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a newsletter of the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations

Winter
2000

Still NCRR After All These Years

By Richard Katsuda, NCRR President

Happy New Year! As all the hoopla around Y2K finally dies down, NCRR begins 2000 with the same desire for justice we started with twenty years ago. During the 80s NCRR worked hard to cultivate the grassroots movement for redress, which was crucial to the winning of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 (CLA). During the 90s we discovered that our work was not done, as we continued to fight for those denied redress. Working throughout the 90s with various grassroots organizations and individuals as well as supportive government officials, we helped to win redress and reparations for hundreds who had almost given up hope of obtaining their overdue measure of justice and redemption.

As we begin the 00s, NCRR finds that our work is still not done. We continue to be an integral part of the Campaign for Justice (CFJ) in order to secure redress equity for Japanese Latin Americans as well as for Japanese Americans who remain deprived of their proper redress.

In addition to another push for legislation, NCRR has been busy with legal efforts. For the past few years, we've joined with members of the Japanese American Bar Association who provide pro bono legal counsel for three cases: Song v. US, Higashi v. US, and Hirota v. US. Carole Song (represented by Lisa Ikemoto), Carol Higashi (represented by Julia Mass and Scott Yamaguchi) and Wendy Hirota (represented by Alex Fukui and Pat Hattori), are all claimants from the Consolo/Ishida category, which encompasses those individuals who were born after their parents had been forced to move to the interior US or after their parents had left an internment camp. Subsequent to a successful court battle by Linda Consolo and Douglas Ishida, the Department of Justice (DOJ) made eligible for redress those persons born on

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NCRR Co-Sponsors Program on Violence Against Women and International Solidarity

By Christina Shigemura

On Dec. 3, more than 130 people attended the Women's Committee's first forum to discuss violence against women during times of war. State Assemblyman Mike Honda (D-San Jose), Martha Matsuoka from the Okinawa Peace Network, Lisa Masa of GABRIELA and other community leaders spoke about the importance of fighting for justice for Korean and Pilipino "comfort" women who were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II. These women, as well as many others around the world, have still not received an official apology or reparations from the governments that



Yuki Terazawa, Lisa Masa and Yuko Yamauchi were part of the panel. photo by Janice Yen

committed war crimes against them. (Hm, does this sound familiar?)

The committee, which includes members of NCRR, UCLA Labor Center and Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights in Los Angeles (CHIRLA), is planning an action to demand reparations for the "comfort" women on International Women's Day, March 8, in front of the Japanese Consulate in Los Angeles. For more information, or to participate in planning the action, please call Eileen Ma at (310) 794-5984.

Seigi/NCRR Plans Community Educational Events

By Jennifer Emiko Kuida

Members of Seigi/NCRR have been working with students from UCLA's Nikkei Student Union and Concerned Asian Pacific Student Alliance to organize the 5th Little Tokyo Community Tour on Saturday, Jan. 23. The Tour focuses on the history of Little Tokyo through the eyes and ears of its people and features current and past residents, past members of the Little Tokyo People's Rights Organization, workers, business owners and other community members as speakers who have fond memories of what Little Tokyo used to be, and share a vision for what it can be.

In the coming year, Seigi/NCRR plans to organize quarterly events which will be open to all NCRR members, students and the community. A Subway Tour of Los Angeles is tentatively scheduled for Mar. 18. Seigi member Richard Garcia will lead a tour of Los Angeles' Red Line to explore the history

of downtown and surrounding ethnic neighborhoods. Other upcoming ideas include issues-based forums, another Feast of Resistance, a Little Tokyo "Community" College and more. In the year 2000, Seigi/NCRR will continue to support other API and progressive political movements, struggles and initiatives. Seigi can be what we make of it. If you are interested in getting involved with Seigi/NCRR, please contact Ayako at (213) 473-1697. If you would like to subscribe to the Seigi e-mail list, email Gann Matsuda at gmatsuda@smp.gseis.ucla.edu.

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• Turn this newsletter over
• for:
• Update on the ever-busy
• Education Committee
• Membership Form
• Vote No on Prop 21!
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Save Our Youth! Vote No On California's Proposition 21!

By Christina Shigemura

Pete Wilson's so-called "Gang Violence and Youth Crime Prevention Act," Proposition 21, will be appearing on the March 7, 2000 ballot. This statewide initiative will penalize children by increasing punishment for non-violent crimes and by placing 14- to 16-year-olds in adult prisons, where they face an increased risk of being raped, attacked with a weapon or committing suicide. According to the California Joint Legislative Budget Committee, Prop 21 will cost taxpayers "hundreds of millions of dollars annually [plus] a one-time cost

of at least several hundred millions of dollars." Yet Prop 21 does not designate any money for afterschool programs or other types of juvenile crime prevention. California already spends nearly \$4 billion per year on prisons, yet we are the 41st state in funding for education. On March 7, let's send a clear message that California needs to prioritize funding for schools and other programs that make a positive impact on our youth. No on Prop 21! For more information, call (323) 769-5251 or email socal4youth@hotmail.com.

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\$30 One-year

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NCRR Education Committee and Visual Communications

Keep Busy with Video Projects

By Janice Yen

NCRR is continuing its three-year collaboration with Visual Communications to produce videotapes which preserve the history of Japanese American internment during World War II and the redress movement which followed. Funding from the Civil Liberties Public Education Fund and the California Civil Liberties Public Education Project have enabled us to undertake a video film project, STAND UP FOR JUSTICE, with a storyline based on the life of Ralph Lazo, a Latino educator, who as a teenager joined his Nisei friends at Manzanar. Besides living in an internment camp, Lazo supported the 1983 redress lawsuit filed by the National Council for Japanese American Redress and the pilgrimages sponsored by the Manzanar Committee. Friends of Lazo have been interviewed, the script written and a casting call for actors will soon be issued.

President's Message, continued

or before January 20, 1945. But those born after that date were deemed ineligible, as DOJ maintained that "legal barriers" prohibiting them from "returning to their domicile" were no longer in effect after January 20. In addition to these three cases, John Ota of Bay Area NCRR is representing Robert Murakami in this category.

We are happy to report that Ms. Song recently received her redress after a federal judge ruled in favor of her case. We hope that we can use Ms. Song's case to open possibilities for the other plaintiffs and for others of that category.

NCRR is also closely monitoring and supporting the case of 91-year-old Kay Kato, who was lawfully admitted to the US on a merchant visa and has lived here continuously since 1937. Mr. Kato was denied redress because the CLA stipulates that claimants must have been US citizens or permanent resident aliens during the War. Mr. Kato became a citizen in 1980, and, prior to that, the Immigration and Naturalization Service had adjusted his immigration status to that of a permanent resident alien "just as though he had maintained his lawful status throughout the war," stated Mr. Kato's son, Douglas. Yet Mr. Kato has been fighting for redress since 1989.

Mr. Kato is represented by Paul Mills, who is also the attorney for Jane Yano, one of the so-called "cutoff kids" that were born in the Crystal City internment camp after the CLA's eligibility cutoff date of June 30, 1946. Ms. Yano, whose father, mother and sister have received redress, is being denied despite having been interned at Crystal City for seven months.

Paul Mills is also representing Henry Shima, who opted out of the Mochizuki settlement of a presidential apology and \$5,000 individual redress payments to Japanese Latin Americans. Mr. Shima is seeking a fuller measure of justice commensurate to the crimes committed against him. In addition, Mr. Mills represents the Ogura family, who were Latin American residents interned at Crystal City and forced to relocate to Japan in 1945. They have been denied redress because they "let" the US send them to Japan.

NCRR also has its own lawsuit against the federal government, which argues that the government breached its fiduciary duty by failing to adhere to CLA language that stipulated that the CLA's redress fund was to be invested in government bonds that accrued interest at a rate of at least 5%. NCRR believes that the lost interest amount to as much as \$200 million, and, had it been accrued, could well have resolved problems with the shortfall in redress and education fund monies.

So NCRR is still in the thick of the fight. That hasn't changed. However, one change that we are now making is to officially change our name from National Coalition for Redress and Reparations to Nikkei for Civil Rights and Redress. In 1992 we established Nikkei for Civil Rights and Redress as our 501(c)3 tax-exempt educational arm. But in 2000 we have decided to fully adopt that name in order to reflect a broad and forward-looking view. As you can see, the acronym is the same, so we're still NCRR.

So join us as we press into a new phase of this exciting and ever-changing movement for justice for our community and for all people.

The NCRR Education Committee and Visual Communications have also completed the preservation of the videotapes taken of the 1981 Los Angeles Hearings of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. The taped testimonies are available for purchase by contacting NCRR (213) 680-3484 or Visual Communications (213) 680-4462.



Richard Katsuda (NCRR), John Esaki (VC), and Janice Yen (NCRR) at interview with Lazo's friends Bruce Kaji and Archie Miyatake.