

Letter from Jaan Laaman, March 7, 2021

I just wrote you on the 4th—but I was just reading the ABC Update I received on Friday. So I want to get some thoughts shared widely, especially the ABC folks all over, especially ABC people in NYC, LA, and Philly and in Lowell/Laurence, Mass. So, I thought I'd run this all by you and you could help me share.

Recently, even here in captivity, we have seen the news of anti-Asian, Chinese especially, racist attacks against people, often older individuals just assaulted on subways and streets, even in places like NYC, SF, LA! Just today (3/7), I heard on NPR that over 2,800 such racist attacks have been reported. This is just terrible and demands response. I think ABC (and others) can help provide some needed safety response.

I have some (way back in the '70s) experience that could/should be looked at and applied now to these racist attacks. In 1978-79, I helped my comrade Kazi Toure and some other anti-apartheid activists set up a fundraising concert to free Nelson Mandela and fight apartheid. The concert happened at the Harvard Univ. football stadium, and featured Bob Marley and the Wailers, Patty Labelle, and other artists and was a success. It was called Amandla Festival of Unity.

In order not to allow any cops in the stadium, we organized a people's security force of 120 people, at least partially trained martial artists for the concert. After the concert some of the Boston area people wanted to continue training, so I set up a martial arts school called "Amandla People's Security." I offered regular Tai Kwan Do training, but we also provided security at things like demos, concerts and some street security/patrols.

With that history/experience in mind, what I think is necessary around the country today is for us, ABCers and like-minded comrades to talk to folks we know in Chinese communities, Asian communities, and in particular to make contact with the Kung Fu and other martial arts schools there to raise the idea of getting some regular street/neighborhood patrols going. Of course, nothing to do with any cops or anything related—rather people's security for vulnerable people in targeted communities. Even with COVID going, just some people in masks walking in areas and streets where Asian people might be targeted by racists.

Of course, I'm sitting here in a cell and have been off the streets for decades, but I think this idea—applied as conditions require in any specific city—is not only necessary but needed now! So share the idea, develop it as is best, and let's see if we can do some community security against these racist attacks.

It would be my guess that people in these communities are probably already doing some security, but even so, once we make solidarity contact with folks in these areas, ABC and related people should offer our assistance as is needed.

OK Josh—so yes share all this with folks (all ABCs) and let me know you got this. Take care.

Amandla! Jaan