



# NCRR BANNER

## NATIONAL COALITION FOR REDRESS/REPARATIONS

### WASHINGTON D.C. HEARINGS

by Bert Nakano, NCRR

The hearings held in Washington D.C., on April 28, on the Civil Liberties Act of 1985, held by the Judiciary Subcommittee on Administrative Law and Governmental Relations were overall positive. Of the 33 witnesses who testified, seven were opposing, including Daniel Lundgren (R. Long Beach) who is strongly against monetary reparations. The hearings began at 9:30 am, going non-stop until 6:30 pm with two 5 minute breaks in between. The scenario was generally similar to the previous hearing with the exception of a few new faces.

The Chair of the sub-committee was Rep. Dan Glickman (D. Kansas) who replaced Rep. Sam Hall (D. Texas) who took a federal judgeship position in Texas. Glickman's posture appears to be sympathetic albeit with some caution. His closing statement that he will move it out of the committee after the Aleuts Hearing came with the condition that a consensus of 219 votes would be a plus to the campaign. Another positive point is that the majority whip Jim Wright (D. Texas), the original sponsor of HR442, is next in line for the position of Speaker of the House replacing Tip O'Neil who is retiring. The minority leader of the sub committee Rep. Thomas Kindness (R. Florida) is part of the opposition and will not return as he is running for the Senate seat in Florida.

On the minus side, we are now getting some indication of what if any is the executive branch of the government's view of the whole reparations matter. A position paper put out by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs (Office of the Attorney General) and signed by the Assistant Attorney General was presented at the hearings.

In brief, the main thrust of this paper contends that: "In our view, the Commission's extensive effort to study the wartime relocation and internment program, despite its apparent thoroughness, proved the futility of endeavoring accurately and completely to comprehend the perception of our national leaders under the extreme wartime conditions of the period..."; that "the internees were among the millions of innocent victims of World War II, confined in the wake of the unprovoked attack on Pearl Harbor and the very real fear of a Japanese invasion of

the West Coast..."; that "The American Japanese Claims Act enacted in 1948" would conclude that most Japanese Americans submitted their claims under that act...".

Reference to the conclusion of the Commission that the evacuation was wrong and to brand the action as the result of "racial prejudice, hysteria and failure of political leadership" is deemed suspect and "best left to historical and scholarly analysis rather than debated by Congress."

## Washington, D.C. Hearings (cont.)

The paper argues on numerous other points on the Commission's findings but the clear message is affirmed in the final statement which recommends against the enactment of this legislature. The position paper is obviously the monkey wrench with which to stop some of the momentum of the legislative campaign, and will only help to sow political confusion and division on the issue.

Suffice it to say, we as Japanese Americans can no more accept the view that the evacuation was an isolated incident based on wartime hysteria and national security, nor ignore the fact that basic human and constitutional rights were abrogated in this process. The position paper indeed brings out that out.

It also brings to mind that we cannot assume that our government and political leadership will exercise correct judgement. Having experienced the concentration camp, we have the responsibility of questioning the integrity of those whose leadership ability to implement justice and to expose hypocrisy and sham democracy for what it is.

Our struggle for justice and reparations will be a protracted one and our resolve will be tested time and again. Grassroots movement in this campaign is still a critical and necessary component to help move it forward to victory. A victory for Japanese Americans in this issue will be a victory for all people in the struggle for democracy and justice.

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## **JAPPS-THE STRUGGLE FOR DIGNITY** by Miles Hamada

In February 1985, NCRR initiated a campaign against a West Hollywood hair salon named "J.A.P.S.S." It is the position of NCRR the term "Japs" is a racist, derogatory term, even though the owners say they have no intention to offend

anyone. The owners formed the name from the first initial of each of their names and for its "effect and sound". Prior to NCRR taking on this issue, the JACL contacted the hair salon owners and stated their concern that the term was offensive and should be changed. The owners replied that they liked the name and would continue using it and in fact were considering expanding their hair salon. NCRR subsequently met with the owners and received a similar answer. JACL and NCRR began coordinating efforts to develop plans to address our concern.

Community response and public pressure has been key in this campaign. NCRR would not accept the owner's position and mobilized members and supporters to hold a large public demonstration at the hair salon with extensive news media coverage. The owners still maintained their position even with the bad press they received. Following the demonstration, many persons from the Japanese American community and the broader community, outraged in hearing that any establishment would be so insensitive to use a blatantly racist name began flooding the hair salon with phone calls stating their concern and that the name should be changed.

A petition drive was also initiated by NCRR and over 2000 persons signed. The petitions were presented to the owners to show that not just a handful of people were concerned. Many groups have become involved by contacting the salon. The Commission on Human Relations of the County of Los Angeles is among those who wrote repeatedly to try to persuade the owners to change the name.

Picketing of the hair salon was scheduled twice a month on Saturdays, the busiest day for the hair salon. Clients have been talked to and some of the new clients did have hesitation going in and other said they would not go there.

Concurrently, along with the petition drive, phone calling, letter writing, and picketing of the hair salon, other avenues of putting pressure on the owners were taking place. The City Council of West Hollywood, known for its



## JAPSS (cont.)

progressive stance on discriminatory signage, was contacted. Members of the City Council did show their support and wrote numerous letters to the hair salon owners asking them to change the name.

Due to the negative response the City Council did receive, the City Council supported the request for a public hearing on the matter. In December of 1985, a long and intense public hearing was held and at this crucial public hearing, the owners, for the first time said they will change the name, given some time, perhaps two months to a year having to raise funds for the change. A victory for the people! But the battle is not over, although the owners did say they will change the name, they have not shown any good faith efforts to support their intentions to change the name. The phone is still answered "Japs Hair Salon" and the existing neon sign remains lit at night.

NCRR and JACL has continued its efforts and in April the West Hollywood City Council passed a resolution stating, "...Whereas, the useage of the name J.A.P.S.S. has created a public outcry and caused numerous complaints, particularly from the Japanese American community. Now, therefore be it be resolved, that the City of West Hollywood declares that the term "Japs" is regarded by many as an ethnic slur and strongly recommends to the owners of said hair salon that the name be changed as soon as possible."

NCRR has tried to meet and talk with the owners and has been refused. The owners have not provided the public with any information of their name change progress since the public hearing in December. NCRR believes continual pressure must be continued on the hair salon owners. The owners did make the statement that they will change the name. For everyone concerned, it is of critical urgency that the name be changed now. For more information call Miles Hamada at (213)628-2725.

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## 10,000 NAVAJOS TO BE EVACUATED. JAPANESE- AMERICANS PROTEST!

by Aki Maehara

As an activist working in the Redress and Reparations movement, I had the opportunity to attend a Youth and Elders Conference which was held on the Navaho-Hopi reservation at Big Mountain from April 23rd through April 27th. While there, I learned that the Big Mountain forced relocation issue has many similarities to the forced relocation and concentration camp policy the Japanese Americans had to endure during World War II.

In 1974, Congress passed the Navaho-Hopi Land Settlement Act, Public Law 93-531, which arbitrarily divides 1.8 million acres of land known as the Joint Use Area from the rest of the Navaho-Hopi reservations. Rather than allowing both peoples to continue sharing the JUA as they have done for over one hundred and fifty years, Public Law 93-531 calls for the removal of the Navaho to their respective side of the reservation and applies to the Hopi in the same manner.

The press and other media have described this as a legislative remedy to disputes between the Navaho and Hopi tribal governments. The real reason for the law is to evict the Navaho-Hopi people from their lands and to weaken Native American sovereignty, and thus give the energy monopolies direct access to the Joint Use Area's mineral-rich land. Eighty to ninety percent of the coal, oil, uranium, gold and timber in the United States is located on Native American reservation lands. Traditional Navaho and Hopi peoples have continuously resisted the exploitation of their land.

In October of 1985, Congress passed the McClure Amendment which waives the Native Americans' right to sovereignty on their reservations, waives the need for environmental impact studies which are required before any mining operation can take place, calls for the immediate

## Navajos Evacuated (cont.)

bulldozing of Native American homes, and calls for the immediate forced relocation of all Native American living within the Joint Use Area.

In sum, these two legislative policies spell out genocide for the Native American peoples now living in the Joint Use Area. What is at stake is the right of the Native Americans to govern themselves and maintain their culture, language and traditional way of life.

Just as the media misrepresented the Japanese-Americans prior to and during the war by printing articles about spies, subversiveness and the unassimilationist orientals, the major press is misrepresenting the issue at Big Mountain by describing it as intertribal warfare. In Newsweek, the Los Angeles Times and other major newspapers there is no mention of PL93-531, nor is there mention of the McClure Amendment and its impact on the Native American people.

Another similarity is that the United States government will not recognize the traditional leaders of the Navaho-Hopi peoples, which are their Elders. Instead, the U.S. government will only interact with an ad hoc tribal council made up of five men. Women are the traditional leaders of the Navaho-Hopi peoples and are the only ones recognized as being able to sign treaties. This is the same policy the United States government used in dealing with the Japanese during their stay in the concentration camps. The U.S. government would not recognize the elder Issei as the traditional community leaders, but instead would talk only to the young Nisei.

In addition, it must be remembered that it was the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), which trained the people who ran the War Relocation Authority. It is the BIA which is helping the U.S. government to carry out its harassment of the Navaho-Hopi peoples to motivate their compliance with PL93-531 and the McClure Amendment.

On July 7, 1986, the Navaho-Hopi forced relocation deadline will fall and federal troops will be called in to enforce the policies of PL93-531 and the McClure Amendment. Not since the forced relocation of the Japanese Americans during World War II has anything of this nature taken place.

As Nikkei, who have endured the injustice of a forced relocation policy, we should be compelled to lend our support to the Navaho-Hopi peoples in their efforts to repeal PL93-531 and the McClure Amendment. The Southern California Chapter of NCRR and the Big Mountain Legal Defense/Offense Committee will be co-sponsoring a fund-raising showing of the Academy award-winning documentary, Broken Rainbow, which is about the struggles of the Navaho-Hopi peoples face at Big Mountain. This program will take place on Sunday, June 8th, at 2:00 pm, at the Japan America Theatre located at 244 S. San Pedro Street, Los Angeles. Ticket are \$7.00 each with a \$5.00 rate for students and senior citizens.

Your support is greatly needed. Contact Ms. Dawn Lionel, (213)456-5809, (213)393-7877, Big Mountain Legal Defense/Offense Committee at 1354 W. Washington Blvd., Venice, CA 90291 or Alan Nishio, NCRR, (213)498-5148 or (213)329-7873.

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## EDITORIAL

Excerpted from: Redress: More Work in Midst of Victories,  
by Gordon Nakagawa, NCRR

There is good reason for guarded optimism on the legislative front. In the House Subcommittee on Administrative Law and Governmental Affairs (where H.R. 442 awaits action), there are six co-sponsors of the bill, and the chair is sympathetic; since there are ten members on this committee, only two more votes (for a total of six) are needed to assure passage of H.R. 442 to the full committee. The full House Judiciary Committee has a total of 35 members including 14 co-sponsors of the bill; thus, only four more votes are needed for a majority. In the full House there are currently 114 co-sponsors, and a total of 218 is needed for House passage of the bill. Representatives Mineta and Matsui are optimistic concerning the bill's chances for passage, once it reaches the floor of the full House.

In the Senate, while there are only two co-sponsors of the bill in the full Governmental Affairs Committee (with a total of 13 members), the power of the committee chair, Senator Ted Stevens, a strong supporter of S. 1053, should not be underestimated. Stevens is currently the Senate Majority Leader, and in that position, he wields substantial influence both in the full committee and on the floor of the House, thus enhancing the prospects for the bill's eventual passage. With 27 co-sponsors (among them the highly respected senators Daniel Inouye and Spark Matsunaga), 24 additional votes (for a majority of 51) are needed; but as the JACL's Legislative Education Committee has noted, "Many bills have become law with fewer co-sponsors."

The redress and reparations movement, then, remains alive and well, as all three arms of the struggle - the *caram nobis* cases, the class-action suit, and the legislative campaign - continue to adapt to changing circumstances and to advance their respective causes, all in the service of justice for the Nikkei community. But it is critical to understand that these three strands are woven into the same fabric: the victories of each have been made possible only by virtue of the groundwork laid by the cumulative past achievements of the entire R/R movement and of the Nikkei

community as a whole. And every gain by one part of the movement complements the continuing efforts of the others.

Redress and reparations will not be won by any single organization, nor by any single court decision, nor by the passage of any single piece of legislation. Redress and reparations will be won only by a community united, a community committed to building a common future in which narrow loyalties and differing strategies give way to a coordinated struggle for justice and full equality. Not until all surviving Issei, Nisei and Sansei, imprisoned behind barbed wire over 40 years ago, gain legal redress and monetary reparations for wrongs committed, can any of us say that we have won.

But there is even more at stake than the winning of R/R: the on-going formation of the Nikkei community as a social and political force. We must ask ourselves: After R/R is won, what lies beyond? The answer to that question will be determined now, as we draw upon the opportunities of the present and the sources of our past in bridging our struggles and in forging new alliances as we move toward a common future.

## KEEP FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE!

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

NCCR is an all volunteer organization  
All donations/dues go directly to  
support redress activities.

General Membership  
\$10.00 per year

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