



September 1986

NCCR BANNER

NATIONAL COALITION FOR REDRESS/REPARATIONS

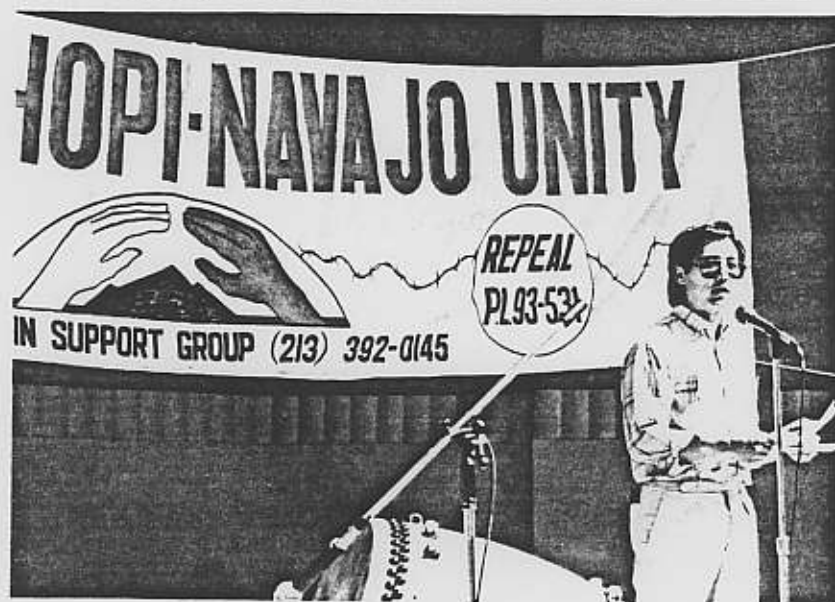
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The 99th Congress is coming to a close. Congress adjourns in October and all legislative action on HR 442 will cease. Currently there are 141 co-sponsors of HR 442. We seem to be picking up about one to two new sponsors each month. NCCR members can help by contacting their Congressman to ask for sponsorship of the bill or to acknowledge their support and to thank them if they are already co-sponsors.

Although the bill may or may not leave Dan Glickman's subcommittee, it is important that the procedure called "mark-up" take place as soon as possible. This amending or adjusting process takes place after hearings on the bill are concluded. Two hearings were conducted this year, one on April 28th and the other on July 23rd. If the "mark-up" could be accomplished, the bill would be technically ready to leave the sub-committee and come before the full Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives.

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SUPPORT TO HALT NAVAJO REMOVAL GATHERS MOMENTUM



Los Angeles - Japanese Americans have solidly lined up to oppose the relocation of Navajo Indians from the Big Mountain area of Arizona. Responding to a series of appeals by the "traditional" leaders of the Navajo tribe, the Japanese American community has registered strong protests at what they see are ugly similarities between what is happening to the Navajo in 1986, and what happened to 120,000 Japanese

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE CONT.

Congressman Mineta's office is working very hard to get the "mark-up" started. Those wishing to assist and urge action on HR 442 should write Congressman Dan Glickman, Chairman, Subcommittee on Administrative Law and Governmental Relations, B351A Rayburn HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515 and/or Congressman Peter W. Rodino Jr., Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, 2137 Rayburn HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515. Both the House and Senate redress bills will be re-introduced in the 100th Congress.

NAVAJO REMOVAL CONTINUED

Americans in 1942.

Speaking to a large rally of over 1,000 persons at Mac Arthur Park, sponsored by the Big Mountain Support Groups of Los Angeles and co-sponsored by NCRR, NCRR speaker Kevin Hasegawa attacked the media description of the issue as a land dispute between the Hopi and Navajo. This is similar to the rumors and misinformation spread by the U.S. Government to aid in the removal of loyal Japanese American citizens. Hasegawa laid the blame squarely on the greed of the mining corporations who want the minerals in the area and who have a working partnership with the tribal councils. The tribal councils are now at odds with the traditional leaders of the Hopi and Navajo, he said.

This greed factor of the mining interests, aided and abetted by the tribal councils and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, was clearly outlined to the capacity crowd that attended a film showing of "Broken Rainbow" in Little Tokyo on June 8th. Put together by

NCRR, with a large number of community organizations as co-sponsors, the crowd saw a moving depiction of the desperate struggle being waged by a people determined to stay on their land and continue a way of life.

Speakers at the program included Lenora Hill from the Big Mountain Support Groups of Los Angeles, and Lou Gerwitz, representing the legal defense team from Flagstaff, Arizona. Also reporting on the conditions at the reservation was the NCRR team that had just returned from the Big Mountain area.

The audience heard appeals for help both politically and monetarily. The response has been strong, adding to a nationwide outcry against the relocation. While most media coverage has distorted the basis of the crisis as a feud between the Hopi and Navajo, the Japanese American press and Japanese language TV programs have managed to firmly lock in on the underlying economic factor. This is in all probability due to the tragic experience of land removal and dispersal experienced by the Issei and Nisei during the evacuation.

The support of the Nikkei community has been a morale booster for the traditional Navajos, many who have made unprecedented journeys to Japanese American communities to ask for help during the commemoration of the Day of Remembrance. Appearing in Los Angeles and San Francisco, they now know the results of the visits have sent many letters to Washington, D.C. and added monetary support.

The showing of "Broken Rainbow" in Little Tokyo yielded some \$2,700 in

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NAVAJO REMOVAL CONTINUED

donations so far. In addition, Congressman Mineta has now called for a moratorium and a complete review of the actions of the government. Senator Alan Cranston, a strong supporter of redress, has introduced a bill to temporarily halt all proceedings for a two-year period.

The Big Mountain Defense Team is buoyed by the support and asks all who wish to assist to continue to write to congresspersons and senators to intervene in this issue.

BAY AREA NCRR REPORT

San Francisco-On September 20, 1986, NCRR, JACL and NCJAR(National Council for Japanese American Redress) will sponsor a forum on redress at the Christ United Presbyterian Church, 1700 Sutter Street in San Francisco. Also attending as sponsors are the Coram Nobis legal team that was instrumental in the Government "vacating" the conviction of Fred Korematsu for failing to report for internment at the start of WWII. The program is set to begin at 1 PM and everyone is urged to attend.

The Bay Area regional of NC RR has been working on several different issues since last February's "Day of Remembrance" program. The DOR program was highlighted by the appearance of the Reverend Jesse Jackson, who has often expressed his strong support for redress. In addition, representatives from the Big Mountain Support Group participated, creating a much deeper understanding of the

plight of the Navajo and Hopi people for the audience. Other speakers drew parallels between the current situation facing the Indians and what we, as Japanese Americans, faced in 1942. This led to NCRR joining with other groups to help sponsor a fundraiser and educational about the issue. The academy-award winning film "Broken Rainbow" was shown. We hope to maintain our ties with the Big Mountain Support Group and stay with the issue.

The Bay Area has also taken up the campaign to defeat Proposition 63, the "English Only" initiative. We have joined "Californians United -Committee Against Proposition 63," a coalition of individuals and groups against this initiative. An upcoming regional meeting will be devoted to discussing what we in NCRR can do to help defeat this proposition.

For more information regarding NCRR activities in the San Francisco Bay area, please call Marlene Tonal at (415)436-5259.

NEW YORK UPDATE

Members of Concerned Japanese Americans (CJA), were among the many Asian groups and individuals who sent telegrams and letters seeking the release of Choichiro Yatani from the Federal Detention Center in Manhattan. Mr. Yatani was arrested by Immigration and Naturalization officials on July 7, 1986, after returning from an academic conference in the Netherlands. Yatani, a 40-year old doctoral student at SUNY was residing here legally for the past

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nine years with his wife and two sons. According to the INS, Yatani's name appeared on a list of persons who could be excluded from the U.S. due to "membership or association with the Communist Party." No further details were given. Yatani has denied the allegations and could only think of his part in anti-Vietnam demonstrations during the 1960's in Tokyo as a reason for his name being on the list. Through widespread publicity and pressure from his friends and members of the Asian American community of New York, Yatani was subsequently released in mid-August.

PROPOSITION 63

A CLOSER LOOK

Proponents for Proposition 63, the "English as the official language of California" initiative, argue that America is being threatened by a bilingualism that is going to create conflict and ethnic separatism. This separatism, they contend, will lead us toward language rivalries and ethnic distrust. The groups behind the initiative, led by honorary chairman S.I. Hayakawa, claim that nothing in the amendment would remove or reduce anyone's Constitutional rights - whether it be in California or throughout the United States. Nothing could be further from the truth.

One of the effects of the passage of Proposition 63 would be the elimination of bilingual voting materials and registration forms. This will

seriously obstruct the voting rights of American citizens who are not yet fluent in English. By passage of a law which calls for all government materials to be printed in English only, it reduces access of the right to vote to two of the largest-growing groups in California, Asians and Latinos. It is no mere coincidence that the focal points for the campaign are the states of California and Florida, both states with large and growing Asian and Latino populations. Most demographic studies conclude that California may be a "minority" majority state within 15 years. In any event, an informed electorate is crucial for making intelligent choices and making democracy work.

Proposition 63 would make it more difficult for people to apply for County, State and Federal assistance. Many Japanese Americans may remember the pitiful state of many of our Issei (especially after the war) when they had no understanding or know-how of the social services and assistance available to them. The myth of the Issei being "too proud" to apply for state aid was quickly dispelled when materials became available to them in Japanese explaining where and how to apply for them. Bi-lingual materials made an enormous difference in the quality of life for many Nikkei.

Proposition 63 would cut back on bilingual education programs. What is ironic about this is that the purpose of bilingual programs is to arrive at English fluency. It was never the intent of any bilingual program to develop two language systems side by side. The intent was and is to educate the non-English speaker into a gradual meld with English. The detractors of

PROPOSITION 63 CONT.

bilingual education are similar to those who believe that swimming is best taught by throwing people in the water. The problem is - what happens to people that sink? The bilingual approach is to make sure that everyone that needs it is introduced to the "water" properly.

Proposition 63 is vague and could be so far reaching that it may also result in the elimination of interpreters for police, fire and emergency services, including the 911 telephone operators. California has had a long history of racial intolerance and bigotry. As Japanese Americans and victims of this history, we urge everyone to take a long, hard look at his initiative, its implications, and the ramifications if passed.

JIM SAITO . .

A WINNER!

Los Angeles - We like to think that Niseis like Jim Saito typify the Nikkei spirit. It's a fighting spirit, far from the "Quiet American" image as seen through the eyes of middle America, and nothing at all like the "get down and crawl" syndrome of ex-Senator Hayakawa. Hayakawa is, if you remember, the person that was always complaining about how redress made his stomach crawl. Unlike the "crawlers" and the "too good to be real Americans", Jim Saito is a scrapper. He was always that even before he joined the 442 Battalion during WWII. Standing up for his rights and letting people know what's what is as natural to him as breathing.

Those of us who know him were quite surprised to see him featured in the Los Angeles Times when we opened our papers to read with the morning coffee. He had taken the giant Department of Water and Power of Los Angeles to court and won. The DWP, it seems, took one of Jim's employee suggestions and never came up with sufficient compensation for his money saving idea. Although it took many years, his day in court came along with \$100,000 the jury awarded him.

Well, we shouldn't have been too surprised. Jim has always stood up for his rights as he saw them. That's one of the reasons he has been a staunch member of NCRR in Los Angeles. When asked about redress, Jim replies, "How can anyone in Congress vote against redress and still say they believe in the Constitution?" It's just plain

hypocrisy! It's saying one thing and practicing another. Those that vote against redress are a bunch of flag wavers who never practice what they preach. They make the Bill of Rights out to be just another piece of paper. All of the excuses I've heard are irrelevant and some of the reasons they give for the evacuation, like trying to protect us, is just plain doubletalk. They can say what they want, but it all comes down to whether the Constitution means something or not."

When asked whether he felt the Japanese American community was finally rallying to the cause of redress, he was as outspoken as ever, "The Nisei kind of want to lay back. They keep thinking that nothing is going to happen. That's what they say - ain't nothing going to happen. Well I say, make it happen. How do you think I won my suit? I didn't want to be the Quiet American and be kicked around. I made it happen - and I WON!"

BROADENING THE SUPPORT FOR REDRESS

by Bert Nakano

How is our involvement in other issues helping redress? For one, it is raising the political awareness of everyone that has come into contact with redress. By Nikkei supporting others, it helps to combat the stereotype of Asians as non-caring "Quiet Americans," too apathetic to care about the society around them. The awareness of Asians as a political force in this country is long overdue. For example, through our involvement in the 1984 "Rainbow Coalition," an Asian

spoke on the redress movement on the podium of the Democratic National Convention in San Francisco. More recently, our successful fundraiser and rally in support of the Navajo and Hopi peoples made us lifelong friends among the Big Mountain Support Group. Their Flagstaff, Arizona office was so impressed with our efforts that they have invited one of our members to stay at their headquarters to share their letter writing campaign and other experiences.

With the expected big push on the redress legislation during the 100th Congress, we are going to need help beyond the confines of the West Coast. We must have help from states East of the Rockies. NCRR is helping to lay the groundwork.

NATIONAL COALITION FOR REDRESS/REPARATIONS

244 So. San Pedro St. #411
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 680-3729

1728 Laguna Street
San Francisco, CA 90012
(415) 921-8841