

NATIONAL COALITION ON REDRESS/REPARATIONS

Coalition Planning Meeting

Saturday, July 12, 1980

Union Church, Los Angeles

M I N U T E S

1. Welcome. A representative from the Little Tokyo Peoples Rights Organization (LTPRO) welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided a perspective on the significance of the meeting and the need for unity in forging a common perspective on the issue of redress/reparations (r/r). These remarks were followed by introductions of all present at the meeting.
2. Review of Agenda. The chair of the meeting reviewed the agenda and the expectations set forth: These included: 1) sharing information on current r/r activities, 2) developing a national communication network, 3) establishing the basis for forming a national coalition, and 4) forming plans for a national conference.
3. Update on R/R Activities. Updates on the r/r activities of organizations represented were given. Reports were given by: Asian/Pacific Student Union (West Coast), Japanese American Citizens League (National Redress Committee), Japanese Community Progressive Alliance (San Francisco), Los Angeles Community Coalition on Redress/Reparations (Gardena and Los Angeles), Little Tokyo Peoples Rights Organization (Los Angeles), Boyle Heights Japanese American Community Organization (Los Angeles), National Council on Japanese American Redress (Chicago and Seattle), Nihonmachi Outreach Committee and Sequoia Chapter/JACL (San Jose), New England Nisei (Amherst), and the Tule Lake Committee (Sacramento). In addition, a letter was read from the Concerned Japanese Americans organization in New York.
4. Proposal for a National Coalition. A discussion paper prepared by LTPRO was reviewed and discussed. The following points were raised and resolved:
 - a. A question was raised on how the proposed point of unity on overturning the court decision regarding r/r would be implemented. It was agreed that this point would be re-worded to stress the importance of seeking to establish the unconstitutional nature of the camps and that this would be through the investigation of various avenues such as a possible class action suit, seeking legislation, and/or seeking a reversal of the Korematsu, Endo, and Yasui cases.
 - b. There was a concern as to whether the proposed points of unity for the coalition would be in conflict with the current efforts of groups such as the JACL. It was the consensus of all present that these points were consistent with the current official position of the JACL.
 - c. It was suggested that a fifth point of unity be adopted that would address the importance of efforts to insure education around the camps for the general public to prevent future acts. It was agreed that a point addressing the importance of education would be incorporated.
 - d. It was further suggested that the coalition's position on monetary compensation would also include those who were uprooted, drafted, and/or "voluntarily" relocated as a result of the evacuation. This point was accepted. It was also agreed that this position would also include others who were affected by the evacuation such as Alaskan Aleuts, Hawaiians, and Central and South Americans of Japanese ancestry.

- e. For purposes of educational outreach, it was agreed that the five points of unity established for the coalition would be incorporated into two broad areas: 1) monetary restitution for losses suffered, and 2) importance of educational efforts to prevent future similar experiences such as the camps.
 - f. Discussion occurred concerning the amount of money that would be specified for monetary compensation. Consensus was achieved that the coalition would seek a minimum of \$15,000 for individuals and that priority would be given to Issei in the disbursement of funds.
 - g. It was agreed that all organizations and individuals wishing to participate in the coalition must adhere to the five points of unity established. Representatives of organizations were asked to return to their groups to seek approval for their participation in the coalition.
5. Development of a National Strategy.
- a. A number of activity areas were identified as being component parts in the development of a national plan of action on r/r. These included: conference planning, educational materials and outreach, survey, communications, media, legislation, and finances. In deepening plans in these areas, three discussion groups were established.
 - b. Education/Survey Discussion Group
 - 1) A list of 21 available films and slide shows related to r/r was identified. These resources will be catalogued and annotated. Additional materials will be added as they become available.
 - 2) It was agreed upon that a short, simple survey that could be standardized was desirable. The purpose of the survey will be to collect information on the public's views on r/r and disseminate these findings. The Los Angeles group will be working with the Rafu Shimpo in hopes that the survey they are developing will be suitable for use on a broader scale.
 - 3) It was suggested that educational materials such as "questions most often asked about r/r" be developed and disseminated.
 - 4) A basic presentation outline on r/r with suggestions on how to gear presentations to particular groups (i.e. churches, schools) will be developed.
 - 5) A brochure listing the groups in the coalition and the points of unity will be developed. In addition, there will be the development of a logo, buttons, and posters.
 - 6) Work will be done to develop a media packet on how to organize press conferences and write press releases.
 - c. Communications/Legislation Discussion Group
 - 1) It was decided that for the present time communication would be maintained at the local/regional level. The interim coordinating committee for the coalition will be responsible for the development of a regional communication network.
 - 2) It was agreed that a unity statement would be developed as a result of this meeting and that this would serve as the basis for a press release to be used in announcing the formation of the coalition

3) Relative to legislation, it was determined that there would likely be a lull during the next year as the commission would be in operation and new legislative efforts would be given little consideration. It was stressed, however, that it was important to develop a unified legislative strategy that would include agreement on a legislative bill and the establishment of a network to influence legislation.

d. Conference Logistics Discussion Group

1) It was decided that priority for the coalition would be on having a larger national conference during the fall to bring together a broader group of organizations and individuals committed to doing work on r/r.

2) The focus of the conference will be on people committed to organizing around r/r. Three objectives were established for the conference: a) to provide a forum for democratically deciding the direction for the r/r campaign, b) to provide training to assist people in doing organizing, and c) to educate people on the r/r issue through workshops and media exposure.

3) After thorough discussion, it was suggested that the conference be scheduled for mid-October in Los Angeles. It was agreed that this was a relatively short timeline for planning a major conference but it was determined that this was necessary so as to impact the upcoming commission hearings on r/r scheduled this fall (assuming the JACL-supported bill is passed).

6. Interim Structure for the Coalition.

a. It was decided that an interim steering committee made up of organizational representatives would be established to follow-up on tasks and maintain communication on coalition activities. This committee would follow-up on plans for the national conference. It was stressed that this structure was primarily for communication purposes and was not to be seen as limiting the participation of individuals in the coalition.

b. Each organization represented in the coalition was asked to name a representative to participate in the steering committee. LTPRO is to be informed of this individual named as they will be convening the first meeting of the steering committee.

7. View of Commission Hearings.

a. With the likelihood of the passage of the JACL-supported bill to establish a Presidential Study Commission, discussion was held on what the view of the coalition would be on the proposed hearings. It was agreed that the coalition would attempt to participate in the hearings and would focus its efforts on the right to seek restitution for losses suffered. The focus of planned testimony would be on the right to monetary compensation and would not focus on whether or not wrongs were committed.

8. Fund-Raising Suggestions.

a. A number of suggestions were made on ideas for raising funds to support the activities of the coalition. These included: direct mail solicitations, "passing the hat" at meetings, seeking grants, selling buttons/posters, organizing speaking engagements, and distributing media/educational materials.

b. It was proposed that an initial fee of \$25.00 for each organization in the coalition be assessed to provide for initial operating funds.

c. It was agreed that the majority of fund-raising activities would be at the local level and within organizations.

9. Coalition Name. It was decided that the name of the coalition would be the National Coalition on Redress/Reparations.