

# The New York NICHIBEI

"Community Service Since 1945"

Volume XXXIII, No. 1675

260 West Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10013

Thursday, August 24, 1978

## History and the Case for Redress

(As part of its program to inform the public about the causes of the mass evacuation of Japanese Americans from the West coast during World War II and the current movement for compensation, the National Committee for Redress of the Japanese American Citizens League has published a booklet entitled "The Japanese American Incarceration: A Case for Redress." The text follows.)

### INTRODUCTION

"No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law. The accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation." These protections are guaranteed in the 5th and 6th Amendments to the Constitution of the United States of America.

However, during 1942-46, some 77,000 American citizens of Japanese ancestry and 43,000 Japanese nationals, most of whom were permanent U.S. residents, were summarily deprived of liberty and property without criminal charges, and without trial of any kind. Several persons were also violently deprived of life. All persons of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast were expelled from their homes and confined in inland detention camps. The sole basis for these actions was ancestry—citizenship, age, loyalty, or innocence of wrongdoing did not matter. Japanese Americans were the only ones singled out for mass incarceration. German and Italian nationals, and American citizens of German and Italian ancestries were not imprisoned en masse.

The episode was one of the worst blows to constitutional liberties that the American people have ever sustained. Many Americans find it difficult to understand how such a massive injustice could have occurred in a democratic nation. This booklet will attempt to explain how and why it happened, and what can be done to ameliorate the effects of that mistake. Professor Eugene V. Rostow once wrote: "Until the wrong is acknowledged and made right we shall have failed to meet the responsibility of a democratic society—the obligation of equal justice."

### ROOT CAUSES

The seeds of prejudice which resulted in the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II were sown nearly a century earlier when the first immigrants from Asia arrived during the California Gold Rush. California was then a lawless frontier territory. White immigrants from the Eastern United States had just succeeded in wresting control of the territory from Mexico, and had briefly proclaimed an independent Republic of California.

Mexico was forced to cede California to the United States in 1848, and almost simultaneously gold was discovered in the Sierra Nevada foothills. Immigrants from the Eastern states, and from all over the world, rushed to California during 1848-49. There was intense, often violent competition for control of the gold

mines, and ultimately for control of the Territory of California.

About 25% of the miners in California during the Gold Rush came from China. The English-speaking newcomers who had previously established dominance over the Native, Spanish, and Mexican Californians were in no mood to tolerate further competition. Using acts of terrorism—mass murder and arson—the white newcomers drove the Chinese out of the mining areas.

When California became a state in 1850, lawless violence against the Chinese was transformed into legal discrimination. Official government prejudice against Asian Americans thus became established. Article 19 of the California State Constitution

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## JACL Sets Weekend Awareness Workshop

The New York chapter of the JACL is now accepting enrollments for the "Japanese American Awareness Workshop" which it will conduct on Sept. 30 and Oct. 1 at the Stony Point Conference Center in Rockland County, N.Y.

As there are accommodations available for only 60 persons at the Center, early reservations are being urged. The fee of \$25 for students and retired persons, and \$35 for all others, includes all meals, lodgings and workshop expenses.

The workshop will begin at 9 a.m. Saturday and conclude at 1 p.m. Sunday.

Among highlights will be a keynote address by Judge William Marutani of Philadelphia, an original play by Phil Nash, tai-chi demonstration and participation led by Herman Kauz, and small group discussion sessions.

Reservations should be sent, with the fee made payable to "New York Chapter JACL," to Ruby Schaar, 50 W. 67 St., New York City 10023.

## Basement's Festival Expanding Activities

The Basement Workshop is calling its projected weekend folk history and arts festival "ASIAN-AMERICA Celebrates," and it will open at 7 o'clock Friday evening, Sept. 15, with a cultural program, a crafts bazaar and an exhibit of paintings and photographs, at 199 Lafayette St.

On Sept. 16, there will be a continuous program of tai chi, folk dance and kung fu demonstrations, performances of music, dance and drama, poetry readings, slide shows and films. For youngsters, there will be a game area and storytelling and arts and crafts. Asian and American food and drink will be available.

Admission to the festival is \$3 for one day or \$5 for two days. Children under 12 will be admitted for 50¢. Proceeds will go toward the support of Basement Workshop's year-round community arts activities.

Those who wish to take an active part in the festival are asked to call its coordinator, Teru Kanazawa, at 925-3264.

## Final Rites Are Held For Shigeki Tanigaki

Funeral services were held this past Tuesday for Shigeki Tanigaki, who died at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital on Aug. 18 following an extended illness. He was 87 years of age. The Rev. Justin Haruyama conducted the final rites at the Chapel Hill Memorial Home at 1649 First Ave.

Mr. Tanigaki was born in Hyogoken prefecture, Japan, and he came to the United States as a young man. Prior to World War II he engaged in farming on the West coast. After coming to New York, he worked for a time for the Oriental Lamphade Co. He is survived by his wife, Shige, and daughter, Irene.

## JAHFA Has New Home And Telephone Now

Japanese American Help for the Aging (JAHFA), whose mailing address for the first several years of its existence was that of the Japanese American United Church, is now installed in its own office at the headquarters of the Japanese American Association of New York, 7 W. 44 St.

Until such time as the office is manned full-time, messages will be received on an answering-recording device, and calls will be returned at the earliest opportunity. The telephone number for JAHFA is 840-6899.

## Holiday Notice

The staff of the N.Y. Nichibei will take their annual holiday during the week of Labor Day, so readers are advised *not* to look for an issue dated September 7, as none will be published. The first issue in September will be dated September 14.

## Bruyeres Villagers Reunite with Rescuers

Bruyeres, as anyone who followed the exploits of the 442nd regimental combat team and the 100th infantry battalion in World War II knows, is a village in the Vosges mountains of northeastern France.

The Japanese American troops liberated the town from the Germans after a 16-day battle which cost the lives of 2,000 of the 3,500 members of the 442nd and 100th and more than 70 of the villagers.

After the war, the people of Bruyeres erected a monument to commemorate the event, and the inscription reads, in part:

"To the men of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the 100th Infantry Battalion who reaffirmed a historic truth here that loyalty to one's country is not modified by racial origin..."

Early this month, 33 men and women from Bruyeres had a reunion with some veterans of the 442nd who were among the 150 or so Japanese Americans who attended a banquet for the French visitors in Gardena, Calif. The latter had stopped off in Los Angeles prior to going on a tour of Hawaii.

## \$6,000 NEA Grant to Basement Workshop for Writers-in-Residence

The Basement Workshop has been awarded a \$6,000 grant by the National Endowment for the Arts for a writers-in-residence program to be conducted at its loft headquarters, 199 Lafayette St.

The Workshop will initiate its program with a seven-day seminar on writing under the direction of poet Lawson Inada, to begin Sept. 9. The fee for this series of workshops is \$30, and since enrollment will be limited, those who wish to sign up are urged to do so immediately.

The dates and hours of Lawson Inada's workshops are as follows: Sept. 9, 12 noon to 3 p.m.; Sept. 10, 12 noon to 3 p.m.; Sept. 11, 12, 13 and 14, 6 to 9 p.m.; and Sept. 17, 12 noon to 3 p.m.

Mr. Inada is also scheduled to conduct seminars in Seabrook and in Chinatown at a later date.

The telephone number for reservations and details is 925-3258.

## Duly Noted

In only the third day of its existence, CITY NEWS, the interim daily-except-Saturday newspaper which bowed last Thursday acknowledged its first big gaffe with the following apology:

"In Friday's edition of CITY NEWS, the word 'Japs' appeared in the headline on a story about a possible joint insurance venture involving the Prudential Insurance Co. and the Sony Corp. CITY NEWS received several calls from readers who pointed out our insensitivity. They were right. We were wrong. We apologize."

(The headline in question had read "Piece of Rock' for Japs".)

## Uyeda Refutes WSJ Editorial Against Redress

Calling it a form of "guilt mongering" (the title of its editorial on the subject, the WALL STREET JOURNAL on August 11 disparaged the JACL's proposal for evacuation redress by placing it within the context of a "society in which collective guilt for past sins has become a commodity to be traded, mongered and exploited.")

Asking why the "relocation issue" has been raised at this time, the editorial theorized that the "JACL has been inspired by the example of other self-appointed ethnic spokesmen snapping at compensation for ancient wrongs under the guise of 'human rights.'"

It suggests that if additional compensation is called for, "an appropriate vehicle would be to consider them like other war-time conscripts and provide them with veterans' benefits."

Conceding that the Japanese were "despised" on the West coast prior to World War II, the editorial states that they are now regarded by most as "an exemplary group of citizens," and that "racial prejudice against them is almost dead." As though in corroboration, in the next paragraph it reports that the daughter of two evacuees "will wed the son of the governor of Utah."

### Uyeda Rebutts

Dr. Clifford I. Uyeda, newly-elected National President of the JACL, has sent the following letter to the Editorial Department of the WALL STREET JOURNAL:

Dear Sir:

Your editorial "Guilt Mongering" (8/11/78) is full of inaccuracies, unworthy of the prestigious Wall Street Journal.

Seeking redress is not "under the guise of human rights." Forced uprooting and years of imprisonment of over 100,000 individuals without criminal charges or indictments, based solely on racial ground, was done as an official act of the United States Government under the guise of "protective custody." It was in gross violation of the basic human rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the United States.

The \$38 million, which you state our government "has already paid," was less than 10 percent of the \$400 million in property losses alone sustained by those expelled from their homes (source: Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, 1942). Many could not even file their claims because their documents to prove property losses were stolen or destroyed by vandals as they remained unprotected in storage on the West Coast.

Those expelled from the West Coast and incarcerated were not "like other war-time conscripts." They were prisoners of their own country. The redress we seek is not a "bonus." It is a perfectly sound American principle of restitution to the victims of injustice. It is not an

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**Uyeda Refutes**

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archaic principle, but an existing honored principle of present day United States.

The Japanese American Citizens League is only responding to the requests of the majority of Japanese Americans, not just JACL members, who have expressed their strong opinions for seeking redress. Any trust fund for the welfare and benefit of Japanese Americans will be under the control of the Japanese American Commission created from representatives of the entire Japanese American community—and not the JACL.

Sincerely yours,  
Clifford I. Uyeda,  
JACL National President

**Redress**

(Continued from page 1)

authorized cities to totally expel or restrict Chinese persons to segregated areas, and prohibited the employment of Chinese persons by public agencies and corporations. Other federal, state or local laws or court decisions at various times prohibited the Chinese from: becoming citizens or voting, testifying in court against a white person, engaging in licensed businesses and professions, attending

school with whites, and marrying whites. Chinese persons alone were required to pay special taxes, and a major source of revenue for many cities, counties and the State of California came from these assessments against the Chinese.

Despite such barriers, there were more opportunities in California than in poverty-stricken China, and more Chinese immigrants arrived. But with the much larger influx of white immigrants from Eastern states and Europe, the proportion of Chinese persons in California dropped to 10% of the population.

Big business recruited Chinese workers for menial labor, but white labor unions agitated for the removal of all Chinese persons from California. The rallying cry for white labor leaders became: "The Chinese must go!" White elected officials

soon joined the exclusion movement and pressured the federal government to stop immigration from China. In response to the California lobby, Congress passed a series of Chinese Exclusion Acts beginning in 1882. The California pressure groups won their first campaign to exclude an Asian minority.

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(To be continued)

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