

FEBRUARY 11TH PROTESTED

The following letter was written by the Special Committee on the Yasukuni Shrine Problem of the NCC-J (ÔSHIMA Koichi, Chairman) and sent to Ambassadors and Official Representatives of Foreign Countries.

We have heard that official representatives of foreign governments are being invited to attend a government-supported assembly, on February 11th, to celebrate Japan's foundation as a nation. It is said that there is a strong possibility of participation by Japanese government officials, and that the assembly will be held in the National Theatre. If you receive such an invitation we would like you to be aware of the problems related to this ceremony.

The observation of a "National Foundation Day" was first proposed in the National Diet in 1957. For ten years it failed to gain a consensus because opinion was divided. It is an attempt to justify militarism and whitewash Japan's responsibility in World War II. Furthermore it is an opening gambit toward the revival of militarism today, and impermissible breach of the principles of Japan's Constitution.

The use of February 11th as "National Foundation Day" is an attempt to politically manipulate the mythology concerning the former "Kigen Setsu," which was promulgated in 1889 by the Imperial Constitution in the name of the emperor. The present "National Foundation Day" is directly contrary to the principles of anti-militarism, democracy, peace, and human rights incorporated in the present constitution. We also recall that February 11th was the central date for the Japanese attack on Singapore in World War II.

Though the present "National Foundation Day" began in 1967, it was not until 1978 that the central government began to support a people's ceremony, and not until 1981 that the Ministry of Education became involved. We fear that these steps are leading to official government sponsorship of "National Foundation Day" ceremonies.

We who oppose Japan's remilitarization and are active in promoting peace and democracy see this government-supported February 11th celebration as a symbolic barometer indicating how far Japan has already gone in reviving militarism. We ask you to give serious consideration to the following points if you do receive an invitation.

- 1) This government support program does not really represent the opinion of the Japanese people.
- 2) According to the printed program from last year there was facing toward the Kashiwara Shrine to worship, shouting "Long Live the Emperor," singing the

"Kimigayo," etc. all of which have religious content. The whole program was organized by people who have nostalgic feelings toward the pre-war emperor system and its ultra-nationalism.

- 3) Your participation in this kind of ceremony will encourage the revival of militarism and discourage the growth of democracy in Japan.

We respectfully request that you give serious consideration to these points.

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