

Rafu Shingwa

NCCR Voices Concerns About L.A. Hearing

●The following letter was sent to Paul Bannai, executive staff director of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians in Washington, D.C., by the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations to express that group's concern about full Japanese translations for Issei and non-English speaking victims of the wartime incarceration who plan to attend next week's commission hearings in Los Angeles. We re-print the letter here for our readers and for the record.

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Dear Mr. Bannai,

Here we are, less than a week before the L.A. Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment Hearings begin, with some very grave concerns about the

way the Hearings are shaping up. Based on conversations with Tom Taketa, Commission staff person, and yourself, we in the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations understand there are problems with translation of the Commission proceedings for Japanese-speaking people. Specifically, that there is no provisions at the present time for translation for those Japanese-speaking who are planning to attend the Hearings.

We strongly urge adequate funds be provided to insure quality translation for Issei who attend the Hearings, out of the million dollars allocated to the Commission. And we repeat our previous request for a public accounting of how all the million dollars has been spent so far.

Again, it is the Issei who are being penalized for not speaking English, just as they were during the evacuation and camp experience: forbidden to speak their own language and denied written materials in Japanese in Camp; the Japanese-speaking leadership bypassed and destroyed by the government authorities. The Issei, who lost the most at the prime of their lives at the time of the evacuation, have waited nearly forty years for their right to confront the government who unjustly incarcerated them. And the CWRIC

is not even providing adequate translation of the proceedings.

This question of translation, both for testifiers, as well as for those who come to witness the proceedings, is a concern that we in NCCR have raised consistently from our initial communications with the Commission months ago. Yet we received no definite answers. If we had been notified earlier, we could have easily lined up people for both tasks.

At this time, we are trying to gather a list of potential translators and equipment to insure the Issei and other Japanese-speaking who attend will be able to understand the proceedings so relevant to them. But as of today, less than a week before the opening of the L.A. Hearings, we have no agenda from which to develop a schedule for translators to know when to take off work; we have no idea if they will even be paid. **LESS THAN A WEEK BEFORE THE HEARINGS BEGIN!**

We urge all those who support the Issei's right to translation at the upcoming Hearings to express that support to Mr. Bannai at the CWRIC Office at: New Executive Office Building, Room 202, 726 Jackson Place N.W., Washington D.C. 20506; or call him at (202) 395-7390.

National Coalition for
Redress/Reparations (NCCR)

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7/29/81

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