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REDRESS

Persons Denied Reparations to Speak at Community Forum

A Nikkei from Arizona, an internee "expatriated" as a minor to Japan and the children of so-called "voluntary evacuees" will give testimonies.

A Japanese American former railroad worker from Arizona, an internee "expatriated" as a minor to Japan as part of a prisoner exchange deal, and the children of so-called "voluntary evacuees"—all denied redress—are among the panelists who will give testimonies at the Little Tokyo Towers on Sunday, May 23.

The program, sponsored by the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations (NCRR), the Japanese American Bar Association and the Japanese Peruvian Oral History Project, concludes a two-part series where those individuals denied redress will have an opportunity to share the stories of the World War II internment period to build public sentiment in favor of redress.

"We are glad that Mr. Paul Suddes, director of the Office of Redress Administration, has accepted our invitation to attend the program. Because of this, we anticipate more interest," stated Kay Ochi, NCRR-L.A. president.

"The original program will be adjusted so that the community will have a chance to meet and engage in dialogue with Mr. Suddes, after the panel presentations," Ochi added.

The program will focus on the plight of five categories of people denied redress:

—Children Born in Camp. Linden Nishinaga will testify for the category of those who have been denied payments due to the ORA's claim that the mothers of these children re-entered camp "voluntarily" after leaving camp for a period of time. One such case involved a child who was born in Heart Mountain internment camp after her father, a clergyman, and her mother returned from a three-day ministerial conference in Denver, Colorado.

—Hawaiian Japanese Americans Who Were Part of the Lualualei Settlements on Oahu. Anita Oshiro will share her recollections as one

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of several hundred Americans of Japanese ancestry who were moved away from their villages located next to a large Navy ammunition dump. The relocatees were forced to live in one-room shacks, subjected to curfews, twice a week check-ins with the military command, and made to wear identification buttons. They lost their homes and property but have yet to be granted redress.

—Children Born to So-Called "Voluntary Relocatees." Duane Sanchez will present one story of the many thousands of these individuals (the largest category of those denied, with 603). Although each individual situation is unique, the common thread is that these children were often born into conditions of extreme poverty, substandard housing and a hostile racist environment, separated from their communities and families on the West Coast due to Executive Order 9066.

—Minors Who Were Sent to Japan Along with Their Families. These youngsters were sent to Japan part of a prisoner-of-war exchange program in return for Ameri-

can prisoners from Japan. The fathers of some of the children were community leaders arrested earlier as "suspected" collaborators and were not permitted to reunite with their families in a different camp until they agreed to "voluntarily" renounce their citizenship and go to Japan. Although the current redress law (Civil Liberties Act of 1988) specifically prevents those who expatriated to an enemy country from qualifying for redress, there is no such provision for the minors who did not "volunteer."

—Residents of Phoenix, Glendale and Other Cities of Arizona. The exclusion line for Japanese was drawn in such a way that the state and cities were split in half. This created a situation where Japanese living on one side of the street were allowed to stay while those on the other side were shipped off to camp. Those who remained could no longer go to schools, hospitals, their jobs, churches and temples on the other side of town, but are being denied redress.

NCRR and the Japanese American Bar Association have conducted two previous workshops to train more redress counselors, aid appli-

cants in writing their appeals and to facilitate the self organization of applicants.

In response to a statewide letter-writing campaign to Attorney Janet Reno, head of the Justice Department which oversees the Office of Redress Administration, an invitation to meet with James Turner, head of the Civil Rights Division, has been secured.

"We look forward to meeting with Mr. Turner or his replacement, Ms. Lani Guinier, but will still pursue the meeting with Attorney General Reno to see if a more flexible application of the law could be used to grant redress to more applicants," stated Ochi.

The public is encouraged to attend the free program which will start at 2 p.m. at the Little Tokyo Towers, 455 E. Third St., Los Angeles, on Sunday, May 23. For more info, call NCRR at (213) 680-3484.