

NCRB BANNER

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NCRB CALLS FOR UNITY

Forty years after President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 (which incarcerated 120,000 Japanese and Aleuts into relocation camps) the U.S. government is finally "investigating" the questions of (1) whether a wrong was committed to those incarcerated, most of whom were permanent residents and citizens of the U.S., and (2) if a wrong was committed, what would be the redress (if any) to those unjustly interned. The body set up to conduct the investigation, the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC), held public hearings in several cities in Alaska and in the continental U.S. during the second half of 1981. NCRB and other Japanese community groups organized thousands of JA's to boldly speak out about the impact of the camp experience on themselves and the community. The message was clear: The U.S. government is responsible for making substantial, meaningful redress and reparations to the Japanese American community now.

Recommendations for a Bill

Now that the hearings are over, NCRB has two goals. The first is to continue to press the CWRIC to make its final recommendation a strong one in favor of substantial reparations. Secondly, we urge all JA redress/reparations groups and individuals to support a direct appropriations bill to be introduced into Congress. This bill needs to be developed by all interested parties and have the strong backing of the whole Japanese community, for only through a united community effort will we realize our goal of just monetary compensations.

As a result of testimonies at the CWRIC hearings and our dialogues with the community, NCRB has the following two recommendations to make as components of the bill:

1) direct, individual monetary compensation of a minimum of \$25,000 per individual, payable in one lump sum, free of administrative costs, and exempt from taxes.

We feel that the tremendous social, economic, and psychological trauma of the violation of constitutional rights requires meaningful restitution on the part of the U.S. government and that while there is no fair amount of restitution possible given the magnitude of the damages suffered, the figure of \$25,000 represents a symbolic amount

and as such is the minimally acceptable figure.

2) a community fund of 3 billion dollars which would be administered by a Community Trust Fund Board elected by the Nikkei community. Board members shall be elected regionally with regions divided equitably throughout the U.S., including urban and non-urban regions. Administrative costs shall be asked for at a rate of 2% in addition to the original amount. The sum of 3 billion shall be returned to the communities in 1 lump sum and priorities for the allocation of the funds shall be decided by each respective community based on their particular needs.

The evacuation and imprisonment of JA's destroyed the cohesion, unity, cultural, social, political, and economic life of the community. The community fund would enable the Japanese community to rebuild and meet the needs of the JA people.

Political Climate in U.S.

To win redress/reparations will be difficult in the face of severe cutbacks in health, education, and welfare and reversals in civil rights policies. The Isseis and older Niseis, more of whom are passing away each day, cannot wait until we are out of the Reagan era. There are thousands of Americans (other nationalities, elderly, disabled, women, and the poor) who can unite with our cause while we in turn support their efforts. We believe that the American people can be educated about the massive miscarriage of justice to the JA people and can understand that we are entitled to compensation and damages.

While Congress votes itself a 3 billion dollar raise and Reagan plans for a 280 billion dollar defense budget in 1983, we will continue to forge ahead for our just cause. The fight for reparations is a fight for justice and equality for all Japanese Americans, and it serves notice that we, in turn, will not tolerate the miscarriage of justice to other nationalities and minority groups. We shall continue to fight until we win!!

COMMISSION UPDATE

Per phone conversation with K. Shores/CWRIC staff person: Proposed extension of the Commission has passed the House of Rep. and is now slated to be heard in the Senate on January 25, 1982.

A STEP TOWARDS UNITY:

On December 19, 1981, Joe Morozumi, NCRR legal counsel, Bert Nakano, spokesperson and myself (Lillian Nakano) flew to Seattle to meet with the Seattle Community Committee on R/R (SCCRR). As we all know, the Seattle Committee actively and successfully organized and prepared the community for the hearings.

A Friday evening dinner was attended by some of the committee members - Cherry Kinoshita, Gordon Hirabayashi, Shosuke Sasaki, Henry Miyatake, Chuck Kato and Ken Nakano. The next day, we all met for luncheon and more getting acquainted which was nice. The formal meeting convened at one o'clock at the JACL office with Cherry Kinoshita and Gordon Hirabayashi co-chair and Karen Seriguchi, secretary/treasurer. In her opening statement, Cherry explained that the SCCRR was made up of various community organizations (JACL, veterans group and others), church groups and individuals. Further, that the SCCRR due to varying views in the committee, while unified in their support for R/R, had not as yet arrived at a position (or a way to achieve R/R). The process then of exchanging views and ideas with other R/R groups in the country was a step to develop that basis.

The meeting was mutually informative as ideas, perspectives and strategies of the respective groups were shared. A redress proposal to the CWRIC at the Seattle hearings, which is generally referred to as the "tax plan" was presented by Chuck Kato of Seattle. Briefly, this plan is a "...voluntary tax allocation plan limited to Aleut and Nikkei" with "...funds allocated to be placed in a special IRS Trust Fund from which payments will be disbursed." Accumulated funds from unclaimed and waived payments would then go to the Residual Fund, which in turn will be disbursed to Nikkei and Aleut community organizations. Individuals advocating the "tax plan" shared that their primary concern was getting redress in the form of cash. Thus, explaining that in the present climate of conservative government, racism and backlash, this plan was set out to avoid insurmountable barriers to redress.

In our NCRR presentation, we outlined our recommended proposal to the CWRIC which speaks to a direct appropriations bill for individual payment of \$25,000 and a 3 billion community fund. At the hearings JAs rallied around a just demand for reparations in the face of political realities, racism/backlash (Lillian Baker et al). The barriers are formidable and the road ahead difficult. A strong and united JA community and continued education not only within our JA community but to the general American public for broad support will be crucial to that end. On the community fund, we felt it is an important component of reparations because not only will the fund help to maintain our communities and needs of the Issei/Nisei, but it will also provide for the historical, cultural and social development of our sansei, yonsei and future generations. A lively discussion ensued from the standpoint of differing perspectives.

After the meeting, there was a viewing of the LA hearings video. A dinner and coffee-and-desert get-together that evening concluded our exciting visit with the Seattle group, and we left with deep gratitude to all of the SCCRR for making this meeting possible and for their warm hospitality throughout our visit.

Hopefully, this will begin a process of future meetings with the SCCRR and other groups in the country, so that through such exchanges, we can share our commonalities, discuss our differences and forge a united JA effort on R/R. We all felt that the meeting was significant and positive in that JAs are getting together, seeking ways to strengthen our ties, to unify and consolidate our efforts based on our common history and goals for R/R and in our overall struggle for Nikkei's fight for equality and power.

the NCRR would like to gratefully acknowledge the many individuals and organizations for their contribution and support. THANK YOU.

The following is a partial list of recent endorsers - participating organizations and supporters:

100/442nd Veterans Association.
Terminal Islanders.
The Lutheran Church in America -
(and the Asian Caucus).
Community Action Program(CAP) -
of the U.A.W./No. Calif.
Nikkei Student Union (UCLA).

REP. DYMALLY TO CARRY NCRR PROPOSAL TO CWRIC

Rep. Mervyn Dymally (D-Gardena) at a meeting with the NCRR October 24, offered to submit our three-point proposal for R/R to the Commission on Wartime Relocation & Internment of Civilians and to make the proposal an official entry in the Congressional Record.

Stating that he would speak to other Congressmen to build support for R/R, he also stressed the importance of strong support from our Nikkei Congressmen which will help to influence other congressmen. He urged the group to reach out to as many congressmen, caucuses, lobbying groups, civil rights groups, etc., throughout the country, getting the message out to gain the strongest support from all. There will be future follow-up meetings to discuss legislative strategy.

DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

The 1982 DAY OF REMEMBRANCE will be held on February 19/20 in JA communities throughout the West Coast, Chicago and New York. This year's significance of DOR not only reflects on the injustices suffered by 110,000 JAs 40 years ago, it also brings forth the historical Commission hearings held in our communities in the Summer/Fall of 1981 where thousands of JAs spoke out to demand just reparations.

The resolve and reaffirmation of that spirit will move us forward in this period as we continue our efforts to forge a UNITED and STRONG JA COMMUNITY. In our campaign for reparations unity and the broad support fr. other groups throughout the country will be crucial to our struggle. JAs unite! for JUSTICE NOW - REPARATIONS NOW!

The following is a list of programs and events sponsored by the NCRR on this Day of Remembrance:

LOS ANGELES: 2/20 1:00-3:00 March & Rally, 3:30 -Program at LT Towers.

SAN DIEGO: 2/20 2:00 Commemorative Program at the Ocean View Church

SAN FRANCISCO: 2/20 Commemorative Program at Christ United Presbyterian Church sponsored by the Bay Area Coalition for DOR.

SAN JOSE: 2/20 7:30-9:00 Commemorative Program at the Valley Methodist Church, sponsored by Nihonmachi Outreach Committee, (member orgn. of NCRR).

SACRAMENTO: 2/20 7:30 Commemorative Program at the Japanese United Methodist Church.

NEW YORK:

2/20 1:00
Commemorative Program
Japanese American
United Church

NEW YORK HEARINGS

On November 23, 1981, over 500 people filled the ballroom of the Roosevelt Hotel in New York where the CWRIC was conducting one of its final hearings.

Nikkei from all over the greater NY area attended = from Phila. Wash. DC, NJ and many suburbs bordering the city. The hearing was a result of persistent effort of JAs here who pushed for a NY hearing despite the Commission's initial decision to bypass the New York site. East Coast Japanese Americans for Redress (ECJAR) a broad coalition encompassing every major JA organization in New York, successfully organized what one sansei described as "the largest gathering of JAs that I have seen at one time in NY." The testifiers included many niseis, some issei and panels of sansei, professionals and others. Many touched on the particular experiences of East Coast JAs. The testifiers that demanded monetary reparations got the strongest applause from the audience. The exciting highlight was the beautiful camp-site displays by such artists as Mini Okubo & Henry Sugimoto.

The pulling together of this widely scattered JA communities into ECJAR was as important a development as the hearings itself. ECJAR, which was initiated by NCRR member organization and Concerned Japanese Americans, will continue to function as a loose network and is regrouping to sponsor a program for DOR.

We welcome all of those interested in this issue to become members of the coalition. You will be put on our mailing list and be informed of our upcoming activities. We also encourage any donations to help fund these activities, our mailings, and other educational work, and as a sign of your support. Please check the appropriate boxes below. *

☐ \$5.00 Individual Membership

☐ \$25.00 Organizational Membership

NAME

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TELEPHONE NO.

ADDRESS

STATE & ZIP

☐ Enclosed is my donation in the amount of \$

Mail your contributions to: National Coalition for Redress/Reparations