

NCRR BANNER



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FEBRUARY 19th A DAY OF REMEMBRANCE



SF REPARATIONS ORDINANCE PASSES

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed an ordinance on January 24, 1983, proposed by Supervisor Quentin Kopp, to provide up to \$5,000.00 for the Japanese American internees who were fired or lost seniority rights from their city/county jobs during WWII.

The new law would pay this amount to former Nikkei employees who were dismissed between 1942 and 1947. But, only former employees, not heirs, will be paid.

During this past year, a similar ordinance was initiated and passed by Los Angeles County for reparation payments to former Nikkei LA County workers.

The passing of these ordinances is a sign that the government admits there was an injustice done to the Japanese Americans during WWII. This is helping set a precedent for other cities and counties to pass similar ordinances in the near future.

A Day of Remembrance - Our Future Tasks

Each year, as we gather on this Day of Remembrance, which signifies the signing of Executive Order 9066 41 years ago "A Day of Infamy" - we resolve that we Japanese Americans will never forget, or let it happen to any other group of people. Voluminous accounts of the incarceration and the sufferings and losses incurred by 120,000 Nikkei are being shared and recorded. On this day, we also want to commemorate the Issei - our parents and grandparents who, as immigrants, suffered the brunt of racist discrimination throughout their lives. When they were hauled into the camps in 1942, this was but another blow upon the thousands of insults suffered. While they toiled the land which they had no right to own, while they were denied citizenship which they had every right to, and other injustices too numerous to list, the Issei persevered with pride and courage. Indeed, our proud history is their legacy to us, because they endured. Today, as we fight for reparations, it is already 40 years too late for the many Isseis who have passed away and this is a bitter pill to swallow.

But this Day of Remembrance, 1983, is not only a time to reflect, more importantly, it is a time to look ahead. The CWRIC report and recommendation is due to be public between now and June. Legislative bills by different groups are either ready to be introduced to Congress or soon to be completed. NCJAR plans to file its class action suit in the courts after the Commission makes public its findings. On the State, City and County level, bills have already passed to compensate the workers who lost their jobs as a result of the evacuation. Editorials in the various newspapers and TV media are now supporting monetary reparations. From all this movement, we can see that this is another turning point in our campaign. At the same time we all know that in this period of unemployment, recession and cutbacks, winning monetary reparations will be extremely difficult. What we have learned throughout the struggle is that people's

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efforts - relying on ourselves - is an important factor which makes up the drive and force of a powerful movement - and only such a movement can force the U.S. government to act upon redress. As a grassroots organization, NCRR has and will continue to aggressively organize and mobilize to build this movement - outreaching to churches, civil rights groups, labor, gardeners, veterans groups, on the campuses, etc.

In the last period, we saw the completion of NCRR's bill. This was introduced by Congressman Mervyn Dymally in the last lame duck session of Congress in December, 1982. We knew full well that the bill would terminate at the end of the special session, but our goals have been to: 1) build awareness in Congress and the American public of the issue and the demands, 2) to have the Commission made aware of the same, and 3) to provide a basis for other R/R groups to compare and share their proposed approaches to reparations. Basically, our bill HR7384 speaks to the direct individual payment of \$25,000 to evacuees or their heirs to compensate for violation of our rights and losses incurred as a result of E.O. 9066. HR7383 is for a community fund in the amount of 3 billion dollars to restore social, economic, and cultural well being to our communities which were disrupted and damaged as a result of E.O. 9066.

We are now at a critical juncture in our campaign - it is a time for the big push. We have finally come to a point where reparations is no longer a distant concept, but on the verge of becoming a reality. It means that we must first develop a final bill, and next, to focus all our efforts for the successful passage of that bill.

Within this realm, an all important component is the concept of unity, which has been foremost to the focus of NCRR throughout our existence. A community united in our common fight for redress.

Our NCRR initiated meetings with JACL back in May of last year, and with other R/R groups throughout the last period, were primarily to overcome division in our community and to create the way for a one-bill approach. To that end, our relationship with JACL has been positive. The fol-

lowing quote from a memo by Min Yasui, Chairperson of the JACL Committee on Redress, to its members, in November, 1982, reads as follows: "I concur with John Tateishi that coordination be had between the JACL and NCRR to develop a single bill on redress to be submitted to Congress and to work cooperatively in building nationwide support for such proposed legislation..." We have had communications with the Washington Coalition on Redress/Reparations, the Chicago and New York redress reparations groups which all help to strengthen this process.

Ron Wakabayashi of JACL, at a recent Little Tokyo People's Rights Organization (LTPRO) Community Forum on R/R, spoke on the different points which came out of their recent Redress Committee meeting. As a preliminary position, JACL would see direct individual payments made to evacuees or their heirs in the sum of \$50,000 per individual, with any unclaimed funds going towards a Trust Fund. The Washington Coalition bill which has Congressman Lowry's backing, also speaks to direct individual monetary payments. The direct individual payment approach appears to be common to all groups which would indicate a positive basis for mutual cooperation. NCRR also has a community fund portion in our bill and we are interested to know how others view this. Differences in approach and perspectives aside, NCRR feels that these exchanges, held in mutual respect and cooperation, will help to lay the basis for the process towards one bill. To that end, NCRR looks forward to having more formal meetings with all of the R/R groups.

With the interest of the entire community as a starting point, hopefully, out of the process, there will emerge one bill which can be enthusiastically supported and fought for by one community.

Winning monetary reparations will be difficult. But, we know too, that our righteous demands are not to be denied, and that we must rely on the power of the people- the drive and force of a powerful movement, to force the U.S. government to act on justice. The task is huge and the campaign requires the commitment and involvement of everyone of us in our communities in order to build that kind of movement. We encourage everyone to join in this fight for JUSTICE NOW, REPARATIONS NOW!

The passage of our now historic "Day of Remembrance" resolution by the Sacramento City Unified School District last year was not an end in and of itself. It was the beginning of shaping our community's future and correcting and understanding an unjust and racist event in our history.

Upon beginning our campaign, we felt that education about the camps in particular would build an understanding of this significant chapter in Japanese American history and benefit the entire Sacramento community.

Consequently, Sacramento NCRR joined together with the Southside People's Art Collective to sponsor an educational project. In order to determine the needs of the teachers in the school district, NCRR/SPAC developed a survey to be utilized by secondary level Social Science and English Literature instructors in the five district high schools. We had hoped to present the survey ourselves during staff meetings at each of the schools. We had not anticipated the degree of difficulty in implementing just this survey. School district bureaucracy prevented NCRR/SPAC from conducting the survey ourselves. Nevertheless, with the assistance of the Human Relations Office of the district, our survey was released and circulated in January. To date, there have been approximately 60-70 responses. In general, comments have been favorable and indicate an interest in the development of an audio-visual project. The possibilities for development of other resources for a complete "curriculum packet" are numerous.

Our actions have encouraged the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) to develop and sponsor a district-wide "Day of Remembrance" workshop, which was held on February 1. NCRR was asked to assist in the development of the workshop and invited to participate as presenters.

We are particularly proud of our work and encouraged by similar campaigns in other school districts. The Florin JACL has asked permission to use our resolution as the basis for a similar "Day of Remembrance" declaration by the Elk Grove Unified School District. Action on this resolution will take place on February 7. Sacramento NCRR plans to submit a letter of support and be present during the Board meeting.

The evacuation and internment of Americans of Japanese ancestry in 1942 has been a long ignored episode in school textbooks. In a step toward changing this, the Oakland and Berkeley Unified School Districts recently passed resolutions proclaiming February 19th, the day Executive Order 9066 was signed, as a "DAY OF REMEMBRANCE" within the schools. Both resolutions were patterned after one initiated by the NCRR and adopted in the Sacramento City School District last year.

In Berkeley, speakers of all ages, representing the NCRR, the Berkeley Asian Youth Center, and the Berkeley Historical Society spoke about the injustice of the incarceration and its devastating impact on the Nikkei community. Over 40 Nikkei from the community, ranging from administrators to high school students, packed the school board meeting to help win this victory.

In Oakland, about 15 Nikkei school district employees attended the meeting to show their support. Joseph Morozumi, an Oakland attorney and NCRR member, testified about being "stripped of our constitutional rights, imprisoned without charge or trial, simply because of our race." As in Berkeley, school board members passed the resolution unanimously and responded to the presentation with strong statements of support.

These resolutions are but one step toward helping to bring this issue into the educational institutions. The real meaning of these Day of Remembrance resolutions will only be realized through implementing a meaningful curriculum in our schools to educate future generations about the racist, unconstitutional acts perpetrated against Japanese Americans by the U.S. government.

Currently, our goal is to involve more community people in the creation of a relevant curriculum packet. Although NCRR feels positive about our goal in achieving the establishment of a truthful and relevant curriculum around the Japanese American experience, we also realize that the educational process is a never-ending struggle. It is the responsibility of the entire community to insure that our experiences, our history never be neglected again.

SUCCESSFUL BENEFIT FOR NCRR

Eager members and supporters of the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations (NCRR) packed the Asian American Theater Company building to the rafters on January 22nd. The occasion was a benefit performance of R.A. Shiomi's new play about Gordon Hirabayashi, "Point of Order". The news that Gordon Hirabayashi himself would be the featured speaker at a program immediately following the play generated such an enthusiastic response that tickets were sold out a week prior to the event. Those lucky enough to obtain tickets heard Hirabayashi speak about some of the events that influenced his monumental decisions to ignore the curfew imposed on all Japanese, citizen and alike, and to refuse to enter the WWII internment camps. Hirabayashi also spoke about some of his thoughts on the play and mentioned some of his hesitations when Shiomi first broached the idea of writing about him. Hirabayashi said he felt that sort of thing "ought to be done after I'm gone." He also had some doubts about whether someone born after WWII could really understand and successfully write about what he and almost 120,000 others went through during that period.

Playwright R.A. Shiomi and Dennis Hayashi of the Committee to Reverse the Japanese American Wartime Cases participated with Hirabayashi in a panel moderated by Mari Matsumoto of the NCRR. Shiomi said that writing a play based on Hirabayashi's experiences was "just like a dream." He called Hirabayashi's story "incredible... and as I did the research I found it even more incredible." Anyone seeing the play would be impressed by the enormous amount of research that went into its writing; however, Shiomi said the amount of information uncovered in turn presented difficulties in trying to synthesize everything into a coherent, workable drama.

Dennis Hayashi spoke of the Petitions for a Writ of Error Coram Nobis recently filed by the CRJAWC on behalf of Fred Korematsu, Gordon Hirabayashi and Min Yasui. The petitions were filed, he said, because new documents have come to light showing that the Justice Department and other high-ranking government officials collaborated in changing, suppressing, and destroying evidence which might have affected the Supreme Court decisions against Hirabayashi and the other two petitioners. Matsumoto

Gardena Community Forum On Redress/Reparations

On January 22, the Gardena Chapter of the NCRR sponsored a community forum on redress/reparations. Speakers included June Kizu (NCRR), Alan Shigekuni (JACL), Joyce Okinaka (NCJAR), as well as Frank Chuman and Alan Terakawa who have been heavily involved in the petition for writ of Coram Nobis, and Gardena councilman Mas Fukai.

The forum was encouraging for a number of reasons. Many people contributed their skills, effort and time to help organize and publicize the event, including our speakers, who came from all over the city. Best of all, while outlining the achievements and recent directions of their respective organizations, the speakers created a sense of how far we have been able to come. At the same time, as June Kizu noted: *"This is a turning point in our community... our real work is now--to get a substantial concrete amount..."*

Each of the speakers indicated agreement with this basic principle, and the forum provided a sense of how close we could be to a single bill. As Frank Chuman pointed out, such a bill will build nationwide support, if Japanese Americans take up the initiative and unite for justice.

expressed the NCRR's support of the CRJAWC's efforts saying that "one of NCRR's principles is to see that the Supreme Court cases are overturned, and we feel that you (CRJAWC) have taken a first step toward that goal." Because of the evening's tremendous success, the NCRR was able to present a check for \$150.00 to the CRJAWC as a tangible expression of its support. Hirabayashi called the current efforts of the CRJAWC as "important battle" of which he was proud to be part of.

Following the program, the audience stayed to enjoy the delicious snacks prepared by NCRR members, and to talk further with Hirabayashi, Shiomi, Hayashi, and other members of the "Point of Order" cast. The satisfied audience agreed that NCRR had turned "An Evening with Gordon Hirabayashi" into "an evening to remember."

Day of Remembrance Activities Across the U.S.

CHICAGO: "The Weekend of Remembrance", Friday, February 18, 7:30, Midwest Buddhist Temple, and Sunday, February 20, 7:30, Buddhist Temple of Chicago, "HITO HATA: Raise the Banner"; Saturday, February 19, 7:30 Northwestern Univ. Law School, Panel Discussion and Open Forum, sponsored by the Japanese American Redress Committee of Chicago and the Asian American Law Students Association.

LOS ANGELES: "United for Justice -- Remember the Issei", 5:30 p.m. Gather at Nishi Hongwanji, 6:00 - Candlelight procession through Little Tokyo; 7:00 - Program at Koyosan Buddhist Temple, sponsored by the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations - Southern California Regional and the Japanese American Citizens League - Pacific Southwest District.

NEW YORK: "Yesterday...9066 * Today...Redress/Reparations", February 19, 4:00 p.m. Japanese American United Church, Pot-luck Dinner/Cultural Program, Discussion: Up-date/Proposed Bills/Class Action Suit, hosted by Concerned Japanese Americans.

SACRAMENTO: Town Hall Meeting, Florin Buddhist Church Gymnasium, 7:00 p.m., Keynote Speaker: John Tateishi, JACL Redress Director; Historical Exhibit, Reflection: Lessons from the Past, February 18, 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. Saturday, February 19, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., sponsored by the Florin JACL and the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations - Sacramento Chapter.

SAN DIEGO: Day of Remembrance Program, Sunday, February 20, 1:30, San Diego Buddhist Church; Saturday, February 19, 11:00 a.m., Press Conference, San Diego Buddhist Church, sponsored by the San Diego Redress/Reparations Committee and the San Diego JACL.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA: "A Day of Remembrance - A Time for Action - United for Justice", San Francisco Program, February 19, 1:30, Christ United Presbyterian Church; Berkeley Program, February 19, 7:30, Jefferson School, Rose & Sacramento Streets, sponsored by the Bay Area Day of Remembrance Committee.

SAN JOSE: "Commemorate Day of Remembrance 1983 - A Community United - In Movement Toward Justice", Candlelight Procession & Commemorative Program, Sunday, February 20, Pre-Procession Program, 5:30, Buddhist Betsuin of San Jose, Candlelight Procession, 6:00, from Betsuin through Japantown to Wesley United Methodist Church, Reception, 6:20 and Commemorative Program, 7:00, Wesley United Methodist Church, sponsored by the Nihonmachi Outreach Committee.

SEATTLE: Day of Remembrance Program, February 19, 12 noon, Nisei Veterans Hall, 1212 So. King Street, featuring, Congressman Lowry, Katherine Bannai and Gordon Hirabayashi, sponsored by the Seattle JACL.

BOSTON: Day of Remembrance Program, February 19, 2:30 p.m., 27 Beach Street, Boston Chinatown, with singers Hiroshi Murphy and C.Y. Anderson, sponsored by the Asian American Resource Workshop.

STATE R/R LEGISLATION UPDATE

The Sacramento NCRR Regional reports that 275 claims for monetary reparations have been filed by former Nikkei state employees under AB 2710 (Patrick Johnston). AB 2710, the first legislative enactment to provide redress or reparations (outside the 1948 Evacuation Claims Act), was signed into law by Governor Brown on August 17, 1982 and became effective on January 1, 1983. This legislation authorizes up to \$5,000 in monetary compensation to Nikkei state employees who were fired or forced to resign as a result of Executive Order 9066.

Assemblyman Johnston's legislative aide, Priscilla Ouchida, states that clean up legislation may be required in order to permit former University of California and California State College employees to benefit from AB 2710.

The \$5,000 reparations provided by AB 2710 will be paid over a 4-year period. Claims must be submitted by May 15, 1983; because of limited funding this year, however, claimants are urged to file as soon as possible. Only the affected former employee is eligible to file a claim; heirs are not eligible. All interested individuals should contact Priscilla Ouchida by writing her c/o Assemblyman Patrick John-

ston, State Capitol, Room 4143, Sacramento California 95814, or by calling her at (916) 445-7931. Claim forms should be obtained from her at the same location.

The success of AB 2710 has sparked movements to provide similar reparations to local government employees in several areas, including Los Angeles County and San Francisco County. It has also encouraged efforts to obtain additional redress and reparations legislation at the state level. This year, Senator Ralph Dills has introduced SB 164, providing additional retirement credit for state employees interned or detained during WWII. Assemblyman Willie Brown has introduced ACR 26, which would recognize February 19 as an annual Day of Remembrance recalling the detention of Americans of Japanese ancestry.

The Sacramento Regional of NCRR will continue its efforts to support redress and reparations legislation at the state level, and thereby build momentum for a Congressional bill. We believe that the broad support for state and local redress and reparations legislation already demonstrates the viability of obtaining redress and reparations through legislation on a national level.

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