of all of us, was in touch with prisoners and supporters the most," observed an NCDPP member. "People would call her relentlessly, just all the time . . . She was seemingly writing and visiting most of the political prisoners and really staying on top of it."⁵⁹ In the 1990s, she generated Asian American support for the renowned Black political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal and, for the first time, organized support groups for Asian American political prisoners, namely, David Wong and Yu Kikumura.

So rather than seeing support for Black or Asian American liberation in additive or competing ways, Kochiyama's practice connected and expanded these struggles. As the Asian American Movement grew and as she spoke out against U.S. imperialism in Asia, she helped raise awareness of Asian and Asian American oppression and resistance. She wrote, for example, about the work of newly formed Asian American political groups to the predominantly Black readership of the *North Star*.⁶⁰ In the 1980s, as the struggle to right the wrongs of the World War II concentration camps gained momentum, she linked Japanese American redress with Black reparations. By broadcasting the work of the Asian American Movement, she helped to repeal the blind spot of Black and Chicano activists to Asian American activism.

In her speeches and writings, she was particularly effective at drawing connections between Asian liberation and Black struggles. Her Hiroshima-Nagasaki Week speech, for example, promoted Black Power, Third World radicalism, and Asian liberation. She condemned American militarism in Vietnam and Okinawa, radioactive fallout in Micronesia, and the slaughter of half a million Indonesians in 1965. Then, with a boldness reminiscent of Malcolm X, she denounced "the recent so-called 'good-will' tour by President Nixon" and proclaimed that "The U.S. must understand that Asia does not need American leadership or *any* Great White Father. They know that American involvement is not for the concern of Asia but to benefit themselves." Borrowing from Marcus Garvey, she stated, "Just as Africa must be for Africans, Asia must be for Asians." She ended with a

strategy for building Third World collaborations: “When nations can feel unity for self-determination among themselves, [only then] can there be interdependence in trade and positive rapport in inter-race and international relations.”⁶¹ Her vocal opposition to U.S. imperialism in Vietnam, Hiroshima-Nagasaki, Okinawa, and other parts of Asia helped build Black support for Asian liberation. In the *North Star*, she called Vietnam “a North Star to liberation movements” in Africa, South America, and Black America, published the program of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, and discussed Ho Chi Minh in glowing terms.⁶²

Significantly, it was the Asian American Movement that enabled Kochiyama to develop and display spokesperson leadership in addition to her already extensive centerperson leadership. She became a coveted speaker on the national circuit—a role she neither asked for nor would have accepted in the black freedom movement. By the 1990s, she rose to national stature as a Movement leader. By the early twenty-first century, her own memoir, two biographies, one in English and one in Japanese, and a U.S.-based documentary focused on her life.⁶³

Conclusion

Yuri Kochiyama’s life is so important because, with extraordinary consistency, she practiced the kinds of skills that empower ordinary people, nurture activists, and ultimately sustain social movements. While we remember the magnificent marches, fiery speeches, and provocative images, we often forget the undramatic, everyday work involved in creating social change. Centerperson leadership is particularly vital to organizing, or the ongoing development of groups to build and sustain a larger vision, by contrast to mobilizing, or the pulling together of relatively large numbers of people for a relatively short-term goal. By encouraging subordinated people to think boldly and imaginatively, by attending to their personal well-being, and by enthusiastically and passionately caring about those facing hardships, especially those besieged by racism and state repression, Kochiyama inspired many toward an activist practice. Significantly, she also reminds us to be understanding—critical yes, but always understanding—about people’s shortcomings. Historian Charles Payne observed: “Unless we do a better job of responding to the human contradictions and weaknesses of the people we work with, we are likely to continue to create politics that are progressive in the ideas expressed but disempowering in the way individuals expressing those ideas relate to one another.”⁶⁴ While

Kochiyama has tended to avoid offering criticism, even when needed, her ability to understand human contradictions and to nurture, in gentle and supportive ways, people's inclination for social justice helped to build the kind of social movement that, in its process, embodied the values and vision of a liberating and egalitarian society.

NOTES

I borrow from Payne's discussion of Ella Baker in noting, that Yuri Kochiyama could have contributed so much, yet remain so obscure even among the politically informed reminds us of "how much our collective past has been distorted—and distorted in disempowering ways."⁶⁵ By focusing our vision on centerperson leadership skills, the complicated positioning of Asian Americans within the Black nationalist movement, and the need to work humanely with the very real human frailties contained in individuals and in social movements, Kochiyama's radical humanism helps recenter these distorted and invisible elements of the Black freedom struggle.

1. "The Violent End of the Man Called Malcolm X," *Life*, March 5, 1965, 26.

2. Karen Sacks, "Gender and Grassroots Leadership," in *Women and the Politics of Empowerment*, ed. Ann Bookman and Sandra Morgen (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 77–94.

3. Kochiyama believes her father's death resulted from the prison's inadequate medical treatment for his recent ulcer surgery; for other explanations, see Diane C. Fujino, *Heartbeat of Struggle: The Revolutionary Life of Yuri Kochiyama* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

4. Yuri Kochiyama, interview with author, June 29–July 6, 1997, Harlem, NY.

5. Diary by Yuri Kochiyama (Mary Nakahara), "The Bordered World," vol. 2, September 9, 1942, Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles.

6. Most internees were first placed in temporary "assembly centers," often hastily converted fairgrounds or racetracks, and, about half a year later, moved to the more permanent "relocation centers" or "concentration camps."

7. Kochiyamas, *Christmas Cheer*, 1951, 2. If not otherwise specified, Kochiyama's materials come from her personal archive.

8. *Ibid.*

9. "Mrs. Mary Kochiyama & family," letter to Malcolm X, October 17, 1963.

10. Yuri Kochiyama, class notes, OAAU Liberation School, December 12, 1964; March 13, 1965. Kochiyama's handwritten notes show she attended every Saturday from December 5, 1964, until April 3, 1965, except for three Saturdays in late December and early January. On Hamer's beating, see Chana Kai Lee, *For Freedom's Sake: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 45–53.

11. Kochiyamas, editorial, *North Star*, 1968, 7.

12. Kochiyama, "And Then We Heard the Thunder 'Black Power': SNCC's New Battle Cry!" *The North Star*, December 1966, 1; Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Vintage, 1967), 54–55.

13. Kochiyama, "And Then We Heard the Thunder 'Black Power,'" 1.

14. Imari Obadele, *Foundations of the Black Nation* (Detroit, MI: House of Songhay, 1975); George Breitman, *The Last Year of Malcolm X* (New York: Schocken, 1967), 64–65; George Breitman, ed., *Malcolm X Speaks* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 197.

15. Kochiyama incorrectly equated feminism with gender segregation. Liberal feminism's neglect of race and class issues and radical feminism's call for separation from men loomed so large that many women of color in the 1970s felt alienated by the women's movement. But by the 1990s, when Kochiyama expressed this view, many women of color had transformed feminism to encompass the intersectionality of race, class, and gender. See Diane C. Fujino, "Revolution's from the Heart: The Making of an Asian American Women Activist, Yuri Kochiyama," in *Dragon Ladies: Asian American Feminists Breathe Fire*, ed. Sonia Shah (Boston: South End Press, 1997), 169–181.

16. Social networking was especially important in Durham County, where 22 percent of the labor force worked in health care. Workers had multiple relationships as family and friends forged through church, school, and other social institutions. It was widely acknowledged that women did most of the behind-the-scenes work that was critical to the unionization campaign, though they infrequently held traditional leadership positions. See Karen Brodtkin Sacks, *Caring by the Hour: Women, Work, and Organizing at Duke Medical Center* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988); Sacks, "Gender and Grassroots Leadership."

17. Sacks, *Caring by the Hour*, 119.

18. Mutulu Shakur, interview with author, October 19, 1998.

19. Quoted in Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 188. On grassroots leadership, see Ransby's discussion of the contrasting leadership models of Ella Baker and Martin Luther King Jr. (pp. 189–192); Charles Payne, "Men Led, but Women Organized: Movement Participation of Women in the Mississippi Delta," in *Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers and Torchbearers, 1941–1965*, ed. Vicki L. Crawford, Jacqueline Anne Rouse, and Barbara Woods (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson, 1990); Dolores Delgado Bernal, "Grassroots Leadership Reconceptualized: Chicana Oral Histories and the 1968 East Los Angeles Blowouts," *Frontiers* 19 (1998): 113–142.

20. Kochiyamas, "New Faces of '62," *Christmas Cheer*, 1962, 1; Kochiyamas, "Sequel to the Mike Hernandez Story," *Christmas Cheer*, 1963, 1, 10; Yuri Kochiyama, interview with author, November 3–10, 1997.

21. Kochiyama, interview with author, November 3–10, 1997.

22. Kochiyamas, *Christmas Cheer*, 1959, 6. The pages of *Christmas Cheer* document the massive flow of people into their home, including some eighty overnight guests in a single year (Kochiyamas, *Christmas Cheer*, 1954, 6).

23. Genevieve Hall-Duncan, interview with author, January 17, 2000.

24. Kochiyamas, "Black Leadership Blazes Pathways Lighting Minds," *The North Star*, 1965, 4, 5, 8.

25. Ahmed Obafemi, interview with author, February 7, 2000.

26. Bibi Angola, interview with author, December 6, 1999.

27. Ahmed Obafemi, interview with author, February 7, 2000.

28. Bolanile Akinwale, interview with author, February 21, 2000.

29. Mutulu Shakur, interview with author, October 19, 1998.

30. Mtayari Shabaka Sundiata, letter to Yuri Kochiyama, April 27, 1975.

31. Ahmed Obafemi, interview with author, February 7, 2000.

32. Bolanile Akinwale, interview with author, February 21, 2000.

33. Author's participant-observation, Tear Down the Walls meeting, Oakland, CA, and conversations with Kochiyama, 2001.

34. Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

35. Sacks, *Caring by the Hour*; Sacks, "Gender and Grassroots Leadership," 77–94; Payne, "Men Led, but Women Organized"; Bernal, "Grassroots Leadership Reconceptualized," 113–142.

36. Japanese Americans were participating in civil rights activism at the time, but there was no guarantee of support from the wider community. When the March on Washington organizers invited the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) to send representatives to the rally, the JACL leadership did accept, but only over the objections of numerous local chapter presidents and after much internal struggle. Also in 1963, the San Francisco *Hokubei Mainichi* editor Howard Imazeki created a stir when he published an editorial, widely reprinted, rejecting Black claims of racism and blaming Blacks for their own situation (Greg Robinson, "Nisei and the Black Freedom Movement"). Bill and Yuri Kochiyama wrote a letter to the editor of the *New York Nichi Bei* (September 26, 1963) strongly denouncing Imazeki's views. That they believed the article "may be representative of the thinking of many Nisei in California and across the country" reveals the distance Kochiyama felt between her budding political activism and the majority of Japanese Americans. On the demise of the Japanese American Left, see Diane C. Fujino, "The Black Liberation Movement and Japanese American Activism: The Radical Activism of Richard Aoki and Yuri Kochiyama," in *Afro Asia: Revolutionary Political and Cultural Connections between African Americans and Asian Americans*, ed. Fred Ho and Bill V. Mullen (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 165–197. On early Japanese American radicalism, see Yuji Ichioka, "A Buried Past: Early Issei Socialists and the Japanese Community," *Amerasia Journal* 1 (1971): 1–25; Josephine Fowler, *Japanese and Chinese Immigrant Activists: Organizing in American and International Communist Movements, 1919–1933* (Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007).

37. Kochiyamas, "Warm Greetings," *North Star*, 1968, 2.

38. Ahmed Obafemi, interview with author, February 7, 2000.

39. Nyisha Shakur, interview with author, October 15, 1998.

40. A. Peter Bailey, interview with author, March 3, 2000; Malcolm X, "Message to the Grass Roots," in *Malcolm X Speaks*, ed. George Breitman (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 16; Clayborne Carson, "The Time Has Come," in *The Eyes on the Prize Civil Rights Reader*, ed. C. Carson, David J. Garrow, Gerald Gill, Vincent Harding, and Darlene Clark Hine (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 245–246.

41. Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

42. The model minority image of Asian America, popularized in two widely read newsmagazines in 1966, extols the educational and occupational achievements of Asian Americans. By promoting hard work, delayed gratification, and assimilationism as pathways to success, its logic functioned to denounce political protest at the moment of the rise of Black Power. See William Petersen, "Success Story, Japanese-American Style," *New York Times Magazine*, January 9, 1966; "Success Story of One Minority Group in U.S.," *U.S. News & World Report*, December 26, 1966.

43. Yuri Kochiyama, interview with author.

44. Black internationalists mistakenly elevated Japan as a symbol of triumph over global White racism; see Marc Gallicchio, *The African American Encounter with Japan and China: Black Internationalism in Asia, 1895–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

45. Yuri Kochiyama, class notes from the OAAU Liberation School, December 5, 1964; Yuri Kochiyama, interview with author.

46. Muhammad Ahmad (Max Stanford), interview with author, January 30, 2000; Yuri Kochiyama, interview with author. On RAM, see Muhammad Ahmad (Maxwell Stanford), *We Will Return in the Whirlwind: Black Radical Organizations, 1960–75* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2007); Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon, 2002).

47. Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Robert F. Williams, *Negroes with Guns* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1962/1973).

48. Mao Tse-tung, "Calling upon the People of the World to Unite to Oppose Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism and Support the American Negroes in Their Struggle against Racial Discrimination," August 1963, in Robert Williams, *The Crusader*, October 1964, 1; Mao, "In Support of the Afro-American Struggle against Violent Repression," *April 1968* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1968); both reprinted in Ho and Mullen, *Afro Asia*, 91–96. For more on Afro-Asian political connections, see Ho and Mullen, *Afro Asia*; Bill V. Mullen, *Afro-Orientalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004); Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao, and Che* (London: Verso, 2002); and Vijay Prashad, *Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity* (Boston: Beacon Press), 2001.

49. Mary (Yuri) Kochiyama, "Who Is Rob Williams, and What Is His Relationship to Asians?" *Asian Americans for Action Newsletter*, October 1969, 4, 8, in author's possession.

50. Robert F. Williams, "On the Platform with Mao Tse-tung," *New York Times*, February 20, 1971.

51. Kochiyama, "Who Is Rob Williams?"

52. Those arguing for Black Power's strong influence include Glenn Omatsu, "The 'Four Prisons' and the Movements for Liberation," *Amerasia Journal* 15, no. 1 (1989): xvi, xv–xxx; Fred Ho, "The Inspiration of Mao and the Chinese Revolution on the Black Liberation Movement and the Asian Movement on the East Coast," in Ho and Mullen, *Afro Asia*; Fred Ho, ed., *Legacy to Liberation: Politics and Culture of Revolutionary Asian Pacific America* (San Francisco: AK Press, 2000); and Diane C. Fujino, "Who Studies the Asian American Movement? A Historiographical Analysis," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 11 (June 2008): 127–169. By contrast, William Wei presents a civil rights framing for the Asian American movement (*The Asian American Movement* [Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993]), which I critique in "Who Studies the Asian American Movement?" For a spatial analysis of the formation of Afro-Asian political relations, see Diane C. Fujino, "Race, Place, Space, and Political Development: Japanese American Radicalism in the 'Pre-Movement' 1960s," *Social Justice*, forthcoming.

53. Diane C. Fujino, "The Black Liberation Movement and Japanese American Activism." My current research is a book project on Richard Aoki.

54. "AAPA Perspectives," AAPA newspaper, November 1969, 3. The AAPA newspaper reprinted Kochiyama's article on Robert Williams (November 1969, 2) and included other articles reflecting their support of "Third World Power" (February 1969, 1); a front-page picture of Black Panther leader Bobby Seale with the article, "Free All Political Prisoners" (November 1969, 1); an article on "Would You Believe Concentration Camps for Americans," denouncing concentration camps to detain "militants, black or white" (November–December 1968, 3); and several articles supporting the struggle for Third World studies at UC Berkeley. Diane C. Fujino, "The Black Liberation Movement and Japanese American Activism: The Radical Activism of Richard Aoki and Yuri Kochiyama," in Ho and Mullen, *Afro Asia*, 165–197; Asian-Americans for Action newsletters; Asian American Political Alliances newspapers.

55. I Wor Kuen, "12 Point Platform and Program," in Ho, *Legacy to Liberation*, 405–407.

56. Renowned Chinese American activist Grace Lee Boggs exerted a powerful influence on radical thought and the Black labor and radical movements in Detroit. While she minimally participated in the Asian American movement, in recent years, her ideas and stature in the movement have influenced Asian American activism. See Grace Lee Boggs, *Living for Change: An Autobiography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998); Mullen, *Afro-Orientalism*; Jennifer Jung Hee Choi, "At the Margins of the Asian American Political Experience: The Life of Grace Lee Boggs," *Amerasia Journal* 25, no. 2 (1999): 18–40.

57. *Asian-Americans for Action Newsletter* 1, no. 1 (June 1969): 1.

58. Yuri Kochiyama, "Statement for the Subpoenees for the Forum on Political Repression," speech, Saint Mark's Church, New York, February 6, 1975.

59. Nyisha Shakur, interview with author, October 15, 1998.
60. Kochiyamas, "Asians Organize in NY," *North Star*, 1969, 3, 7, 8.
61. Mary Kochiyama, "Hiroshima-Nagasaki Week speech," August 9, 1969, New York City, in *Asian-Americans for Action Newsletter* 1, no. 3 (October 1969): 3–4.
62. Kochiyamas, "Brave New World," *North Star*, 1966, 2, 3; "Ho Chi Minh," *North Star*, 1969, 3.
63. Rea Tajiri and Pat Saunders, *Yuri Kochiyama: Passion for Justice* (video, 1993); Mayumi Nakazawa, *Yuri: The Life and Times of Yuri Kochiyama* (Tokyo: Bungenshugu, 1998); *Passing It On—A Memoir*, ed. Marjorie Lee, Akemi Kochiyama-Sardinha, and Audee Kochiyama-Holman (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 2004); Fujino, *Heartbeat of Struggle*.
64. Charles Payne, "Ella Baker and Models of Social Change," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 14 (1989): 898.
65. *Ibid.*