

Day of Remembrance Redress Organizers Expect Diffic

The people involved in putting on the Day of Remembrance commemoration on Saturday, Feb. 23, felt that the program, which attracted some 400 spectators, was a success. But generally, they thought passage of a redress and reparations to compensate Japanese Americans who were imprisoned in America's concentration camps would be difficult because of the current administration's economic woes and its decision to cut back on social programs.

Bert Nakano, national spokesperson for the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations, stated that the Day of Remembrance program was a "tremendous success."

Nakano, a native of Hawaii, became involved in the redress movement because of his own family's camp experiences.

His father, who was a successful businessman and a community leader in Hawaii at the time of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, was rounded up along with leaders of other Japanese communities in Hawaii and on the mainland U.S.

"My dad was taken away right after Pearl Harbor, first to Santa Fe, then to Bismarck, North Dakota, and then to Crystal City, Texas in November 1942," said Nakano. "The rest of the family was sent to Jerome, Arkansas—we were among the first to be interned from Hawaii—where we stayed for a year-and-a-half. Then we were sent to Tule Lake for another year-and-a-half."

The 57-year-old NCRP spokesman, who was incarcerated from the age of 14 until he was 17-years-old, said he was very impressionable then. "My brother was very political. He was pissed off about the camp issue. And when he was 19, they picked him up from Tule Lake and sent him to Crystal City, Texas."

But what actually started Nakano off on the campaign was becoming involved in the protest demonstrations against Little Re-development.

"Again seeing Japanese people thrown out of their homes in Little Tokyo—Issei and Nisei who were thrown in-camps and were living in these Little Tokyo hotels—felt to me like it was happening all over again," said Nakano.

That experience led to his joining the redress campaign.

Nakano believes the Nikkei must get involved in the redress campaign.

"The Japanese American community gotta lead the fight," he

stated. "If we don't, no one else will. It's our responsibility."

But getting a redress bill passed in Congress will be very difficult, Nakano said, because of the attitude of the Reagan administration, which is cutting back drastically on social programs, and because of the huge budget deficit.

"It (opposition to redress payments) has nothing to do with the Constitution of the United States," he said. "The basic foundation of the country is based on equality and justice, not on monetary values. The government ought to live up to the Constitution or get rid of the damn paper."

Stressing the theme of the Day of Remembrance—"Political Power through Unity"—Nakano pointed out that the Japanese Americans are a small segment of the population and do not get much of a voice in determining the destiny of the nation. However, he said, by uniting with a larger Asian Pacific population, "we can pool our strengths, we can be heard, we can be counted. It's the only way to push for anything. We need an Asian Pacific voting bloc to benefit us all."

He said a united Asian Pacific voting bloc "can be very strong. We hope to start a loose network."

Evelyn Yoshimura, NCRP member, echoed Nakano's sentiments in proclaiming the Day of Remembrance turnout "good. The support of other Asians was good. It was something different."

"We still have to build support for the redress bill," Little Tokyo Service Center staff member Yoshimura said. "To do that we are trying to get support from other groups in the Black and Chicano communities. We have to build support for the bill in many ways, including putting pressure on elected officials."

The chances for passage of a redress bill "depend on how much we push," she said. "It's going to be difficult because of the policies of the Reagan Administration. But we have to push it."

Things are going slow in getting a redress bill passed in Congress, said George Ogawa, redress chairman of Japanese American Citizens League's Pacific Southwest District, who revealed that the JACL is considering contracting for professional help to carry on lobbying and fund raising.

JACL also has a Legal Education Committee, a separate corporation set up, he said, "so we can



REMEMBERING—Senator Alan Cranston (D-California) speaks to the Asian American press at the Day of Remembrance in Gardena about his thoughts on redress and reparations for Japanese Americans interned during World War II. He, along with Spark Matsunaga and Daniel Inouye will be introducing legislation concerning this issue in the Senate.

do more lobbying."

The LEC, organized about a year ago at JACL's national headquarters in San Francisco, "can't get going until it gets funds," said Ogawa. The goal of LEC, comprised of people on the JACL board and led by chairman Min Yasui, is to "win redress."

If and when Japanese Americans are compensated for internment, "After that I don't know what JACL will do," said Ogawa. "Probably it will be in the form of legislative action against repressive laws and discrimination."

Ogawa himself was not the victim of the repressive and discriminatory internment camp experience. When World War II began, he and his family were living in Pullman, Washington, far inland away from the restricted military area along the Pacific Coast.

"We didn't experience any trouble. It was very calm around Pullman, a college town. But there was some discrimination around,"

recalled Ogawa, a radar systems engineer at Hughes Aircraft.

The Nisei civil rights activist who has been a member of the American Civil Liberties Union for 30 years, thinks the redress legislation will be "a very difficult task. Trying to get \$1.5 billion from Congress will be very difficult."

"But, they may be a way," he said. "If the funds are distributed over a period of three years. Maybe Congress will buy that."

Ogawa describes the campaign

Nikkei Man Missing Monterey Bay

MONTEREY.—A Japanese American man was one of three persons classified as missing by the U.S. Coast Guard as a result of separate boating accidents that left seven people drowned Feb. 16 in Monterey Bay.

The Coast Guard identified the three men still missing as Philip Sakakibara, 70, of Watsonville, Ronald Staggs of Hollister and Stanley Fadden of San Leandro. They are presumed dead.

Four other people were hospitalized in a series of boating accidents that Monterey Bay

Obituaries

ERNEST MINORI FUJIMOTO

Funeral services for Ernest

Difficult Task

to obtain justice for Japanese Americans who were interned during the war as "the greatest civil rights issue of all time . . . not just for Japanese Americans, but for all people."

Alan Nishio, NCRR member and president of Little Tokyo People's Rights Organization, said, "I'm pleased with the turnout. There are many different kinds of people here—students, Nisei and Issei."

"This is the first time the Day of Remembrance was held in Gardena, because there was support in the South Bay area," said Nishio, an assistant vice president for student affairs at California State University-Long Beach. "The turnout tonight consisted largely of South Bay residents."

Nishio stated that although the Reagan Administration has placed a priority on defense spending against social programs, "we have not given. We are continuing to build."

Evidence of continued interest in the redress movement is reflected, he explained, in the large turnout at Saturday's program and the attendance of some 500 people at the latest screening of the film "Unfinished Business" in Orange County.

"It's hard to keep it going, but it's still a growing movement," Nishio stated. "It's made an important impact on the conscience of Americans and on our own community."

Nishio's own involvement with the Nikkei camp experience began when he was born—in Manzanar. He grew up in Venice and attended UC Berkeley in the mid-60s, dur-

Continued On Page 4

Day of Remembrance Stresses Unity

GARDENA.—"Political Power Through Unity" was the theme of this year's Day of Remembrance, a commemoration of Executive Order 9066 which led to the evacuation and incarceration of 120,000 Americans of Japanese descent during World War II.

On this 43rd anniversary held in Gardena's Ken Nakaoka Memorial Center on Feb. 23, politicians gave speeches, Japanese American religious leaders spoke, community representatives made statements, individuals from other Asian groups addressed their concerns, and young people performed Polynesian dances and sang.

It was probably the most diverse program for this commemoration that Japanese Americans have every witnessed. But for the most part, seeds of unity were sown throughout the crowd.

"You enjoyed your dancing," whispered a middle-aged Japanese American woman in the ear of Cissy Lani, the leader of the Polynesian dance group.

Bert Nakano of the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations stressed this theme of unity in his statement to a predominantly Asian American crowd of approximately 400.

"We all know there is a need for more Asian legislators in local offices, State Assembly and in the U.S. Congress, especially in the West Coast and here in So. Calif. where the concentration of Asian Pacific people is probably the greatest," Nakano said, "We should support all progressive candidates, be it Asian, Black, Chicano and others, for it will essentially translate into political power for Asians. We should promote and support each other."

He also related the theme in addressing racism both domestically and internationally.

Senator Alan Cranston also illuminated the importance of Asian unifying their political power.

The audience greeting his arrival with a standing ovation, Cranston, in the finally hushed auditorium, told of his personal visits to the camp in Heart Mountain, Wyoming. "My most poignant memory is of a young mother who was trying to conceal from her four-year-old son the fact that they were prisoners in a racial internment camp."

He then said, "Unite. Join with others who share your values and concerns. Build coalitions. Don't dwell on your differences—look in-

stead for the values you share in common."

Cranston, who will be reintroducing the Senate bill for redress and reparations with Spark Matsunaga and Daniel Inouye, admitted that passage may be difficult in the present budget-cutting atmosphere. But he said they will continue to introduce the bill.

Representative Mervyn Dymally, whose district includes the city of Gardena, was introduced as the one who pushed for a legislative redress bill before it was "safe," or politically acceptable. The black congressman outlined the current House Bill 422 introduced by Majority Leader Jim Wright of Texas which has 99 co-sponsors.

According to Dymally, the bill accepts the findings of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians and calls for a presidential and congressional apology, as well as funds to educate the public and \$20,000 to those who suffered the internment. In addition, the bill also recognizes the injustices suffered by Aleuts; the bill provides funds for rebuilding and \$12,000 for each Aleut interned during the war.

A new development in the House, said Dymally, is the possible federal judgeship of Congressman Sam Hall who presently chairs the subcommittee which has been assigned to H.R. 422. Hall, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Administrative Law and Governmental Relations, has not been supportive of H.R. 422. If his judgeship is confirmed, the chairmanship of the subcommittee will be opened, said the congressman.

Other community leaders and political representatives also spoke. Gardena City Councilman and Chief Deputy to Supervisor Kenneth Hahn, Mas Fukai gave the "Day of Remembrance" proclamation. George Ogawa of the Japanese American Citizens League included mentioning of the court cases involving the Japanese Americans who protested wartime laws. Rev. Paul Nakamura of Lutheran Oriental Church of Torrance and Rev. Roy Kyozo Kokuzo of Long Beach Buddhist Church relayed messages, and led the audiences in a prayer and *gassho*.

The program ended with an Asian Unity Panel, comprising of five men from different Asian American communities. They ad-

ressed issues that concern their particular group.

Pok Than of the United Cambodian Community said that despite success stories, Cambodians in America are still struggling and must face resentment from other minorities in competition for scarce resources.

Roy Gorre of Asian American News expressed two main concerns of the Filipino community: U.S. foreign policy and the development of their own Filipino Town between Temple and Beverly Blvd. in Los Angeles.

Encompassing foreign policy issues are United States and Japanese government acquiescence of the Marcos "dictatorship" in the Philippines and plight of Philippine WW II veterans in United States who may be deported back to their homeland.

Craig Wong of the Chinatown Progressive Association addressed the influx of Chinese immigrants, especially to L.A., and the growing atmosphere of racism as seen in violence and expansion of anti-minority groups.

He also connected Reagan budget cuts with social service deterioration and bad working conditions.

Issues that concern the Korean community in Los Angeles, according to Duncan Lee of the Korean American Coalition, is the conflict between blacks and Koreans, the struggles of Korean businessmen, inadequate cultural services, and cases like Cho Soo Lee.

The event was endorsed by a number of organizations, but was largely sponsored by National Coalition for Redress/Reparations, the Japanese Citizen League (JACL) Pacific Northwest Division, and Little Tokyo People's Rights Organization (LTPRO).

The program had to be reorganized due to the late arrival of Senator Cranston, and was interrupted by the flow of people walking in and out. But the auditorium was full throughout the first two hours of the program.

"The program was a little too long," said an older Chinese man, "but I found the panel very interesting. It is good to hear about discrimination from other people—Chinese, Korean, Cambodian, Filipino."

—NAOMI HIRAHARA

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One survivor, Walter Tanaka of San Jose, remained in Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital in "fair" condition, according to a hospital spokeswoman.

Two others, Tom Masuda and Steven Jones, both addresses unknown, were treated and released.

Music Lessons

Redress Campaign Organizers Expect Tough Time

From Page 1

ing the birth of ethnic studies. It was then he received his introduction to the camp experience.

"Finding out about the camps put my own family's experiences into proper perspective," he revealed. "My father was a gardener who hated his job. He was an alcoholic. "My parents never socialized when I was growing up."

"But then I found out that before the war, my parents operated a store, and they used to socialize a lot," Nishio continued. "The camp experience had a tremendous negative impact on my family."

That realization led to his involvement in the civil rights to fight against the "blatant acts of racism" and then eventually to the redress campaign.

Echoing the sentiments of the other redress campaign leaders, Nishio called for unity with other Asian Pacific groups. "We must work not just as a Nikkei movement, but as part of a broader issue," he said. "But it's the responsibility for us as victims to raise the issue."

Nishio thinks chances are good that the redress bill will pass in Congress. "But the chances of Reagan signing it are not very strong," he said. "We have to get the bill through Congress and force Reagan to veto it."

Nishio stressed the need to establish an Asian Pacific network to address other Asian Pacific issues such as Asian Pacific immigration, Southeast Asian refugee problems, freedom for Pilipinos and Korean community affairs.

"I'm not knocking the JACL," he said. But we need to have an alternative organization. In any community, there should not be just one organization to represent a people."

If and when the redress bill is passed, Nishio said the NCRP would not want to be the adminis-

trator of the funds. "NCRP's should be a watchdog-advocacy role, he explained. "To see that the money goes to the community and not to the bureaucrats, to make sure the system is responsive to the people."

Persons not involved in the campaign who were interviewed after attending the Saturday program generally favored redress.

James Fujii, 76-year-old Nisei resident of Little Tokyo Towers said the program was "pretty good."

Fujii, who was one of the first to be voluntarily interned at Tule Lake from Portland ("I was tired of the horse stables at the assembly center in Portland), came all way to Gardena to witness the program, he said, "because my friends said go, so I came with the others."

He wasn't sure about redress, but said, "I want it. We should try for it. We have to work for it."

"I don't know if it will pass," he said. "Chances are kinda slim because the government is tightening up everywhere."

Fujii said if he received redress payments he would donate part of it to charity.

Mrs. Miye Maeda, 91-year-old Okinawa-born Issei who was interned at Poston, Arizona, came from Little Tokyo Towers to attend the event with her friend from Diamond Bar, Mrs. Mitsu Ryono.

Mrs. Maeda, who lived on a farm in the Delano area before the war, said in Japanese that she lost her strawberry crop and her farm with a new house on it when she was interned.

Mitsu Ryono, a native of Wakayama-ken, was interned at Gila, Arizona.

"Please tell the redress people to give redress funds to the old folks first," both elderly Issei women urged.

Art Nakahara, 66-year-old Nisei retired retail food clerk from San

Pedro, thought the program was "quite good, although it dragged at the end."

He said he attended with his wife "because people said to come. And I came for my own good."

Redress, he said, "is something we should try for. People might go against us, but we should strive for it. I'd be willing to work for it in some ways—support it, go to meetings, sign petitions.

Like the others interviewed, Nakahara wasn't sure of the chances of the redress bill's passage, "because of the times, the administration is trying to cut back."

Instead of awarding compensation to persons, he suggested giving the funds to help the Asian community.

Two Nisei women who not interned in camps during World War II attended the program because they "were very interested. We came to listen," said Midori Yasuda and Lily Ray, both of San Pedro.

The two women, who were

teenagers when the war broke out, relocated to Utah with their families before the evacuation to work as farm laborers. "I never saw snow until Utah," said Yasuda.

"I'm for redress," said Mrs. Yasuda. "I believe they should get it."

Mrs. Ray, 60, said they experienced no racial trouble in Utah. "They never saw Japanese before. We were a curiosity. And we were needed for farm labor. But it was hard on our parents."

Mrs. Ray said she was also for redress. "I think they should get it."

Ray is a distant relative of former California Assemblyman S. Floyd Mori, now a Utah businessman.

—TAKESHI NAKAYAMA

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