

Reparations Delay Hit in Little Tokyo Rally

By JONATHAN GAW, *Times Staff Writer*

Kiku Uno was one of about 500 people wearing black arm bands at a demonstration in Little Tokyo on Saturday to protest delays in redress for Japanese-Americans who were interned in U.S. relocation camps during World War II.

Occasionally yelling "Justice now!" during a 20-minute march, the 64-year-old Uno is not hopeful that she will see reparations from the U.S. government in her lifetime.

"I had a brother who volunteered for the 442nd [a U.S. Army regiment] during the war . . . he won't get reparations, he's dead. My parents lost their business and were taken to camp. They're dead," the retired elementary school teacher said.

"Our Issei [first generation Japanese-Americans] parents taught us well. They taught us to be good citizens. They also taught us to be quiet and take it. But that doesn't work. Being quiet doesn't get you justice," Uno said.

No Payments Made

Nearly a year after President Ronald Reagan signed into law a bill providing \$20,000 in payments to former internees or their survivors, not one of the 120,000 Japanese-Americans herded into the 10 U.S. relocation camps during World War II has received payment.

About 2,500 former internees have died since the bill was signed on Aug. 10, 1988, according to the U.S. Justice Department's Office of Redress Administration. Only 60,000 former internees are still alive, and they are dying at a rate of more than 200 a month, the office reports.

"This issue has brought to focus the way we treat what I consider to be [the] finest natural resource of this country, and that's the humanities that exist inside of it," said actor Edward James Olmos, keynote speaker at the rally.

"This problem is a problem that

strikes at the very core of America's ability to take care of its own problems," Olmos said in an interview. "Our human resource is our best natural asset and if we let our cultures be forgotten, we all lose."

"There are people today who still don't believe that the U.S. would do such a thing to its citizens," said Minoru Tonai, who was interned in Amache, Colo., and now lives in Los Angeles.

Carrying banners in English and Japanese, the protesters marched and shouted slogans such as "Justice delayed is justice denied, we want redress in '89."

The Canadian government has already made reparations to more than 40% of the survivors of internment camps it set up during the war, according to Tony Tamayose of the National Assn. of Japanese-Canadians, the organization that successfully pursued reparations in Canada.

"The general population of Canada relates to the issue as a very personal human rights issue," Tamayose said.

The rally, sponsored by the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations, coincided with the beginning of Nisei Week in Little Tokyo.

Events during the week include more than 50 exhibits and demonstrations of Japanese and Japanese-American art, history and entertainment.

One exhibit depicts what life was like at the Manzanar Relocation Center in Inyo County, where more than 10,000 Japanese-Americans were interned.

The exhibit includes photographs and testimonials of those who were interned at the relocation camp, as well as a miniature model of the camp. It chronicles the internment of each Japanese-American held at U.S. relocation camps, cataloguing where they were placed, when they were released and their alien registration numbers.