



Preface

Was trying to make sense of the world as a baby nationalist when i met Yaki. He helped me digest Marx & Lenin, fed me Mao & Cabral, and shook me out of the doldrums of narrow, cultural nationalism. i grew up on the southside of chicago. My parents came from the hard-working west virginia hills, and raised me with a decent moral compass & an eye toward a college education. As i learned more of what it meant to be a Black man in America, my outrage at injustice & oppression grew. i remember the murder of fred hampton and the terror in my mother's eyes and voice when i expressed this outrage and a desire to become active in the struggle for liberation. i was too young to be a Panther, but i was inspired by their example. i loved to read, and always found non-fiction and political science compelling.

It was in this context that i met Yaki. His writing intrigued me, and i was drawn to his analysis. Naturally, i jumped at the chance to meet him. i travelled more than 100 miles to dixon, illinois (the hometown of ronald reagan!) to visit with him at a state prison. The visiting room was usually less than half full, but on some weekends or holidays, our visits would be cut short due to overcrowding. Mostly, We could sit for hours & talk about any and every thing.

The first time We sat down together, We had to feel each other out, having only corresponded up to that point. He was clean cut, with a neatly trimmed mustache. He kept his hair cut short, but

not bald. He had an easy smile and a knowing demeanor, often seeming bemused when We discussed the movement or different comrades. He would ask probing questions about different aspects of the work, and when he wasn't satisfied with an answer, he was sure to ask more detailed questions. If he thought an answer was totally useless, he would simply say "why not"? i hated leaving him there, and he jokingly suggested that i take his place. He got a kick out of my stammer as i demurred.

Just like his writing, Yaki worked very hard on precision. It was very important for him to say exactly what he meant. You could see the mental process at work, and it was a joy to watch. He also worked very hard to encourage one to think for oneself. In fact, he felt that We should be working with people to help them learn *how to think* instead of telling them *what to think*. This difference in methodology was a great source of frustration for him as he watched others attempt to agitate, educate & organize.

This collection is important because Yaki put his prodigious intellect and drive to work in the study of the descendants of enslaved Afrikans (*New Afrikans*), and our current social, economic and political reality. Because he was a "bottom of the pile negro" (thank you, Malcolm), he wrote to and for the oppressed masses, who often have no representative amongst our so-called "leaders." He concentrated on developing theory for the voiceless in their struggle against neo-colonialism and settler-imperialism. Yaki helped me understand this contradiction: the united states of amerikkka is a prisonhouse of nations, where nations become like classes. Even in the age of Obama, though the analysis begs for some finetuning, there's more truth & clarity in his journals than can be found in the vast majority of stuff which passes for "radical" analysis of amerikkka today.

Re-Build!
Hondo T.