

NCRR BANNER



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HAVING SHARED A DARK PAST-

TULE LAKE: SHARING A BRIGHT FUTURE

By Tom Izu, San Jose

Forty years ago, thousands of Japanese Americans were forced into a desolate region of Northern California called Tule Lake. Facing extreme hardship and given little hope for the future, they made Tule Lake their home for nearly four years.

Forty years later, on June 5 and 6, more than 360 Issei, Nisei, Sansei and Yonsei returned to Tule Lake to participate in the 1982 Tule Lake Pilgrimage. Only this time, they came with a sense of determination and hope, eager to share and learn of their past, their heritage and eager to discuss what lies ahead for Japanese Americans.

This year's pilgrimage, sponsored by the Japanese Community Progressive Alliance of San Francisco, the Nihonmachi Outreach Committee of San Jose and the Sacramento chapter of the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations, was organized around the theme: "1942-1982: Our Struggle Continues".

More than 60 people from the San Jose area took part in the pilgrimage. Nikkei from Seattle, San Francisco, and Sacramento area joined San Jose's Nikkei during the busy weekend.

On Saturday, former internees gave a tour of the former camp site and recalled many feelings and experiences.

That afternoon, workshop discussions on the past, the present and the future covered Nikkei experiences and reflections, their concern over current issues such as assimilation and cultural identity and redress and reparations.

In the evening, a cultural program featured a diverse range of performers from traditional Japanese song and dance to contemporary jazz, by Nisei to yonsei actors, musicians and singers.

NCRR'S LEGISLATIVE CAMPAIGN

By BERT NAKANO

It is now 2 years since the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations (NCRR) came into existence. The purpose was to create a platform through which individuals and organizations can express sentiments and actions on this most crucial issue facing our Japanese American (JA) community. Members of NCRR have since organized diligently towards broadening the struggle for R/R. Mobilizing our communities for the CWRIC hearings was a major focus last summer. Our working jointly with various JACL chapters during the hearings period was again to maximize community participation throughout the nation in a coordinated effort with all R/R groups. We have always advocated a stance of mutual cooperation when possible, because it is in the interest of the community that is foremost to the issue.

The hearings are now past and the voluminous heart-wrenching testimonies must now be translated into DEEDS by the government and ACTION by the community. We are now at a most critical phase of the R/R campaign. It means objectively that we must focus all our energy towards fighting for justice. The U.S. government incarcerated its own citizens into concentration camps for 4 years, and the hardships, losses, and denial of basic rights are glaringly acknowledged facts. While our numbers may be small and our resources somewhat limited, our spirit is never to be deterred.

NCRR's position is clearly stated in our draft of a Bill which Congressman Dymally will introduce into Congress prior to the summer recess. The basis of our bill goes back to the principles which were adopted by NCRR at our November conference of 1980. The bill is comprised of: 1) \$25,000 direct individual payments to the victims and/or heirs; 2) a community fund of 3 billion dollars for the destruction of our communities; 3) a provision

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for "enabling legislation" which would allow for individuals to seek additional claims or through a class action suit. While the bill, as with all remaining legislation at the end of the 1982 year, is slated to die in the committee at the end of the 97th Congress (1981-1982), it will nevertheless serve four main purposes: 1) it will serve as a reminder and a reiteration to the Commission of the hearing's testimonies and demands put forth by the JA communities at the hearings; 2) it will serve as a basis by which other R/R organizations can compare and share their proposed approach to reparations; 3) it will be a vehicle by which we can concretely seek support from legislatures and organizations within and outside of our communities; and 4) it will create the way for a re-introduction of an R/R bill in the next (98th/1983-84) Congress.

A meeting with John Tateishi of the JACL Redress Committee was held on May 18. The steering committee also stressed the importance of making all such meetings and discussions public so that the community as a whole may be fully informed of what transpires between our organizations. A statement was published in all of the vernacular newspapers (see article in this issue of BANNER) as a first step, stating basically both organizations' desire to move towards unity and mutual cooperation in the interest of the community. Since winning meaningful reparations for all JAs is the main objective of all groups, strengthening our ties and developing a united effort will surely enhance our chances of waging a successful campaign.

It will also help to strengthen our community's ability to fight, not only

for R/R, but on numerous other issues facing us. What may well be the true reflection of our strength and determination in this struggle and all other struggles, is the common bond that will pull us together in the face of a formidable foe - the U.S. government. As the people cried out in the struggles of the 60's, "the people united will never be defeated!"

With the bill in hand, NCRR will continue to outreach to the community for more input and support by way of community meetings, house meetings, fundraisers, and others. We can encourage existing groups within our communities for support and involvement in this legislative campaign. One such way is for JA constituents to meet with their District Congressmen sharing and soliciting support for our bill. Gathering endorsements and support from organizations far and wide often involve months and months of preparation and process. There is much to be done. In this period, publicizing our bill nationwide, both on the Congressional level and throughout our communities, JA's and others, will be crucial to laying the groundwork for the massive support and backing needed in the successful passage of our bill. At the same time, the magnitude of this campaign requires us to objectively seek unity with other R/R groups in the country. The JACL, and possibly the Seattle or Chicago group, are similarly developing their formula for legislation. NCRR feels that it would be important to begin a dialogue in the spirit of mutual respect and cooperation that will help pave the way towards a common approach to R/R, thereby maximizing the attainment of reparations for all JA's.

NCRR LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETS WITH DYMALLY - 7/6/82

- 1) Congressman Dymally personally submitted draft to Legislative Council.
- 2) David Johnson, Dymally's legislative aide, will meet with Dymally on July 16 to discuss the progress and status of the bill.
- 3) Approximately end of July, NCRR will have final draft in hand.
- 4) Upon approval of draft by NCRR, Dymally will introduce bill in Congress early August. Additionally, a cover letter (by NCRR) accompanying the Bill will be sent to all Congressmen from Dymally's office in Washington.
- 5) Dymally to return to Los Angeles on August 7, to give a support statement at the AAND sponsored Hiroshima/Nagasaki program, at which time, an announcement of the bill will be included in statement.

LEGISLATIVE TIMELINE:

- 1) Bill likely to be assigned to the Judiciary Committee.
- 2) Possibly, a one-day hearing in October geared to media, with hopefully a bi-partisan composition of legislatures by invitation, as well as interneers, sponsored by the author (Dymally) and the sub-committee assigned.

NOTES:

Congressman Dymally has had preliminary briefings with Congressmen Lowry, Mineta, Matsui and others.

Also, the NCRR Legislative Committee has just completed a 26-page Supplementary Document (fact sheet) to accompany our bill. This document, the Bill and brochure will comprise our legislative packet in a booklet form. The printing of the brochure is slated for mid-August, at which time, our legislative packet will be ready for legislative and organizational outreach.



WHY I SUPPORT NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

The issue of nuclear disarmament is of growing concern among Japanese Americans, and millions of people throughout the world. As a sansei, and a member of NCRR, I'd like to share some of my thoughts on why I support the current movement for nuclear disarmament.

The build up of nuclear weapons by both the United States and the Soviet Union is incomprehensible. To imagine 50,000 nuclear weapons, or 95% of all nuclear weapons in the world, enough weapons to destroy all life on this planet several times over, is absurd.

But beyond the startling statistics about these bombs, missiles, etc., what has made the nuclear threat frighteningly real to me is learning about the hibakusha - the atomic bomb survivors. I never knew that there were over 4,800 nisei living in Hiroshima at the time of the bombing, and there were 500 - 700 of these survivors who returned to live in the United States. Hearing of their personal experience, of Hiroshima/Nagasaki, seeing pictures of the human suffering, and realizing that this happened to Japanese people - many of our relatives and loved ones - was enough for me to know that I should support nuclear disarmament.

Hibakusha suffered not just one atrocity - the bombing - but to this day have had to face the constant fear of contracting leukemia, cancer, and many other physical disorders resulting from their intense exposure to radiation. Their suffering has only been compounded by the U.S. government's refusal to give any form of medical assistance. Many of the hibakusha have to travel to Japan for free medical treatment that the Japanese government offers.

It was good learning of the formation of the Bay Area Asians for Nuclear Disarmament (BAAND), and the Asian Americans for Nuclear Disarmament (AAND) in Los Angeles. These committees of ministers, professionals, working people and students came together around their concern for the nuclear arms race, with particular attention toward supporting the struggle of the hibakusha for medical assistance. I think it's important for Asians to be involved, to have a voice in the disarmament movement which reflects our own concerns, and our particular experiences.

Both committees, BAAND and AAND are currently involved with planning the commemoration of Hiroshima/Nagasaki Day in early August, and are continuing broad outreach and educational work in the Asian communities.

I feel that it is our responsibility to support the just demand of the hibakusha for medical assistance from the government and the efforts for nuclear disarmament - for world peace, for our people, and for our future generations to come.

Kimi Maru
NCRR, SF Regional

TOWARDS UNITY-

NCRR - JACL HOLD NATIONAL MEETING

John Tateishi, JACL redress director, and Bert Nakano, national spokesperson for the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations, met in San Francisco on Tuesday, May 18, to discuss current strategies and future plans regarding the efforts to redress the wartime wrongs under study by the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC).

Donna Kotake of NCRR; Ron Wakabayashi, JACL national director; and Carole Hayashino, staff of the JACL redress committee were also present during the meeting.

Recognizing the significance of the redress campaign, Tateishi and Nakano agreed that the issue affects all Japanese Americans.

The support and cooperation of all sectors of the Japanese American community would be important to the success of efforts to obtain redress and reparations.

They agreed that mutual dialogue and cooperation between NCRR and the JACL national committee for redress would be important, especially at this time, since the CWRIC is completing its final report and recommendations to the United States Congress.

The JACL national committee for redress and the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations expect to continue discussions in the future.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

- July 30 - Benefit film showing of "SURVIVORS" for the Committee of Atomic Bomb Survivors, 7:30 p.m. at the Buddhist Temple of Alameda, 2325 Pacific Ave., Alameda. Donation: \$3.00 general \$1.50 seniors.
- August 1 - NCRR National Steering Committee meeting. 10:30 a.m. at the JCPA office, 1858 Sutter St., San Francisco.
- August 5 - Nihonmachi Outreach Committee General Meeting. 7:30 p.m. at Yu-Ai-Kai office, San Jose. Call Tom Izu (408) 294-2505.
- August 6 - Hiroshima/Nagasaki Commemoration, 6:00 p.m. Konko-Kyo Church, 1909 Bush St., San Francisco.

City-wide Program - 8:00 p.m., Japan Trade Center Peace Plaza, San Francisco.
- August 7 - Hiroshima/Nagasaki Commemoration & Candle Light March, 6:00 p.m., Old Nishi Temple, 1st and Central, Los Angeles.
- August 7&8- Nihonmachi Street Fair, 10-5 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, San Francisco Nihonmachi.
- August 20 - SF/Bay Area NCRR Regional Meeting, 7:30 p.m., California First Bank Hospitality Room (inside Trade Center), San Francisco.
- August 21 - Daruma Folk Festival, 10-2 p.m., Saratoga Lanes Parking Lot, Saratoga Ave. & Graves, near Prospect Rd., San Jose.
- August 28 - NCRR 2nd Anniverary Program & Film Showing of "HITO HATA", 7:00 p.m., San Francisco Buddhist Church, 1881 Pine Street, San Francisco. Donation: \$5.00 General, \$3.00 Seniors/under 12 years.

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