Nikkei Recall Roosevelt Signing of Camp Order
About 250 Take Part in NCRR-Organized "Day of Remembrance" Observance

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Although the turnout of about 250 persons was smaller than some had expected, the peaceful marchers made up for what they lacked in numbers with spirited calls of "Justice Now!" and a seeming unity of spirit. Most of the marchers were Sansei and Yonsei, many of whom never saw the insides of an internment center but who have taken up the cause on behalf of their internee grandparents and parents. Marching along side the student-aged Nisei were a smattering of Issei and Non-Japanese at the War Relocation Authority's Manzanar, Calif., and Terminal Islanders organization.

Nisei at the "Day of Remembrance" observed the 1982 "Day of Remembrance" were calling it an overall success. They had emphasized a call for "One Community, one (redress) bill" — a coming together of the community for the upcoming legislative campaign for Japanese American redress. But the day, clearly, had been marred by the small attendance at the rally and the reality that other groups were still jockeying to be the leadership group in the community.

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Commenting on the absence of more Nisei at the "Day of Remembrance" march, Ralph Lazo, who as a 16-year-old youth protested the injustice of the camps by volunteering to evacuate along with his Japanese American friends becoming one of the few non-Japanese at the War Relocation Center at Manzanar, Calif., offered: "The Nisei are settled, ready to retire. Some feel they can attempt to forget now. Plus, they're conservative types anyway. What are they going to do? Walking the streets. You know, it's just not in their culture."

Lazo, now 57 and a counselor at Los Angeles Valley College, added however that "it's important to be out here today... because it's been 40 years too long for justice, and hopefully, observances like this will get all the communities, people from Los Angeles, Seattle, Chicago and New York, get them together and realize that the only way we're going to get any progress is if everybody works together."

The marchers included clergy-men like Rev. Wee Yamaka of Sage United Methodist in Monterey Park and Rev. Ren Kimura from San Fernando's West Valley Japanese Community Christian Church. Groups of marchers were transported to the march and rally by bus. Young Japanese American parents pushed their children down the march route in baby strollers.

Organizers of the march, the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations, received endorsements from groups such as the 160th/442nd Veterans Association, United Teachers of Los Angeles, Lutheran Oriental Church of Torrance, Nikkei Students Union of UCLA, Manzanar Committee, Little Tokyo Peoples Rights Organization as well as groups in San Diego and San Francisco. Similar "Day of Remembrance" activities were held in San Diego, San Francisco, Sacramento, Sun Jose, New York, Seattle and Chicago.

A rousing performance by Kinnaro Taiko, led by Johnny Mortol of the Sasebo rock group Hiroshima, marked the start of a rally at the end of the march in front of the old Nishi Hongwanji Temple.

Ralph Lazo
Volunteer Internnee

the nagging thought of what might have been," Tanihata told the crowd. "Just imagine what we could've been... and, in turn, I can say that America—a great nation as is—could have been even greater had she compassionately accepted the differences of Japanese Americans in 1945."

Congressman Mervyn Dymally next stepped to the podium and told the marchers: "In his recent debate on the budget President Reagan has told the Congress to put up or shut up. I think if it would be appropriate if the redress committee also called on Congress to put up or shut up on this issue of redress..."

Dymally whose district includes a large number of Japanese American constituents, said he and Seattle-area Rep. Mike Lowry were ready to carry a Japanese American redress bill in the House. The Black Democrat's advocacy of the appropriation of a trust fund approach to redress, however, received a cool reception from lawmakers. Under his plan, a commission would administer reparations funds appropriated by Congress.

In closing the program, NCRR spokesman Miya Iwataki detailed her organization's view on how the government should proceed with reparations. She stated: "We are not a grant program."

I can honestly say, more than anything else, that the one greatest tragedy of the evacuation was...