

CJA STATEMENT - FEB. 22, 81

Thirty-nine years ago, on February 19, 1942, Pres. Franklin Delano Roosevelt proclaimed an Executive Order 9066--an order which made it mandatory for every person of Japanese ancestry be removed from the states of California, Oregon, Washington, and parts of Arizona.... *120,000 people*

Today, we are holding a "Day of Remembrance" of that order which abruptly changed the life of every Japanese and Japanese American on the West Coast of United States...and also we have learned <sup>recently</sup> of hundreds of Japanese nationals right here in New York City, whose story has hardly been told.

Days of Remembrances are being held all over the west coast--pilgrimages to assembly centers and concentration camp sites; seminars and symposiums on college campuses by Asian students; and <sup>this year,</sup> also a candle-light march in Los Angeles

*Nisei* to honor Amy Uno Ishii, a dedicated fighter for redress who passed away several weeks ago. These observances have ~~been~~ going on for ~~almost~~ 10 years, *initiated*

~~ironically initiated, not by Issei and Nisei, but by Sanseis and other Asian students who have become aware of the history of Asians and other Third~~

World peoples in America. *Also Niseis like the late Edison Uno, Sue Embery, Ray Okamura, Edison Uno and the late Eileen Uno & Amy Uno Ishii must not be forgotten.*

Remembrances of even a painful past are important if we can learn from it that it will not happen again. We must also remember <sup>the non-Japanese</sup> all ~~those~~ who had

the courage to speak out in our behalf at a time of war and race hysteria (and how few those voices were) who gave us moral support and material help when much of the American leadership and populace looked upon us as the

"enemy" too. We must not forget people like: Dorothy Day who went to Manzanar by herself and picketed in front of the guard-post; or Ruth Gage Col-

by who spent the war years finding jobs for evacuees in the twin city area

*Minnesota (she resides here in N.Y.)* of Minneapolis; or <sup>this place</sup> Earl Finch, a Mississippian, who was a one-man USO for the

442, the Japanese-American Combat Team; or Ralph Lazo, a teen-age Chicano,

who voluntarily went to camp with his Japanese-American friends; *or the Swearingin family who regularly visited the only enclave of Japanese-Americans allowed to stay in Calif.--the tub. patients at Hillcrest Sanatorium.*



Concerned Japanese Americans hope that this program--"Day of Remembrance"--will be meaningful, educational, and motivating--that we can all begin to feel closer to one another from this common denominator of a common experience; that we can begin to have dialogue ~~an~~ an issue that should be pertinent to us as a people. That issue is redress.

And what is redress?

*quoting from* The JACL statement of February, 1979, answers the question *thrusly idealistically. well* clearly.

"By custom and tradition, any American who has been injured by false accusation, arrest or imprisonment is expected to bring the responsible parties into court and obtain a judgement clearing his or her name and collecting damages as redress. Freedom is considered so precious by Americans that even a few days in false imprisonment have been compensated with large monetary sums." (Historically, this is not true for Third World Peoples, but legally it should be possible).

"German Jews experienced the horrors of the Nazi death camps. Japanese Americans experienced the agonies of being incarcerated for an indeterminate period. Both were imprisoned in barbed wire compounds with armed guards. Both were prisoners of their own country. Both were there without criminal charges, and were completely innocent of any wrongdoing. Both were there for only one reason--ancestry. German Jews were systematically murdered en masse--that did not happen to Japanese Americans, but the point is that both Germany and the United States persecuted their own citizens solely on the basis of ancestry." *Unquote*

*fakes this out* "Redress *of* the injustices of 1942-1946 is not just an isolated Japanese American issue; it is an issue of concern for all Americans. Restitution does not put a price tag on freedom or justice. The issue is not to recover what cannot be recovered. The issue is to acknowledge the mistakes by



providing proper redress for the victims of the injustice, and thereby make such injustices less likely to occur." (Unquote)

Every Third World ethnic peoples here have a history of national oppression; violations of human and civil rights, especially the Africans who were kidnapped from <sup>a distant continent, brought here in concentration camps called plantations</sup> their native lands, and forced into slavery, <sup>and (now called</sup> Black Americans); the indigenous peoples here (misnamed American Indians) <sup>stripped of their land as also</sup> who were placed in concentration camps <sup>this time</sup> called reservations; <sup>also</sup> the polynesians in Hawaii and the Eskimos in Alaska, <sup>the Chicanos & Puerto Ricans -- all have had some or all of these</sup> <sup>or have had their land exploited by the U.S. military & corporations</sup> <sup>taken by</sup> States. Each of these groups have legitimate claims for land and reparations, <sup>as there has been no restitution for the irreparable damage to their people & their redress</sup> Among Japanese Americans the subject of redress has been discussed for years. One of the prime movers for a redress campaign was Shosuke Sasaki of Seattle, Washington who proposed monetary redress which in 1979 culminated in the Mike Lowery Bill, H.R. 5977. This bill was denied.

The JACL and ~~the~~ Japanese American Congressmen and Senators introduced and won a Commission on War-time Relocation and Internment of Civilians Act, a fact-finding commission to determine whether a wrong was committed against Japanese Americans during the World War II period. The commission is not a bill to provide redress in any form or manner but to gather facts, hold public hearings, recommend appropriate remedies, and submit a report to Congress within 18 months after the enactment of the bill. <sup>However, pending the outcome of the hearings, the panelists may make recommendations -- including monetary reparations compensation.</sup>

William Hohri, the leader of the Chicago-based National Council for Japanese-American Redress is appealing for justice in a different way—through a court action against the United States government. NCJAR, as the organization is known, originally proposed with the Seattle group, and supported, lobbied, and worked for the Lowery Bill. The defeat of the bill, they felt, left them only the option of a class action suit for monetary compensation.

We cannot do  
it. <sup>United</sup> who  
were removed  
from their islands  
in the Pacific  
in April of 1942  
to abandoned  
canneries & mines  
in SE Alaska.  
Western Canada,  
Japan in  
Puerto Rico,  
Peru & other  
So. Amer. countries  
were also uprooted  
& incarcerated in  
camps confined  
to a limited  
area



In July of 1980, individuals and organizations representing the Nikkei communities throughout the nation met in Los Angeles to establish the National Coalition on Redress Reparation. This same body called its first national conference where some 300 people nationwide attended. They drew up 5 principles of unity which reads:

- (1) Redress/Reparation means monetary compensation to individuals who suffered evacuation and/or incarceration (or their heirs).
- (2) Redress/Reparation means restitution to the Japanese-American communities--the exact form to be determined by the needs of each respective community.
- (3) Redress/Reparation means overturning the legal basis that has justified the evacuation and the camps.
- (4) Redress/Reparation means supporting others who have or are suffering from unjust actions taken by the U.S. government.
- (5) Redress/Reparation means that we seek the educating of the American public so that future generations may learn from the mistake of the past and not knowingly allow them to happen again.

Concerned Japanese Americans, an ad hoc committee in New York, after much thought and study of the different proposals, have come to the conclusion that the just-mentioned principles of unity by the National Coalition for Redress Reparation is the most appropo. We agree with the principles and have decided to <sup>support</sup> join the Coalition. <sup>We can also do</sup> It ~~allows us also to~~ support the NCJAR law suit, ~~in event all recourses fail.~~ <sup>and</sup> We ~~can~~ also become involved with the Japanese Community here in the commission hearings. <sup>Community participation would be</sup> ~~Involvement with the~~ <sup>the CAA's</sup>

Some of the objectives of CJA's participation in the redress movement is to: 1. Unite Nikkeis throughout New York and East Coast on redress.

2. Educate and build support from all sectors of the American public.



3. Help mobilize people to testify for the commission hearings.
4. Conduct a petition drive for the NCCRR's 5 points.
5. ~~Launch a media campaign that~~ <sup>provide</sup> newspapers, t.v. and radio stations <sup>with</sup> ~~will have~~ up-to-date informations on the commission hearings and other redress/reparation activities.
6. Support ~~all~~ other peoples' redress movements for land, reparatins<sup>o</sup>, <sup>their rights to</sup> and political power.

CJA believes in building a strong, united broad-based movement because winning reparation will not be an easy or quickly accomplished task. It will only be done through long, hard, persistent and gruelling endeavor. By a large number of people. <sup>We must remember that an Indian tribe in the United States fought for basic rights after a struggle of 80 years.</sup>

We hope that the end gains of reparation <sup>for the Japanese</sup> may come to fruition before all the Issei <sup>1st generation Japanese</sup> are gone. We are calling on all Nikkeis to unite <sup>with us</sup> and participate on some level. <sup>Now Japanese who would like to work with us may do so too. We welcome the help of all.</sup>

~~Redress/Reparation is a call for justice and equality.~~ <sup>It is a call</sup> for the vindication and restitution for the massive and blatant <sup>wartime</sup> violations and denial of democratic rights of a whole nationality.

Redress/Reparation is a struggle for the future generations in the united States, ~~for not only the Japanese minority but for all people...~~ that the right to a full life with equal protection, unlimited enhancements, and human dignity will be ~~theirs.~~ <sup>a reality for all. A victory for Japanese American</sup>

~~can help open the door of restitution for others.~~ <sup>Redress/Reparation is your fight/our fight.</sup> Unite in this common cause! <sup>struggle/ struggle.</sup>

~~But that is the primary reason we must confront & challenge acts of~~ <sup>unjustices is because of the historical reality of the U.S. gov't's perpetration of wrong against people of color in this country.</sup> The polarization of nation-  
alities <sup>and the upsurge of racism today</sup> attest to the serious problem in American society. Only through equity and justice can a nation be united. Japanese-Americans, like all <sup>national</sup> minorities, must fight for the redress of wrongs done to anyone.. (Repeat - anyone).