

NCRRR BANNER



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NCRRR'S CAMPAIGN FOR LEGISLATION

BY LILLIAN NAKANO

The Commission hearings are behind us now. But the old pride wells up each time I recall the hearings. Throughout the cities they echoed the same message to the Commission and the U.S. government that we demanded reparations and justice for the years of hardship, deprivation and losses suffered from the racist incarceration. The fighting spirit that came through was a testimony to our very pride and gut-level feeling which Japanese Americans (JAs) still embody despite 40 years of suppression. Indeed, this was a historic event within our JA communities as finally our demands were clearly expressed in uncompromising terms. We no longer went by the old euphemism of "relocation center" as they would have us do, but firmly acknowledged that "a concentration camps experience" it was, under no uncertain terms.

Throughout that period, the different Redress and Reparations (R/R) groups including the NCRRR really bore down to spread the work, mobilized and coordinated for strong community participation at the hearings. JAs had a message and it was said resoundingly!

Since its formation in November, 1980, NCRRR has been very active and in the forefront of the issue throughout our communities. All of the regionals are actively involved in their respective communities and our membership is growing. Now, it is appropriate for us to take our work a step further to speak concretely on the means to reparations. By a process of discussions in all of our regionals and on the level of the National Steering Committee, a decision was arrived at whereby NCRRR will submit a draft to Congress as a first step to redress. On the basis of NCRRR's principles, our draft will call for individual payments of \$25,000 and a community fund of 3 billion. This is also consistent with the overwhelming majority of testimonies by JAs at the hearings for individual monetary compensation.

Commission's Responsibility

It is now official that the Commission for Wartime Relocation & Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) has been granted an extension through December, 1982 to conclude its findings and make a recommendation on that basis. The evidence (hearings testimonies) would seem to indicate

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1982 Day of Remembrance Programs

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the incarceration of 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry into ten concentration camps. Forty years later, in 1982, Nikkei communities throughout the U.S. commemorated February 19 as the "Day of Remembrance".

The demand for redress and reparations highlighted this year's programs. They were a time to honor those of our people who lived through the camps and have since passed on. They were a time to reaffirm our commitment to carry on the legacy they have left us, and renew our struggle for justice and equality for Nikkei -- a struggle exemplified by the demand for Redress and Reparations.

The following are brief descriptions of the many Day of Remembrance programs which took place this year:

Los Angeles: On February 20, the NCRRR sponsored a march and rally of 300, through Little Tokyo, expressing the demand for redress and reparations. Speakers included Gardena City Councilman Mas Fukai, and Congressman Mervyn Dymally.

Boston: The Asian American Resource Workshop sponsored a program at Harvard University attended by 100 people on February 21. Speakers included Sasha Hohri, of the East Coast Japanese Americans for Redress, and David Sakura of the New England JAACL.

New York: The East Coast Japanese Americans for Redress sponsored a program attended by 150 people, featuring 6 speakers testifying about their wartime experiences, a commemoration by George Shimamoto of the NY Buddhist Church. Actors from the Pan-Asian Repertory Company read scenes from their upcoming production "Rohwer".

Sacramento: The NCRRR sponsored a program on February 20, attended by 75 people, which focused on their campaign to have the Sacramento Unified School District recognize February 19 as the Day of Remembrance.

San Francisco: On February 20, 200 people (½ nisei) attended a program sponsored by

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NCRR'S CAMPAIGN FOR LEGISLATION

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what the Commission's final recommendation ought to be, and that is to urge Congress to appropriate substantial compensation to all JAs who were affected by Executive Order 9066 (heirs of deceased, included.) Yet, the climate of the economy and the "messages" of "political reality" we are getting from all sides, reminds us further that we cannot rely solely on officials to take the issue at hand. Our submitting a draft to Congress will be another way of speaking directly to the Commission as to their responsibility and response to our message at the hearings.

Legislative Perspective

At the same time, a legislative campaign does concretely require us to aggressively seek the support of as many Congressmen as possible including our Nikkei Congressmen. Underlying is the principle of the grave injustice done to the Japanese people during WWII. JAs must stand firm and not let political expediency nullify our rights to seek redress for gross injustices and violation of our rights and the damages incurred as a result of the camps. NCRR therefore feels it is correct to stand behind the strongest possible Bill.

A United Community

In the past, NCRR has worked jointly with various chapters of JACL, be it for the hearings, educationals or events like the Day of Remembrance. Additionally, we are working with various Church groups, community groups, Veterans groups, art & culture groups, different student organizations from the many campuses on the West Coast, and of course the many individuals who have joined us or supported us throughout the years. Our goal has always been to strive for a community united around a common goal - that of winning reparations.

There have been questions in the community around the different approaches to R/R that now exist such as the JACL's Foundation concept, Seattle's tax plan, NCJAR's class action suit and NCRR's direct appropriation bill. While NCRR is not at this time pursuing the tax plan or the class action suit, we do respect the initiative of these groups and feel that all approaches are in principle, speaking to a common sentiment for just compensation. Our draft will incorporate the "enabling legislation" or other legal aspects which would enable individuals to pursue the lawsuit route if desired. Specific to JACL's approach, as far as we are aware (J. Tateishi's article in Pacific Citizen March 12 and 19), they are advocating the creation of a "Chartered Foundation" from which individual payments would be disbursed with residual monies going into a

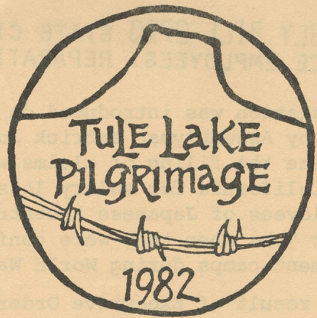
community fund. We urge JACL to disclose the various details specific to the individual amounts, eligibility, method of payments and other such critical points related to their program to the community. These are questions of concern to all JAs and will help towards moving on a unified approach to redress. NCRR, in pursuing the direct appropriation route, feels that this is generally the quickest and most substantial means to redress with direct payments to individuals.

To the best of our knowledge, all drafts submitted to Congress will remain dormant for the period that the Commission is still in effect. NCRR will finalize a draft to be submitted into Congress as soon as possible. In the coming months, and throughout this year, NCRR would like to share this draft with our communities as well as with the different R/R groups. In this way, the differences may be discussed as we strive for a common approach or a common bill. A common bill we feel, should be one that represents the sentiments of the entire community which incorporates individual payments that is meaningful and substantial.

The Tasks Before Us

It is very clear to us that this year is a crucial one for JAs to again rally, as we did for the hearings in 1981. We must reject feelings of apathy stemming from the attitude that the present reality is too formidable for winning any kind of reparations. Formidable it is, but the power of the people is likewise formidable. This will require mass involvement for our voices to spread into and beyond our communities. Justice minded people will support and respect us for our fortitude and righteous stand. We can in this period, come out with our heads high and our fists clenched in an all-out effort to fight for what is right and just.

The legislative campaign being the focus of NCRR in this period, we will continue to do mass outreach within and outside our communities to build a strong network and the broadest support for reparations. We urge all of you to become involved in whatever level of participation possible. Some of the concrete ways in which individuals and organizations can help are to: join the coalition, endorse the NCRR (in writing), organize videotape (hearings) showings or other NCRR presentations, provide updated information to your members through your organization's newsletter, help with membership drives and fundraising events. Other ideas are to form committees within your organization - taking up petition drives, letter-writing campaigns, or contacting and visiting Congressmen. Let's all march behind the banner of JUSTICE NOW! REPARATIONS NOW!



Join the Tule Lake Pilgrimage June 5-6

"1942 - 1982 - Our Struggle Continues" is the theme of the 1982 Tule Lake Pilgrimage. The Pilgrimage, as in past years, will bring together Nikkei of all generations - issei, nisei, sansei, yonsei and newcomers, to commemorate the concentration camps experience and address the current issues and questions facing Nikkei today.

This year, the Sacramento Regional of the NCRP is co-sponsoring the Tule Lake Pilgrimage, along with the Japanese Community Progressive Alliance of San Francisco, and the Nihonmachi Outreach Committee of San Jose.

The theme of this year's Pilgrimage "1942-1982 - Our Struggle Continues" commemorates this being the 40th Anniversary of the opening of the camps, and gives particular attention to the continuing struggle for redress and reparations. The Pilgrimage gives support for the movement for redress and reparations, which is at a particularly high point, following the 1981 Commission Hearings. The Pilgrimage will also bring out how the struggle for redress and reparations is related to the many other issues facing Nikkei today, and why the need for building unity among Nikkei is so important for our continuing fight for justice and equality.

These different ideas are expressed in the 3 Principles of Unity for the 1982 Tule Lake Pilgrimage:

- 1) To build unity among Nikkei to fight for justice and equality.
- 2) To expose the racist incarceration of the camps as part of the history of oppression of Japanese people in the U.S.
- 3) To build the demand for redress and reparations.

The NCRP encourages all interested people to participate in this year's Pilgrimage. For more information, contact:
SF Bay Area: JCPA (415) 921-8841
San Jose: Tom (408) 294-2505 (days)
Cathy (408) 298-8910
Sacramento: Diane (916) 457-7162



40 YEARS. . . A TIME TO REMEMBER A TIME TO BEAR WITNESS THE MANZANAR PILGRIMAGE. . . A LIVING HISTORY

The 13th annual Pilgrimage to Manzanar is scheduled for Saturday, April 24, 1982. This is an important event especially this year since it marks the 40th anniversary of the building of Manzanar, under President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066.

The extraordinary unity which surfaced at the hearings of the Commission on War-time Relocation and Internment of Civilians was a heartwarming experience. The campaign for redress/reparations continues with the conclusion of the hearings and the Day of Remembrance activities. It is extremely important that both the Manzanar Pilgrimage and the Tule Lake Pilgrimage be widely publicized and attended by all of us.

We suggest that the following activities can be generated by the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations:

1. Contact the witnesses who testified. Urge them to attend the Pilgrimage and continue to bear witness to their experience.
2. Raise funds and charter a bus so many more people can participate in the Pilgrimage.
3. Share your time and your energy and enthusiasm with us. By helping us plan the program, you can also outreach to people with the redress/reparations story. We can help each other "spread the word".
4. Contact your elected officials. Urge them to take a stand. Let them know we expect them to stand behind the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights and to reaffirm their public duty to a democracy.

We will be writing to the Legislature and requesting the presence of these public officials. You can support our efforts. Let them hear our stories; let them know how we stand on redress.

LET US TAKE TIME TO REMEMBER AND TO BEAR WITNESS. THE MANZANAR PILGRIMAGE - A LIVING HISTORY.

By Sue Kunitomi Embrey

ASIAN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES

BRIDGE

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ASSEMBLY BILL 2710 STATE CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEES: REPARATIONS



THE LONG ROAD: JAPANESE AMERICANS MOVE ON REDRESS



BRIDGE presents the full story of the redress and reparations movement in a special section packed with information, art and ideas:

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- * feature article by members of the East Coast Japanese Americans for Redress
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- * satirical essay "The Junior Senator from California" by Raymond Okamura
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- * chronology of the internment and redress movement events
- * information about the NCCR, NCJAR, and JAACL-NCR
- * poetry by former internee Suma Yagi

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Legislation was introduced on February 19, 1982, by Assemblyman Patrick Johnston to authorize the filing of claims with the State of California for salary losses to State employees of Japanese ancestry who lost their jobs when they were confined in internment camps during World War II.

As a result of Executive Order 9066, the California State Personnel Board (SPB) distributed an extensive questionnaire to State employees of Japanese descent to determine their loyalty. All were dismissed from State service and interned in camps from 1942 to 1945.

Eventually in 1947, the SPB reinstated 88 employees. They were given 10 days to report for work. Only a few knew of the Board's action and returned to their jobs. The other 226 dismissed State workers never did win back the right to return to their State jobs either because they were not permanent employees or because they had not formally appealed the dismissal in 1942.

The filing of this claim calls for compensation in the amount of \$1000 per year for five years for each dismissed employee, despite actual losses in excess of that amount.

As stated in the press conference to introduce this piece of legislation, Assemblyman Patrick Johnston in Sacramento stated:

"It is California - its politicians, its business leaders, its newspaper publishers - who whipped up the hysteria against Japanese Americans at the outset of World War II that caused Roosevelt's evacuation order."

"This Legislature can annually pass resolutions protesting how sorry we are for what happened. But if we mean what we say, we will pay back our own loyal former State employees who were victims of the most outrageous campaign of discrimination in the history of California."

The first hearing before the Assembly's Public Employee and Retirement Committee took place on Wednesday, March 24. Representatives from NCCR - Sacramento Chapter were present to register their support and answer any questions.

DAY OF REMEMBRANCE PROGRAMS

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a coalition of organizations including the Center for Japanese American Studies, Contra Costa JAACL, Japanese Community Progressive Alliance, the NCCR and NCJAR. The American Friends Service Committee spoke along with nisei and sansei speakers. San Jose: 75 people attended a program sponsored by the Nihonmachi Outreach Committee, which included speakers from the San Jose JAACL, Peninsula Redress Committee, and Stanford Asian American Student Association.

DAY OF REMEMBRANCE RESOLUTION



On February 4, 1982, a Resolution of Remembrance of the internment of Japanese Americans was approved in the California State Legislature. This piece of legislation was introduced by Patrick Johnston (D-26th District) and co-authored by 58 legislators.

"Relative to a 'Day of Remembrance'", this Resolution in part states that:

"...Whereas, February 19, 1982, marked the 40th Anniversary of a day in American history which will long live in the memory of countless American citizens, for it was on that day in 1942, that Executive Order No. 9066 was issued, uprooting over 110,000 persons of Japanese ancestry from their homes to be detained in internment camps; and...

"...Whereas, although the citizens of the United States today express remorse, and wonder how such constitutional and moral violations could be put into effect, denying persons the enjoyment of the basic guarantees enumerated in the Bill of Rights this regret can never right the wrong inflicted upon loyal Americans;...

"...Resolved by the Joint Rules Committee of the Senate and the Assembly, that the Members affirm that the citizens of California and the United States have learned from the tragedies that came from Executive Order No. 9066 and its denial of liberty and justice to Americans; and be it further

"...Resolved, that February 19, 1982, be recognized as "A DAY OF REMEMBRANCE", a time set aside so that persons might reflect upon the shared responsibility to uphold the constitutional and moral rights of all individuals at all times..."

NCRR GIVES SPECIAL THANKS:

The Wendy Yoshimura Fair Trial Committee Trustees recently made a decision to close out their fund, and named four recipients to receive the balance: Wendy's parents, the NCRR, NCJAR, and JACL's National Redress Committee.

The NCRR would like to give our thanks to the Wendy Yoshimura Fair Trial Committee, for their contribution and support of our efforts to win justice and equality for Nikkei people.

* The following letter was written by a 71 year old nisei woman, living in Venice, California, following the Day of Remembrance march and rally sponsored by the Los Angeles Regional of the NCRR.

* * * * *

At the close of the Redress and Reparations meeting held in Venice Community Center, you (an NCRR member) gave me your name and address.

As a result of my giving my opinions at that meeting, I was asked to take part in the "Mock Hearing" at the Tokyo Towers. That led to my appearance before the Washington Commission to present my testimony.

Saturday's demonstration in Little Tokyo organized by the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations did much to bring the injustice during World War II, the evacuation and incarceration of the Japanese-Americans to the American public.

It was conducted in an orderly and dignified manner, as shown on prime time TV news. The reporters' remarks were truthfully stated. I would like to thank the group for taking this action.

Also, on February 21st, a very good article appeared in the Metro Section of the Los Angeles Times concerning the demonstration. A Bert Nakano was mentioned as the spokesman for the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations. Please extend my thanks to him for the statements he made. I agree with him on all points.

I am sending you a copy of my testimony given before the Washington Commission. My time is taken typing copies to send to key people. I call myself, a voice crying in the wilderness, trying to right the injustice faced and lived by citizens because of race within the United States of America through information of facts.

Hoping we may meet again.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Nishikawa

Calendar of Events April - May 1982

- April 13 - General Meeting, JACCC, 4th Floor, Room 411, Los Angeles
- April 17 - NCRRC Steering Committee Meeting, 2:00 p.m., JACCC, 4th Floor, Room 411, Los Angeles
- April 19 - Sacramento NCRRC meets with Sacramento City Unified School District to present Resolution on Day of Remembrance, 7:30 p.m.
- April 24 - Manzanar Pilgrimage, Program starts at 11:00 a.m., for more information, call (213) 662-5102.
- April 30 - San Francisco Regional Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Sumitomo Bank Hospitality Room, SF J-town.
- May 2 - Nikkei Matsuri - San Jose Community Street Festival, Jackson & Fifth Streets.
- May 6 - Nihonmachi Outreach Committee General Meeting, 7:30 p.m. Yu-Ai-Kai office, 171 E. Jackson St., San Jose.
- May 8 - LA Coalition Meeting, 2:00 p.m., JACCC, 4th Floor.
- May 16 - Asian Pacific Heritage Week Festival, 12 noon - 6:00 p.m., Oakland Museum; entertainment, food booths, games.
- May 17 - "Gold Watch" Asian American Theater Project - Stanford University, Call: (415) 497-3542.

 We welcome all of those interested in this issue to become members of the coalition. You will be put on our mailing list and be informed of our upcoming activities. We also encourage any donations to help fund these activities, our mailings, and other educational work, and as a sign of your support. Please check the appropriate boxes below.

\$5.00 Individual Membership \$25.00 Organizational Membership

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Sincerely,

Elizabeth Washlaw