



February 1987

NCCR BANNER

NATIONAL COALITION FOR REDRESS/REPARATIONS

REDRESS UPDATE

ELECTION RESULTS FAVORABLE TOWARD RESULTS

The results of the recent Congressional elections in November have provided a favorable climate for redress. With Jim Wright of Texas assuming the post of House Speaker and with the return to the Senate of Alan Cranston, the conditions for the issue of redress to reach the floor of Congress seem good. Jim Wright was the sponsor of HR 442 during the last 99th Session of Congress and the post of House Speaker is a very powerful one. Alan Cranston, a long time redress advocate, will be functioning as the Majority Whip in the new Senate.

H.R. 442 REINTRODUCED

H.R. 442 was reintroduced to Congress on January 6th. It was the first meeting of the new 100th Congress. The bill was presented by House Majority Leader Tom Foley of Washington along with 126 co-sponsors. When the 99th Congress adjourned last year, H.R. 442 had gathered 139 co-sponsors in the House. It is expected that a big push is needed to replace those sponsors who were not returned to the House after the November elections. The bill was introduced by Representative Foley due to the fact that Jim Wright, as Speaker of the House, cannot sponsor a bill.

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

The members of NCCR feel strongly that time is of the essence. Each day the number of those eligible to claim redress dwindles. The average age of Nisei surviving the evacuation is between 55-65 years of age. The Issei, to everyone's regret, are almost gone from the scene. The sense of urgency is acute in that it would be a bitter experience to have some form of redress given to only those few who have managed to outlive others if too many years go by.

WHAT WE NEED TO DO TO PROD THE 100th CONGRESS

We need to get people to Washington to talk to members of Congress while it is in session. We need to try to visit with members of the House and Senate and win them over to redress. This is particularly true because the reality of the matter is that we are strong where Japanese Americans are around in numbers and in states which have large urban centers. California, for example, provides 27 co-sponsors, New York, 16 co-sponsors, New Jersey 9, Pennsylvania 9 and Illinois 8. On the other hand, the combined Southern states of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina and Virginia put together give us a total of only 5 co-sponsors. (Continued on Page 2)

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LET'S GET PEOPLE TO WASHINGTON!

It's pretty clear what we have to do to make things happen in the 100th Congress. Although the educational aspect of redress should never stop, the thrust of the effort now needs to center on winning friends in Congress. This is how all bills are moved through Congress and redress will be no exception. Many of the current sponsors were won over to redress due to the efforts of individuals from their home districts. Although NCRR will be making efforts to raise funds to help get people to Washington, the efforts of individuals using their own initiative to reach their representative to Congress remains crucial.

DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

GARDENA SITE OF SOUTHLAND DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

The Day of Remembrance activities in Southern California will take place in the city of Gardena. The event will be held on Saturday, February 21, 1987, at the Ken Nakaoka Community Center.

The program will be held in the evening starting at 6:30 p.m. and will feature a premiere of the newest work of film makers Karen Ishizuka and Bob Nakamura. Called "Conversations Before the War.... After the War," it is a 30 minute film depicting the reflections of individuals caught in the contradictory world around them.

Bob and Karen have recently received national recognition for "Fool's Dance," another film in a long series of work focusing on Asian American life.

A reception is also planned at the beginning of the evening before the viewing. On hand will be Congressman Mervyn Dymally, who has the distinction of introducing the first redress bill in Congress.

Another major focal point of the program will be the honoring of unsung heroes in the fight for redress. These individuals are those who have stood up and fought the evacuation but have not yet received the recognition due them.

BAY AREA REPORT

"TIME TO RIGHT A WRONG" THEME OF SAN FRANCISCO DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Congresswoman Barbara Boxer of San Francisco will be the featured speaker at the Day of Remembrance. The event is scheduled to take place on Saturday, February 21, 1987 from 2-4 p.m. at the Christ United Presbyterian Church, 1700 Sutter Street in San Francisco.

In addition to the address by Congresswoman Boxer, there will be an update on redress activities, cultural entertainment and a display sponsored by the National Japanese American Historical Society.

A reception is planned after the program featuring a sushi plate sale in order to help raise funds for redress. The public is invited to help observe this event. Many internees came from the Bay Area and the evacuation still plays a living part in their memory. The theme "Time to Right a Wrong" was chosen to express the continuing demand for justice, according to the program organizers.

The Bay Area members of NCRR are continuing their educational activities fighting racism where it rears its ugly head. A major effort has been its opposition to Proposition 63, the "English Only" initiative. Bay Area NCRR meetings have featured speakers from organizations such as Ninhonmachi Legal Outreach, who have voiced their opposition to these acts. In addition, NCRR has voiced their own criticism of "English Only" through the local Japanese newspapers.

REDRESS=SAN JOSE

CONGRESSMAN NORMAN MINETA.....FILM
"YANKEE SAMURAI" AMONG FEATURES OF
SAN JOSE PROGRAM

This year's Day of Remembrance will be held on Sunday, February 15, 1987 at the San Jose Buddhist Church. The observance will be held in the evening and is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m.

In addition to Congressman Mineta, the program will feature Eric Saul (Go For Broke, Inc.), and Professor Gary Okihiro from the Nihonmachi Outreach Committee. The event is dedicated to the Nikkei veterans of WWII and the overall theme is "Liberators Overseas, Prisoners at Home-- Redress Reparations in 1987!"

The program will also feature a performance by the San Jose Taiko Group. Camp art and military artifacts will also be displayed. A candlelight memorial ceremony is also planned for the evening.

Those wanting further information in the San Jose area may contact Richard Konda at (408)287-9710 during the day and Gary Jio (408) 295-8106 in the evening. The sponsors of this year's event are the San Jose Nihonmachi Outreach Committee, the National Japanese American Historical Society/Go For Broke, Inc. and the Japanese American Citizens League of San Jose.

NAVAJO EVACUATION

Senator Cranston's bill, calling for a moratorium on the forced relocation of Navajo in the Big Mountain area of Arizona, is scheduled to be reintroduced in the new Congress. If it is passed, it will mandate an 18 month moratorium on forced relocations and will establish a commission to conduct hearings into the matter.

The task of the commission will be to hold hearings with the idea of seeking alternatives to the continued implementation of PL 93-531. The commission, for the first time will include Hopi traditional leaders and Navajo elders (those facing evacuation), as part of the panel.

Traditional members of both the Hopi and the Navajo have spoken out against PL 93-531 which has caused a storm of protest throughout the nation. The memories of the darkest days of the evacuation caused a strong surge of support and sympathy from the Japanese American community.

Pictures of homes being destroyed and people being forced to relocate brought back grim reminders to many who suffered through the internment of 1942. The public outcry and the resulting pressure was a major reason for the government temporarily halting its bulldozing policy.

Several changes in the new Senate have made the campaign to repeal PL93-531 stronger. Chief among these was the retirement of Barry Goldwater, who strongly opposed any changes to PL 93-531. In addition, the recent election has weakened the power of congressional conservatives, who formed the strongest support base for relocation.

In the Navajo nation, Peter MacDonald, a long time former Tribal Chairman, has returned to power. He ran on an anti-relocation platform and many observers feel that he will be a stronger voice for repeal than former Chairman Peterson Zah.

One other form of fighting the relocation is a consideration of a lawsuit that challenges the law as an unconstitutional abridgement of the right to freedom of religion. The suit will be based on the fact that the Navajos of the Big Mountain area will not be able to exercise their religion if they are separated from the land they hold sacred.

FRANK EMI

PROFILE OF A WINNER

If anyone told Frank Emi he was a winner in 1944, he would have thought that person to be quite mad. Here he was in Heart Mountain, stuck in a concentration camp, for no other reason than his racial ancestry. In addition, he was a key leader among a group of Nisei who were fighting the draft. They were fighting it for all the same reasons we can think of today that drive us to seek redress.

If we could turn back the clock and hold an imaginary conversation with Frank, we could assure him that he was winning a place in American history. All we would probably get out of him at that time would be a grim laugh, for the price he would have to pay for speaking out and resisting would be high.

Frank was among the leadership of the Fair Play Committee. They provided counseling and advising for many who were protesting the internment. The Committee particularly worked with those who wanted to resist the draft as a form of resistance, even though many were too old or were women and not subject to the draft.

There was a price to pay for this of course. Frank was brought before a judge and sentenced to four years at the federal penitentiary at Leavenworth. No matter that President Truman would eventually issue a pardon to these men. Frank served some 18 months at Leavenworth before he was released by an Appeals Court that reversed his conviction.

All of this was hardly comforting in the post-war atmosphere of the "Quiet American." Most Nisei spent a whole decade trying to blend into wallpaper or to disguise themselves as shrubbery. Civil rights and Martin Luther King Jr., and the Asian American

movement was still a decade away. Frank was forerunner of what was to come in the 1960's.

History has a way of proving things out. The "Quiet American", we all found out, was just that... someone that had died but who had forgot to tell anybody. Being wallpaper and shrubbery no longer appealed to anyone. We all got tired of being painted over and being used as shrubbery by the dogs. Enough was enough... redress was born and we were through being associated with the likes of S.I. ("Redress Makes My Skin Crawl") Hayakawa.

Frank Emi's time has come and his day is here. He will be honored at the Day of Remembrance in Southern California as someone to be proudly acclaimed by all Americans who value their rights. He stood up for all of us, and by doing so, elevated everyone with him.

ELDERLY STILL NEED AFFORDABLE HOUSING

SCARCITY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING STILL PLAGUE ELDERLY NIKKEI IN LITTLE TOKYO

The problem of dwindling affordable housing continues to be a thorny issue in some Japanese American communities. This situation was brought to light by the efforts of the City of Los Angeles to relocate the remaining tenants of the San Pedro Firm Building in Little Tokyo. The City purchased the building some years ago when plans were developed to tear down the Northside of First Street in order to create additional parking. These plans never occurred and now private developers are expressing an interest in the area and the issue has again arisen over what is to become of the Northside of First Street.

One of the needs of Nikkei in the Los Angeles area is for affordable housing. Existing senior citizen

housing, such as the Little Tokyo Towers, have long waiting lists. The San Pedro Firm Building still has older Nikkei who want to live there despite the City's refusal to adequately maintain the building.

NCRR activist Kathy Nishimoto has been helping to rally support to keep the tenants in the San Pedro Firm Building. NCRR members are keenly sensitive to the policies of community dispersal that the Nikkei community suffered after WWII. The origins of the Little Tokyo People's Rights Organization, a strong member of NCRR, is rooted in the struggle to maintain low cost housing in Little Tokyo.

SUPREME COURT

PETITION TO RESTORE DISMISSED
CLAIMS PRESENTED TO THE U.S.
SUPREME COURT

The Supreme Court has agreed to hear the U.S. government's arguments against the lawsuit filed on behalf of the internees by the National Council for Japanese American Redress (NCJAR). The original lawsuit, filed in 1983, asks for more than \$24 billion in damages. Initially dismissed by a U.S. District Court, the suit was brought back to life by the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The decision to overturn the dismissal of the suit, however, only applied to one of the twenty-two claims presented. The one remaining claim not dismissed dealt only with the loss of property.

A petition has since been filed by NCJAR asking the Supreme Court to consider the remaining 21 claims, including those addressing the violation of constitutional rights. The petition further requests that sovereign immunity, the right of the government to be immune from being sued, be waived.

To date, no reply has been made to the petition made by NCJAR.

JAPSS TO JADSS

HAIR SALON CHANGES NAME FROM JAPSS
TO JADSS

The owners of the West Hollywood hair salon "JAPSS" have decided to change their name to "JADSS". This brings to a close a year and a half effort initiated by NCRR to pressure the owners of the hair salon to change the offensive name of their establishment.

The drive to have the name changed to something less racially-tinged was supported by many groups within the Nikkei community, according to NCRR members Richard Katsuda and Miles Hamada. The controversy even spread to the chambers of the West Hollywood City Council where a resolution was passed urging the owners to change their name.

Opinion

Jim H. Matsuoka

THE CONSTITUTION AND REDRESS .. A FUNDAMENTAL VIEW OF AMERICA

It's not easy to believe in redress and maintain a positive perspective of why we are doing so. It's easier to approach it from a cynical point of view. This pragmatic approach views American society as one not based on fairness, but one where winning or losing is based on whatever strength you can muster in the political arena. It also presents a fundamental view of this society as a diverse nation, crosscut by competing economic, social and ethnic classes. We are, in sum, a nation stumbling through one contradiction after another. Our laws are seen to crumble, often giving way to the passions of the majority at the moment. Redress, in this case, becomes an exercise in power (or the lack of it).

There is, however, a positive view (if you want to believe it). This view holds that there exists a fundamental sense of fairness in the American character. That somehow, we are all governed according to the structure of the Constitution as the founders of this nation actually envisioned it. Further, there is a firm conviction that we are a varied lot drawn together from all parts of the world. We are, no matter how poorly, one nation and the most decent example of a functioning republic seen so far. Our laws, although we occasionally err, still stand as guideposts for future generations to follow.

The positive view is difficult for some to accept. If you choose to do so, however, then redress certainly becomes a serious moral obligation. It is simply not worthy of this nation to do anything less than to try to make all transgressions right.

As the 200th Anniversary of the Constitution approaches, we are sure of one thing. Redress will certainly test the fundamental character of America. Each and every case involving civil rights exposes the basic fabric of America. If we are found wanting, I believe America will enter into the next century with large segments of its population who would hold to the most negative view of this country. On the other hand, if we measure up to each test, who is to say what our limits are?

SAN DIEGO

The Asian Pacific Student Union will be holding their statewide conference on Saturday, February 28. With the theme of "Living in America: Land of Opportunity?", the conference will be held at UC San Diego. The San Diego Redress/Reparations Committee has been working with APSU in assisting with outreach and fundraising.

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