

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS  
SUPREME COMMANDER FOR THE ALLIED POWERS  
GOVERNMENT SECTION

4 January 1946

MEMORANDUM:

TO THE SUPREME COMMANDER

THRU : CHIEF OF STAFF.

1. The law governing national elections as amended (Tab A) has been critically examined in this section to determine that it affords the basis for a free and untrammelled expression of the popular will.

2. It has been urged that in two major points the law is fundamentally undemocratic and hence defective, and that such points are contained in:

a. Article 27 which provides for election under a system of restricted plural voting, (i.e. the elector is limited to one vote if there are three representatives to be elected in his district, two votes if there are four to ten, and three votes if there are eleven to fourteen), the elector thus being denied the opportunity to vote for all representatives who are to represent his district; and

b. Article 30 which provides for write-in ballots, (i.e. ballots on which the elector must write in the name of the candidate or candidates of his choice rather than merely affixing an "X" after the name on a printed ballot, in accordance with American practice).

3. The arguments pro and con on these points in issue are contained in a study of the law as a whole now in course of preparation in this section, and which will be ready for your consideration in the next few days. Suffice it to point out that, of all points raised in opposition to the national election law as it now stands, the two abovementioned are the only two which of themselves offer any fundamental challenge to the democratic character of the law.

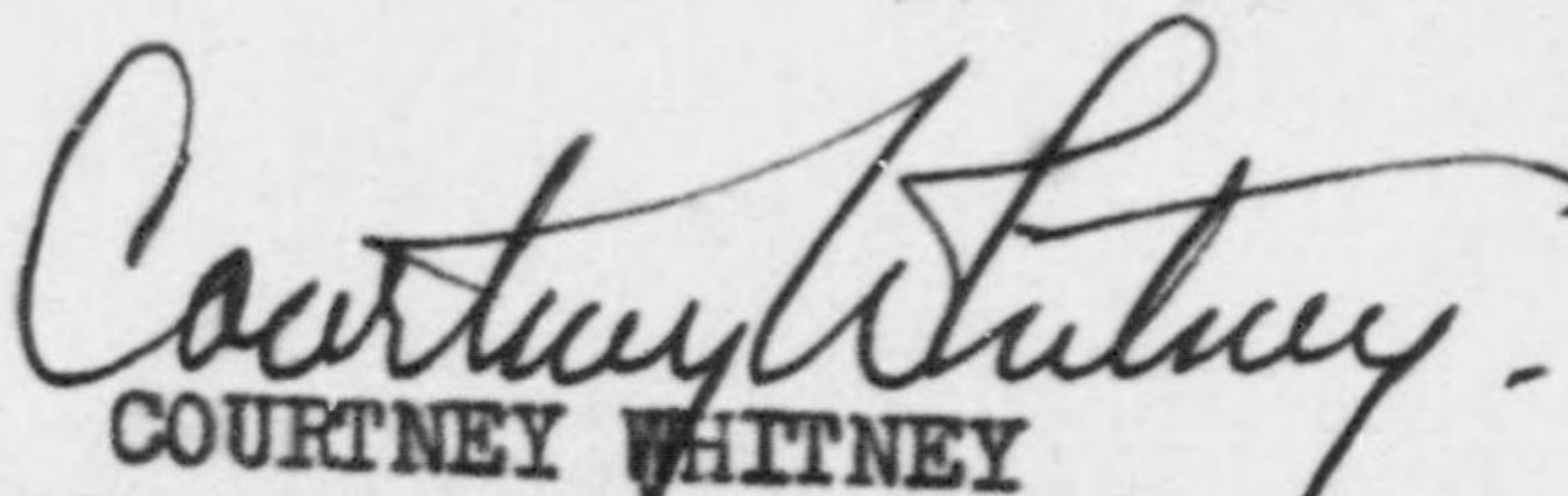
4. It should be borne in mind that the election law under consideration concerns itself solely with the national elections. Below the national level the assemblies (prefectural and lower) result from popular vote, but prefectural governors are appointees of the national government and lower executives are elected by the assemblies from a slate approved by the prefectural governor. Thus, the executive branch throughout the several levels of government is not dependent upon the popular will of the people despite its inherent power, and must be presumed to exert a strong influence in the shaping of that will.

5. Democracy is a thing of the spirit rather than the written or spoken word. Its successful development in Japan will result best if it come from the bottom up rather than from the top down. Hence, it appears sound procedure, while working toward a more democratic and representative national government, if we at the same time democratize the lower levels of government as well by rendering them subject to the popular will. From hasty inspection it appears that provision for this can be made by ordinance within existing election machinery governing the election by popular vote of the lower assemblies. The advantage of such change, releasing the people from any existing executive controls before the next national election, is obvious, whether an election by popular vote within the lower levels of government be actually held first or not.

6. In view of the foregoing considerations, there is attached (Tab B) a proposed directive to the Japanese Government authorizing the holding of a general national election, and calling for vigorous enforcement of punitive provisions of the law and such steps as may be necessary to preserve inviolate the secrecy of the ballot.

7. Meanwhile, studies now in process will be completed in ample time to permit you to direct any change by ordinance which may be indicated upon review thereof, and to take appropriate steps prior to such general election pursuant to which executive officials at the lower levels of government will be made subject to popular will; thereby reserving to you full freedom in the premises.

8. It is recommended that attached directive (Tab B) be signed and dispatched.

  
COURTNEY WHITNEY  
Brigadier General, U.S. Army,  
Chief, Government Section.

2 Incls:  
Incl 1 - Tab "A"  
Election Law.  
Incl 2- Tab "B"  
Proposed directive.

(1)

CHUDO-KAI (Middle Way Association)

Tokyo

President

YONEYAMA Hachiya -- born 27 December 1894 -- graduate of the Department of Economics of Tokyo Imperial University -- clerk of a company. Belonged to the NIPPON MINSEI ANTEI KYORYOKU-KAI (Co-operative Society for Stabilizing Japanese National Administration).

Membership

500

Objective of the Party

Contribute in carrying out the Potsdam Declaration and the reconstruction of Japan as a middle-of-the road party.

Number of Candidates Who Ran for Election

1

Number of Candidates Elected

1

Name of Diet Representative

YONEYAMA Fumiko (woman)

Number of votes received by the Party

49,726

Diet Member's Affiliation in the Diet

SHINSEI-KAI (New Political Association)

Diet Representative's Background

YONEYAMA Fumiko - born 25 April 1902. Graduated from Tokyo Normal School for Women, was teacher of a primary school. Wife of YONEYAMA Hachiya, head of the party.

Diet Representative's Opinion on the Constitution, the Food Problem, and other important Problems

a. Constitution

Mrs. YONEYAMA approves of the Draft Constitution. She is for a modified tenno system such as it appears in the Constitution.

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CHUDO-KAI (Middle Way Association)

b. The Food Problem

Mrs. YONEYAMA feels that Japan must not depend on American imports. They must try to compel farmers and zaibatsu morally to give up their hoarded food. If fertilizer, farm equipment and cotton clothing are rationed out to the farmers, they will give up their rice.

c. Women's Problems

When the Civil Code amendment comes up in the Diet, she feels that the 39 Women Diet members will have to get together and raise their voices. When women's problems come up and the men in the Diet are against them, the women will have to band together regardless of party affiliation. As an example of men's interference, she pointed to the Liberal Party. There the men are hindering the efforts of the 6 Liberal Party women to amend the Civil Code.

Mrs. YONEYAMA feels that women should be able to get positions in such government offices as the Welfare Ministry. She said that the Women Diet members had tried to introduce such an idea, but that the men in various political parties are hindering their work. The women in the Diet must watch that the Diet men do not go "astray" such as being influenced by the government.