

# CJA UPDATE

July - August 1983

## Hibakusha Support A Grass Roots Effort

By Leslie Inaba Wong



Last summer the United Nations held its Special Session on Nuclear Disarmament and New York became a focal point for the public's growing opposition to the arms race and threat of world war by the governments of the United States and the U.S.S.R. As part of the Asian American community, members of Concerned Japanese Americans (CJA) and Asian Cine Vision (ACV) chose to participate thru educating about the issue of the hibakusha, survivors of the world's first atomic weapons.

On June 12th, 1982, Mrs. Kaz Suyeishi, Vice President of the

## Work in New York

Committee of Atomic Bomb Survivors (CABS), marched with us: members of CJA, ACV, the New York Buddhist Church, the Soh Daiko group, students and people from the Chinese community. We chanted spiritedly, "NO MORE HIROSHIMA! NO MORE NAGASAKI!"

Throughout the long march, Mrs. Suyeishi, straining physically, was visibly moved, weeping openly. Later she told us, "It was the first time since the bombing that I walked that far. I had to make it. I was inspired by all of you, by the spirit of the taiko group and the presence of the bonsan, all of the young and old people. I never thought I'd live to have such a stirring experience.

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## Commission Report: Community Commentary

"I'm glad the Commission has finally come up with its recommendations, but I think every person who was in camp (including descendants of internees who died) should get three or four times the \$20,000 suggested amount. There was so much suffering! I just hope when the government decides to give us the money, it doesn't raise our taxes to cover the amount. Also, I hope they will act soon because I want to take my money and divide it between my grandchildren" (he has eleven of them).

Kinnosuke Hashimoto, Issei  
96 years old

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**FROM PG. 1.**

Kanji Kuramoto and Kaz Suyeishi, President and Vice President of CABS, were featured speakers at a Cultural Benefit Program sponsored by CJA, ACV and the Universal Jazz Coalition. From listening to them and from viewing the film, Survivors, I learned of their ten-year struggle to get medical assistance from the U.S. Government. "For many years," said Mrs. Suyeishi, "everytime I went to the doctor, it came out of my own pocket." Even though she lives in Los Angeles, she has never been able to drive because the lights and motion of traffic trigger off too many bad memories.

A source of inspiration came from within CJA, Mr. Karl Akiya, who has been an unding source of information. Mr. Akiya explained, "It was very hard for the Nisei to support this cause. They didn't want to face it. Many of them said it was too horrible. But I've been saying, 'It's horrible and that's why we have to do education about this.'"

**THE WORK CONTINUES...**

As part of our ongoing work for the hibakusha, CJA pledged to raise \$1,000.00 for CABS.

Throughout the year, we folded cranes and exchanged them for \$1.00 pledges. We sold booklets on the hibakusha and set up tables for information and donations at various campus and community events. Learning of our efforts, Mrs. Haruko Kishi painted note cards and gave them to us to sell. Mr. Akiya calligraphed, "Support the U.S. Atomic Bomb Survivors," in English and Japan-

ese on cards which we sold for \$1.00. To this date, we have raised a total of \$700.00 through strictly grassroots efforts.

Thanking us for our efforts, Mr. Kuramoto expressed that he never thought the hibakusha would receive this type of sustained support from the Japanese community in New York. "We are greatly touched by your deep interest about us."

**UPCOMING**

August 6, 1983 marks the 38th anniversary of the Hiroshima bomb. CJA will be holding a Hiroshima/-Nagasaki Commemorative at the Japanese American United Church, 225 Seventh Avenue, Manhattan. We plan to have a pot luck and program. We will be showing the film PIKADON. We will also have a presentation on the current condition of the hibakusha. Mrs. Kishi will give a demonstration of brush painting. We will begin the program at 3:00 p.m. A donation of \$2.50 or a donation of food is asked.

Please come and help us raise the pledged \$1,000.00 for CABS.

PLEASE JOIN US!

## Justice for Vincent Chin!



On June 23rd, the New York Committee of East Wind Magazine held a memorial marking one year since Vincent Chin was brutally murdered by white racists in Detroit. The event was endorsed by more than 50 groups and individuals, including Concerned Japanese Americans; and was highlighted by statements from East Wind Magazine, representatives of the ILGWU, East Coast Asian Student Union, Chinese Progressive Association and Archer Dong, Principal of JHS 65. Also present were Asian American poets G.T. Wong and Chin Sung as well as musicians Wing On Leung and Charlie Chin. A slide show and recording of an interview with the mother of Vincent Chin were also featured.

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## Japanese Medical Team Visit "A Success!"

Bay Area hibakusha and volunteers, looking back on the recent four-day visit of the Hiroshima Prefecture Medical Team, awarded high marks to the cooperative spirit of participating groups and individuals and to the sensitivity and tireless efforts of the visiting doctors who gave exams to more than 90 A-bomb survivors or hibakusha.

"I was impressed with the number of people who came together from so many different areas and groups," said Kay Yoshioka, an Oakland resident, eight years old at the time of the bomb. "All of the doctors gave us such a warm and comfortable feeling. And they remembered everyone's medical histories from the time of the previous visits." In her interview with Ted Koppel, on NBC's Night-time program, Mrs. Yoshioka spoke of how the bomb has affected her family. "My father died of a heart disorder. My mother, my sister and I all have cancer. Do you think that is a coincidence? We live with the bomb inside ourselves. I don't know when it will explode."

The team of Japanese physicians, specialists in radiation medicine, provided free comprehensive medical exams at U.S. Medical Center from June 10 to the 13th for Japanese American and Korean American atom bomb survivors. Some made trips from as far away as Salt Lake City.

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FROM PG. 1

Around mid-June 1983, the Commission (CWRIC) recommended that Congress pass a joint resolution, to be signed by the President, which recognizes that a grave injustice was done and offers the apologies of the nation for the acts of exclusion, removal and detention. The CWRIC also recommended to Congress a one-time per capita compensatory payment of \$20,000 to each of the approximately 60,000 surviving Japanese Americans excluded from their places of residence pursuant to Executive Order 9066.

As we all realize that no amount of money will ever compensate for our incarceration and our former secure family life of about two years or more during World War II, it is my humble opinion that my aged mother and my ailing sister cannot wait too long to receive their benefits. My father had already passed Spring 1951. The NCRRC has raised the demand to \$25,000 per individual as a minimum payment; how long will this take?

The Aleuts should receive the same amount as for the Japanese Americans.

Yuriko Lily Werner, Nisei

Five years ago I would never have believed that a Congressional Commission would be set up to study and later issue its recommendations on redressing the injustice of the internment camps. And now, because of the heartfelt commitment and unrelenting strength of the Nikkei community, we have gotten this far with several bills already introduced in Congress. There's still much more that has to be done, but I believe the energy that has been created within our communities will carry us to a successful and long over-due conclusion.

Lori Kitazono, Sansei

Since I evacuated California forty years ago, not a day has passed with-

out my thinking of my deep rooted conviction that all the events of evacuation and incarceration were conducted on the basis of racial hatred, prejudice, injustice and war hysteria; nothing to do with military necessity at all.

Now, finally, the CWRIC which was appointed officially by the congress, has made public its "REPORT", "Personal Justice Denied" on February 24 and "Recommendations" on June 16.

I was very pleased and satisfied with the verdict of the Commission which confirmed my long-time conviction:

Although I wholeheartedly support the "Recommendations" by the Commission, I would like to make a critical comment on two points:

1. In part 2, it recommends that the President pardon those who were convicted of violating the statutes imposing a curfew on American citizens ...

Did any American citizen, Nisei, act crimes by violating an illegally established statute? Are they actually criminals? If the "pardon" by President is applied, it means we accept and admit that they had committed crimes. I'm do not agree with this idea of "pardon."

2. In part 5, it recommends "This fund ... first provide a one-time per capita compensatory payment of \$20,000 of the approximately 60,000 surviving persons.

... Well, as a matter of fact, even among some commissioners, Congressmen, prominent figures in the nation, who know the injustice had been done to the Japanese, there are quite some who are opposed or hesitant for monetary compensation. Therefore, once the debates start in the Congress, speculation says that there might occur "dragging on", "postponement", "delaying decisions" and such sorts of things as tactics by those opponents of the monetary compensation. The longer the debates drag on without any decisions, the lesser the number of 60,000 become. Is it a fair recommendation?

Karl Akiya, Kibei

**FROM PG. 3**

The Vincent Chin case began in June 1982 when, in an unprovoked attack preceded by racist slurs, Vincent Chin was attacked with baseball bats by three white men. He died a few days after the attack. But despite this, the District Attorney did not charge the men with first degree murder. They were allowed to plead guilty to manslaughter, fined \$3000 and given three years probation.

This is not an isolated incident but comes at a time of increasing racist attacks on Asians and other third world people who are being scapegoated for the economic and social problems in this country. We support the American Citizens for Justice, a coalition of Asian community groups in Michigan, and others who are seeking to overturn the judges decision and are also bringing a "wrongful death" suit of \$6 million against the three men who murdered Vincent Chin.

For more information and donations contact:

American Citizens for Justice  
P. O. Box 37343  
Oak Park, Michigan 48237

**FROM PG. 3**

Dr. Tetsuo Monzen, leader of the Hiroshima Prefecture Medical Team, says they expect to provide examinations for some 500 of the estimated 1000 hibakusha living in the United States. He reports that the health problems of the survivors appear to be identical with those of survivors in Japan where increased rates of thyroid, breast, lung and stomach cancer have been confirmed. "The cancer rate among hibakusha is twice that of the rest of the population."



"But we're not sure the team will be able to come again," said Reverend Nobuaki Hanaoka of the Friends of Hibakusha. "The Japanese government is cutting back on funds, and of course even with the generous support of private volunteers and donors, the Japanese would like to see some help from the American government." Hanaoka expressed concern that many survivors are afraid to participate in the exams, afraid of what they might find, and fearful of losing their health insurance coverage. "We know there are more people out there, but they haven't come forward."

"We'll continue to press the government for support," said Kanji Kuramoto, President of CABS, who, with the JACL, has been pushing a series of bills in Congress, asking for medical benefits for survivors. "None of those bills have ever reached the floor of either the Senate or House," he said, "and meanwhile many survivors have astronomical medical bills. They need ongoing medical care now."



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"We'll continue our argument for support," said Hanaka. President of JACP, who with the JACP, has been pushing a series of bills in Congress, asking for medical benefits for survivors. "None of those bills have ever reached the floor of either the Senate or House," he said, "and meanwhile many survivors have astronomical medical bills. They need ongoing medical care now."

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