

- CJA UPDATE -

CONCERNED JAPANESE AMERICANS

545 WEST 126th ST.

NEW YORK, NY 10026

MAY 1984

In a nutshell...

*In the past year, Concerned Japanese Americans has been active in support and education of the U.S. hibakusha, the survivors of the Hiroshima/Nagasaki holocaust. We have raised over \$1,000 for the Committee of U.S. Atomic Bomb Survivors, and developed a Fact Sheet for general outreach and education.



*CJA held our annual Day of Remembrance on February 18th to educate and solicit the support of the broader Asian American community for Redress/Reparations. CJA supports the pending legislation in Congress, and encourages everyone to send letters to his/her congressmen.

*With the upcoming Presidential Elections, members of CJA worked actively in the New York Asians for Jesse Jackson. It is our view that the current policies of the Reagan Administration must be challenged and checked. We support many of the platforms of the Jackson Campaign and actively participated in building the Rainbow Coalition.

*Asian Pacific American Heritage Festival time brings out the wealth of creative talent among members and supporters of CJA. Join us this year and discover Pat Nakai's creation, "Iro no Nagare", the Currents of Colors, crafts for children.

Jesse Jackson Endorses Redress/Reparations

On March 1, New York Asians for Jesse Jackson announced that Jesse Jackson is supporting redress and reparations for Japanese Americans and Aleuts incarcerated during WW II. The position adopted by Jackson was formulated by Concerned Japanese Americans (New York), a member organization of the New York Asians for Jesse Jackson, and the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations, a coalition formed in 1980 with chapters in seven cities across the country.

The position was adopted through the efforts of Manhattan Campaign Coordinator David Dinkins in conjunction with the N.Y. Asians for Jesse Jackson. The group was informed of Jackson's endorsement by Mr. Dinkins, who spoke personally to Rev. Jackson.

The provisions of the position include support for swift passage of national

legislation currently pending in Congress (H.R. #4110 and S.B. #2116), along with two key amendments: the first calling for an allocation of funds equal to the total number of incarcerated, and the second an offer of parity for the Aleuts.

Jesse Jackson's support of redress/reparations is a reflection of the importance his campaign places on the issues and concerns of Japanese Americans and other minority and disenfranchised peoples. It is proof of the campaign's efforts to include broad input and participation from grassroots people.

Jackson's endorsement was hailed by Asian Americans across the country. "The position adopted by Jesse Jackson represents the culminated efforts of thousands of Japanese Americans throughout the nation, many of whom raised their voices in hours

New York Asians Commemorate

1984 Day of Remembrance

Close to 120 Nikkei and friends came out this year for New York's Day of Remembrance commemoration on Saturday, Feb. 18 held at the Japanese American United Church. Sponsored by Concerned Japanese Americans (CJA), the event observed the 42nd anniversary of Franklin D. Roosevelt's issuance of Executive Order 9066 which consigned over 120,000 West Coast Japanese Americans to concentration camps for the duration of World War II.

Against a background of art work and memorabilia submitted by Karl Akiya, Bill Kochiyama, Mine Okubo and Henry Sugimoto, the audience was treated to a tightly-organized program of entertainment, music and song, speeches and as Bill Kochiyama said in introducing it, the "pre-World Premiere" of Loni Ding's film "Nisei Soldier: Standard Bearer for an Exiled People."

What was significant this year in New York was the evident Asian-American identification with, and commitment to, Japanese-American redress. In her talk, Leslee Inaba-Wong described how moved CJA has been in receiving statements of support from numerous Asian-American organizations for the redress effort. Such groups include: Advocates for Social Action, a Pilipino-American group; Asian American Dance Theatre; Asian Women United; Basement Workshop; Chinatown Planning Council; Chinese Progressive Association; Columbia University Asian Law Students Association; East Wind--N.Y. Local Committee and N.Y. Metropolitan Asian Law Students Association. Canadian folksinger Terry Watada read a statement of solidarity from Japanese-Canadians who, on Feb. 26, 1942, were ordered into camps by their government.

Speaking on an "Asian-American Perspective on Redress/Reparations," Rocky Chin, who has taught Asian-American history and literature, stated that the question always arises when teaching "Could (the Order) nappen again?" He stated that most people answered yes. "Redress means," Chin continued, "that it tries to rectify inequalities for all Asian Americans and other minority groups."

Japanese-Canadian folksong writer and singer Watada provided an international dimension with his spirited singing of Canada-based songs, and Laura Chan, Vivien Chen and Gerri Igarashi danced with Sharon Hom, to the latter's rendering of "We, the Dangerous" by West Coast sansei poet Janice Mirikitani.

Culminating the program was the showing of "Nisei Soldier," which was produced, written and directed by a Chinese-American woman Loni Ding. "Nisei Soldier" pays tribute to the all-Nisei World War II 100/442, the singlemost decorated American unit fighting in that war. It movingly portrays, with the aid of contemporary interviews and archival footage, the practically impossible situation the Nikkei soldiers found themselves in as they fought to prove their loyalty to a country which was incarcerating their families. The film is heart-wrenching in its depiction of the sentiments and thoughts which motivated the soldiers to such service, and indeed, tears came to many eyes. After the film, moderator Lori Kitazono suggested that the people in the audience who had been incarcerated in camps stand, and a minute of silence was observed.

What more fitting end to the day but the singing of Yuri Kochiyama's celebrated "A Song for Redress/Reparations," (sung to the tune of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic"). A sign, to this participant, of a good event is that people want to hang around afterwards to talk, exchange greetings, meet new people, and find out other people's reactions to what occurred. This, many did.

Edited from an article by Teru Kanazawa, THE NEW YORK NICHIBEI, March 1, 1984.

Join Us!

I am interested in the activities of CJA.

Please put me on the mailing list.

Please keep me informed of meetings and events.

NAME (Please Print)

ADDRESS Street

City State Zip

PHONE (Area code)

Jesse Jackson

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of testimony before hearings conducted in the fall and winter of 1982 by the Commission on Wartime Internment and Relocation of Civilians. It represents the sentiments of the many unheard voices from the Japanese American communities, crystallizing in a common call for Justice," stated Burt Nakano, National Spokesperson for the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations.

Evelyn Yoshimura, Co-chair of the Asian Pacific Americans for Jesse Jackson in Los Angeles stated "Japanese Americans have waged an uphill and courageous fight to gain meaningful compensation for the grave injustices perpetuated by the U.S. government during WW II against citizens and permanent residents of Japanese and Aleut ancestry. Jackson's support for redress and reparations is a welcome sign of his concern for the needs of Japanese Americans in this country."

Lyle Wing, Co-chair of the San Francisco Bay Area Asian Americans for Jesse Jackson stated, "We were confident that Jackson, as the only candidate who speaks to the concerns of Third World and working people, would support redress and reparations. His endorsement shows that Asians can have a significant impact on the 1984 elections."

In New York, Jackson's endorsement of redress and reparations has given greater impetus to the efforts of the New York Asians for Jesse Jackson to organize Asian support for Jackson. "Jackson's support for redress and reparations reaffirms to us that the Rainbow Coalition is a real vehicle for the disenfranchised to voice our concerns and be heard," states Leslee Inaba Wong of the Concerned Japanese Americans and Co-Chair of the New York Asians for Jesse Jackson.

R/R Legislation Update

Congress is scheduled to convene hearings on Redress legislation in late May and June of this year. Testimony on the bill before the House of Representatives, H.R. #4110, which provides for \$20,000 individual redress payment and the establishment of an education fund will be heard before the Judiciary Subcommittee of the House Administrative Law Committee on June 20th and June 21st in Washington, D.C.

Testimony for the Senate bill, #S2116, containing the same provisions will be held in open hearings before the Governmental Affairs Subcommittee. The first session for these hearings is scheduled for late May in Anchorage, Alaska; and the second session scheduled for June 1st in Los Angeles.

Concerned Japanese Americans encourages everyone to write to his/her congressmen to show support for Redress legislation. A list of congressmen from the New York metropolitan area and a sample letter can be obtained from CJA.