

# NCRR BANNER

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## CWRIC RECOMMENDATION ISSUED

NCRR is pleased with many aspects of the CWRIC recommendation, but feels that the recommendation did not adequately address community concerns about heirs, the Aleuts, and "pardons". We feel that it is a victory for the Japanese American community that the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) has come out with a recommendation for individual payments for the injustice of the camps. During the CWRIC hearings in 1981, hundreds of people voiced the unanimous demand for monetary reparations.

The CWRIC report itself was positive in that it brought out the "enormous damages and losses, both material and intangible" suffered by the JAs. It concluded that no military necessity justified the exclusion, "...the broad historical causes that shaped these decisions were race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership". It went on to say that this event "...did happen here" and that "this message must be transmitted, not as an exercise in self-laceration but as an admonition for the future."

We felt that the HEIRS of those interned should be entitled to reparations. The camps were an injustice to all those interned, not just those who are still living. Almost half of the internees have already passed away, and many of the internees still living are in advanced years. To pay only living internees may encourage Congress to delay a decision until even more internees have passed away. Further, the children of internees have been directly impacted by the incarceration - economically, socially, culturally and psychologically, resulting in loss of identity, culture, language, etc.

We also felt that the amount of \$5,000 per individual Aleut is a token amount. We object to such a large disparity between what is being recommended

for Japanese Americans and for the Aleuts.

While the recommendation's amount of \$20,000 per individual (or 1.5 billion total) is significant, we reiterate that this does not reflect the severity of the losses incurred.

Regarding the pardon by the President of the U.S. in the cases where individuals were unjustly convicted of curfew violations or refusal to submit to incarceration, we felt that the term "pardon" implies criminal complicity. In the case of the entire Japanese population, it is clear that we were the victims instead.

While we feel that it is a victory for the Japanese American community, this is but a first step leading to a more protracted struggle in our fight for successful legislation. We have heard people say "all this happened 40 years ago". The culmination of years of anti-Japanese discrimination and injustices resulted in the camps and while some may see this as history, it is not totally erased from our lives even today. Similar kinds of anti-Asian, anti-immigration legislation, prejudice and violence are being directed to all Asians. Apart from the hostilities arising out of the anti-import issues, there is the backlash already emerging out of the very fact that the camps issue is being re-raised and a demand for reparations, no less, is being made. Indeed, it is because of and in spite of this pervasive racist climate that our fight for reparations becomes a relevant issue in our community in our fight for justice and equality.

In our community, a positive and significant first step in an effort to achieve unity among the various RR groups occurred on April 23 in Reno by representatives of JACL, NCRR and WCR. The following is a joint statement resulting from that meeting:

The leadership of JACL, NCRR, and WCR recognizes that the ultimate objectives of the three organizations in regards to redress are:

1. Substantial monetary compensation in an amount reflective of the overwhelming testimonies presented at the Commission Hearings.
2. Direct individual payments to evacuees and their heirs within a reasonable amount of time for losses and violations of basic human rights imposed by arbitrary actions of the Federal Government under Executive Order 9066 during WWII.

In recognition of the commonalities of these objectives, the JACL, NCRR, and WCR agree that monetary reparations must be paid to individuals, that the above groups would cooperate to develop such legislation, and to obtain the most effective sponsorship possible. Additionally such legislation should provide funds to compensate for community losses and such funds should be authorized for community projects and other purposes as would benefit surviving evacuees and their descendants.

JACL, NCRR, and WCR agree to continue meeting to discuss unresolved issues and refinements in approaches to redress.

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was general consensus to a common approach to the meeting indicated that major areas of agreement appeared to outweigh the differences.

Within NCRR itself, there have been lively discussions in the regional around the general parameters of our position as a basis for this possible joint bill with the other RR groups. From this, the National Steering Committee of NCRR arrived at the position that the bill must compensate, in substantial amounts, individuals and/or their heirs, in a timely fashion, with additional funds to compensate the community. The discussions helped to reiterate NCRR's overall perspective to the RR strategy, which is to help build a responsible and winning campaign for all JA's. Given the enormous task before us, it seemed imperative for all groups to rise above the "my" and move towards an "us" approach. What we all have in common, it seems, is the need for successful legislation to benefit the entire community.

Hopefully, out of the future meetings with all of the RR groups differences will be resolved to make way for a positive step towards developing a common bill and a common strategy. Beyond a workable strategy, it will take the entire community to implement it step by step. The task of winning reparations will fall on each and everyone of us. Grassroots organizing will be crucial in this next period. We must force the issue to the politicians by every means available. We will need the strong support of civil rights organizations, church groups and many others throughout the nation to make this issue heard and for a favorable passage of a reparations bill. Thus, in the aftermath of a bill in Congress, lobbying on a grassroots level will require organization, resources and financing. In the upcoming period, the involvement by everyone in our community will be key to a successful RR campaign. We must unite and we must organize for JUSTICE AND REPARATIONS NOW!

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#### SAC'TO COUNTY PAYS REPARATIONS

The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors voted 4-0 on April 26, 1983, to pass an ordinance establishing a memorial fund in recognition of the injustices created by the evacuation of Japanese Americans during World War II. The ordinance stipulates that Japanese Americans who lost their county civil service jobs as a result of the evacuation during World War II can be compensated from the memorial fund which will be set up during budget session in August.

Supervisor Illa Collin introduced the proposal which will set aside approximately \$35,000 for the memorial fund. Eligible employees would apply to the fund for up to a maximum sum of \$5,000. Applications should be received no later than June 30, 1984. The fund will be divided among the eligible employees up to a maximum of \$5,000 each which can either be paid in a lump sum or in four equal installments, whichever is preferred. County employees of Japanese ancestry who lost their jobs between March 2, 1942, and June 30, 1946, because of forced evacuation into internment camps will be eligible for repayment. Survivors of the former employees would not be eligible.

Anyone knowing the names and addresses of eligible persons are urged to call Supervisor Illa Collin in her Sacramento office at (916) 440-5481, or write to her at 700 H Street, Suite 2450, Sacramento, California 95814.

The NCRR along with the JACL Sacramento Chapter were consulted by Collin's office prior to its introduction for community input and refinement of content. We also initiated a letter writing support campaign as well as planned strategy for the presentation before the County Board of Supervisors.

#### ESTELLE ISHIGO EXHIBITS CAMP SKETCHES

The NCRR, Los Angeles, and the Amerasia Bookstore and Gallery present a display of Estelle Ishigo's concentration camp sketches from August 6 - 21 at Amerasia, 321 Towne Avenue, Los Angeles. Also, meet Mrs. Ishigo, author of Lone Heart Mountain (1972), in person on August 14 from 11 - 1 p.m. and on August 21 from 2 - 4 p.m. at Amerasia. Her display is part of NCRR's participation in Los Angeles's Nisei Week activities.

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