

# National Council for Japanese American Redress

925 West Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Illinois 60614

July 17, 1982

Dear Friends,

## Sponsors, Redress Legal Fund

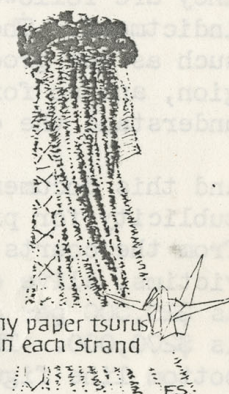
\* Kiyoharu and Edith Aburano  
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Kay Boyle  
Rita Takahashi Cates  
Father Clement  
Rev. Martha Coursey  
Don Date  
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\* Rose Sakata  
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Rev. Lloyd Wake  
Chiyeiko Watanabe  
Prof. John Pitman Weber  
Walter M. Weglyn  
Joseph B. Wiley  
Wakako Yamauchi  
Prof. Mitsuye Yamada  
The Rev. S. Michael Yasutake  
Mr. and Mrs. Kazuo Yoshinaka  
\* Amy Yoshinaga

\* designates ronin,  
contributors of \$1,000 or more.  
Some remain anonymous.

June was an eventful month. Three of us from Chicago NCJAR went to the Big Apple for the anti-nuke demonstration. We ran into many of our NCJAR supporters. We also got another Ronin. And on June 22nd, we received the first draft of the formal court Complaint in our lawsuit against the United States.

The demo was huge. We got to the assembly point around 8:30 a.m.; didn't start marching until around noon; walked slowly to the United Nations and then down 42nd Street; broke off from our group for lunch and the call of nature; didn't get to Central Park, where a mammoth rally was in progress, until 3:00 p.m.; and when we left and got to my brother's place for dinner and watched the Six O'clock evening news, it was still going on. 800,000 is probably a good estimate of the gathering. It could have been a million. There certainly was no way to know who was and who wasn't there. But since we marched with the Asian-American contingent, we did see Franklin Woo and met his family, Takako Kusunoki, Steve Wada, sporting a mustache, Sohei Hohri, Kazu Iijima, June Kushino, Chiyeiko Watanabe, others whom I've forgotten, I'm sure -- all NCJAR supporters. But there were others there, too. We include Jeremy Mott's letter which gives another perspective of the "elephant."

The latest Ronin are Kiyoharu and Edith Aburano of Chicago. Kiyoharu is a body-and-fender man at a shop just around the corner from us. Edith is a nurse. They are raising a large family. Once again they demonstrate the adage that it's not necessarily them that's got it that gives; it's them that cares. Most of our Ronin are not well-heeled. A few of the twenty-one, I guess, can afford the thousand bucks. For most, it is a tough decision. We still have not reached our goal of \$75,000. We really do need Forty-seven Ronin. So why not? As the old Schlitz commercial used to say, "You only go around once in life."



Tiny paper tsurus  
on each strand



And the court Complaint makes it all seem worthwhile. In well over 100 paragraphs, it lays out a litany of allegations and causes of action. The allegations include all the now familiar ones of the suddenness of the notice to pack and leave; the barbed wire confines in desolate areas; the tar-papered barracks; the placement of an entire family in a single cubicle, or with strangers to improve space utilization; the loss of property, dignity, and self-esteem; the abuse of the aged and infirm, their suffering and even death; the extremes of temperatures from 120 above to 40 below -- plus many new ones which identify conspiracies and activities within the government to keep us locked up illegally, to prevent our access to the courts, and to keep us from exercising our constitutionally guaranteed freedoms.

It is a beautiful document. It spells out our grievances in a single document as has never before been done. Just the allegations of fact go on for 60 paragraphs.

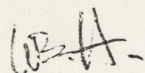
They are followed by 20 causes of action -- much like counts in a criminal indictment. The causes of action cite mainly constitutional violations, such as due process, equal protection, freedom of speech, assembly, religion, and so forth, as well as violations of the law. Now we finally do understand the extent and depth of our injury.

And this document is not a book or a magazine article or a piece of fancy publicity for prime-time viewing. It is an historic demand for justice from the courts of our nation. It is an historic demand from all 120,000 victims, alive or their descendants, for relief. The relief is spelled out as \$10,000 per cause of action. With 20 such causes, the total per victim is \$200,000. The sum for all victims is 24 billion dollars, although the bottom line figures may vary and the number of causes of action may grow or shrink.

When the Complaint is on file with the court, we will publish all of it for our supporters and readers to review.

As in any complicated legal case, we may not succeed in every cause of action. Nor does the writing of the Complaint remove any of the obstacles that still stand in our path to win in court. As we have stated over and over again, success in our lawsuit remains a high-risk venture. The government, no doubt will seek to avoid responsibility because of the statute of limitations and "sovereign immunity." These, and other legal obstacles, are anticipated. Our legal counsel are prepared to counter them as forcefully as possible. But whatever the outcome, the Complaint will become an official court document in our demand for justice. It is not the will of some commission. It is not the will of a compromised Congress. It is our will. And that's the way it should be.

Peace,



William Hohri

P.S. The artwork and lettering of our last newsletter was done entirely by Eddie Sato. Hurrah! for Eddie!



Letter from Jeremy Mott, June 15, 1982

The NCJAR newsletter must have many other readers who, like me, read every issue from beginning to end but never write to tell you how interesting the newsletter is and how concerned and gratified they are about the progress of the redress movement. Bless you!

The latest newsletter leads me to enclose another small contribution for NCJAR, and my experience at the gigantic pro-disarmament and anti-nuclear-weapons march in New York City on June 12 prompts me to write to you. I doubt if you took part yourselves, with what must be a busy schedule. Possibly you have already received other first-hand reports from friends or family members. Even so, the march was so huge that each participant, like each of the blind men who examined the elephant in the old tale, will have a different story to tell.

Judy, Mary Hannah, and I were walking east across Manhattan (in the middle of 42nd St., no less) about 11:00 A.M. when we found that the marchers were already coming west towards us from the United Nations. Apparently the march began early, to relieve crowding at the gathering points. After dodging a police and marshals' line, and walking for several blocks in almost a circle, we reached the march near Grand Central Terminal. A huge number of giant puppets from the Bread and Puppet Theater passed us, along with some thousands of Vermonters, and then several large groups of foreign demonstrators, came along. The largest foreign contingent (except for the Canadians, some with signs in English, some with signs in French, some bilingual) was surely the Japanese, and by luck we came upon it now, preceded by a Tibetan and Tibetan-American group with signs denouncing Chinese nuclear tests in Tibet.

Of course it was no surprise that there were so many Japanese marching. I can remember enormous Japanese anti-nuclear-weapons demonstrations, with millions of demonstrators, from my boyhood in the mid-fifties. As one might expect considering their history, the Japanese, with very few pacifists among them, must be the most fervently opposed to nuclear war of all the world's nations. There were groups of what I guessed were Buddhist monks, dressed in orange robes and beating drums; there were delegations from Japanese Christian churches; and there were large groups from the Gensuikyo, the largest Japanese peace group -- even though hundreds of Gensuikyo members who asked to come to the march were excluded from the U.S. by immigration officials.

The Gensuikyo contingents included many survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bomb attacks, who held up signs with large photographs of the devastated cities and mutilated human bodies and piles of corpses that those bombings produced. Many were loudly and angrily chanting "No more Hiroshimas! No more Nagasaki! No more hibakusha!" Some were carrying thousands of origami cranes, like those made by Sadako, which they were giving away to anyone who would take them.



Here, between two Gensuikyo contingents, we joined the march. No other place would have been so appropriate for one with my views. Pacifist as I am, opposed to all war as un-Christian, I don't believe that "ordinary" war (at least as war was usually carried on during the last few centuries before World War II) is nearly as evil as the various techniques of mass extermination that were developed during World War II -- the German concentration camps, the British destruction of German cities by fire bombs and firestorm, the American destruction of Japanese cities by fire bombs and firestorm, and ultimately the destruction of two Japanese cities by atomic bombs, dropped by U.S. airmen, under Presidential orders. (Furthermore, these extermination techniques, sometimes wrongly thought of as types of war but actually far worse, threaten the future of all of us far more than ordinary war, and as one sign I saw stated "I don't want to die.")

It is mainly because I am so opposed to these modern forms of "extermination war" or "apocalyptic war" or whatever you want to call it that I am, in my little way, a supporter of NCJAR. To be sure, America's concentration camps were not built or used as extermination camps. However, the early German concentration camps were built as prisons for those with the wrong ideology or race also; only after almost a decade of operation did the German concentration camps become extermination camps. Considering American racism, which surely was a factor in the decision to drop atomic bombs on Japanese cities, it seems to me possible that American concentration camps, if ever again allowed to exist, might also eventually become extermination camps.

It was a good peace march. I felt almost honored to be able to be with the hibakusha. All of us, especially Mary Hannah (now 7 years old), were almost showered with gifts from Gensuikyo members -- origami cranes, dove and crane badges, Japanese peace buttons, anti-war poems, written complaints about the exclusion of many Gensuikyo. It struck me that this exclusion must have been the "final straw" convincing hundreds or even thousands of Americans to join the march and take the places of those excluded. Later it also struck me that this exclusion was totally absurd: a couple hundred fervently anti-war but gentle Japanese were excluded from the march, because of the tenuous Communist affiliations of the Gensuikyo, while thousands of home-grown U.S. Communists could not be excluded, and marched in militant, war-like, "revolutionary" fashion.

As our portion of the march passed the Dakota apartment house where John Lennon and his family lived (and where he was killed by Mark David Chapman in 1980), the Americans started singing his song "Give Peace a Chance." At the park entrance, we left the line of march; by now it was 3:00 P.M. and I had to leave to go to work. So I never made it to either the rally at the UN origin of the march or the rally at the Central Park destination. Nevertheless it was an unforgettable day, especially because of the Gensuikyo, with their terrible pictures, their angry chants, and their origami cranes.

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# JACL in quest of justice: A Critical Review by William Hohri

Bill Hosokawa's latest book begins candidly enough. He likens the story of the JACL to the tale of Rashomon, a tale of rape, in which each of the characters tells a unique version, none agreeing with the other. Hosokawa, of course, pretends to give us the authentic, objective history. But he winds up as only another in the cast of characters. The book is a history of the Japanese American Citizens League. Like all histories, stories, drama, art, culture, it tends to define what we are. It goes considerably beyond the JACL and into the history of Japanese America. It clothes us with our consciousness. So it must be evaluated for its effect upon us.

The term "Japanese American," hyphen-less, is the self-conscious creation of the JACL. It was promoted, quite successfully, to denote American citizens of Japanese ancestry and to exclude Japanese nationals. The JACL, in its early years, struggled valiantly to achieve an all-American identity. In the thirties, Wheaties, the Breakfast of Champions, was promoted by the radio character of Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy. All young boys strove to fulfill this heroic image. So it's no wonder that the JACL was (and still remains) an exclusive club for American citizens. But Hosokawa extends "Japanese American" to all of us and thereby does our history and ourselves a great disservice. For the term excludes my parents and my oldest brothers and sister, all of whom were born in Japan. They were certainly part of Japanese America. They were Japanese-Americans. I suppose that as a private club, the JACL may be permitted to exclude non-citizens. But the insinuation of such exclusion to the rest of the community is inaccurate and distressing.

The anecdotal part of the book is interesting enough. Some of the names are familiar. And it fills out the identities of those with whom one had only a nodding acquaintance. Not all the names appear. And some that do seem trivialized. I missed the mention of Frank Sakamoto, who must be considered Mr. Chicago JACL. Richard Akagi was much more than "Masaoka's assistant." And Togo Tanaka's outspoken opposition to the Walter-McCarran Act is missing. But a book must be selective. Hosokawa seems fair-minded enough. He states his desire to resist revisionist tendencies. So he does display some of the JACL's soiled laundry, such as the flap over Ushio and Sugiyama. He even includes a picture of Warren Furutani. But the book suffers other lapses which are unforgivable. It is revisionist history with a JACL bias.

The critical war years remain unexplicated. We are left with the impression that the hostility towards JACLers in the camps was the result of their patriotism and the forced idleness of the internees. There is not a hint that JACL leaders, such as Fred Tayama, Joe Grant Masaoka, Tokie Slocum, and others acted as informants for the government. The hostility, which had deadly manifestations, was evoked by activity, which, equally deadly, caused persons, including my own father, to be taken away -- from within camp -- without a particle of due process -- without charges specified, without a hearing, without legal counsel, without judicial reckoning of any sort. The implied but undefined criminality of this imprisonment made even harsher the life in the isolation centers and the Dept. of Justice camps. And the acts of informants did not remain covert. Tokie Slocum testified before a Senate committee about his fingering of the Manzanar Sixteen, who were whisked away in the aftermath of the Manzanar riot. FBI agents were sloppy in their interrogation of suspects. The role of the JACL is also confirmed by official documents from the National Archives.



An FBI report dated January 20, 1942 states:

"On December 19, 1941, members of the Anti-Axis Committee came to Los Angeles Field Division Office and offered the facilities of the entire Japanese American Citizens League to this Bureau. It had been the experience of this office that, although the various Japanese organizations, Issei and Nisei, had for some time past volunteered to cooperate with the Bureau, there had always been a reluctance on their part to furnish any specific derogatory information concerning any organization or individual. The former existence of this situation was freely acknowledged by the Anti-Axis Committee at the time of the above meeting, but they alleged that the attack on Hawaii had completely changed the attitude of most of the American-born Japanese, and that they were now willing to inform on all individuals who appeared to be a danger to this country."

Then further on:

"The following items of interest were recently obtained from various members of the Japanese American Citizens League, who have requested that their identities remain anonymous:

1. It is claimed that for the past two years, it has been impossible for a citizen of Japan to receive permission to travel to the United States until he was thoroughly investigated by the Japanese Government and was subjected to an interview, in which he satisfied Japanese officials that he was wholly in accord with the policies of the Japanese Government. In addition, an oath of allegiance to Japan was demanded from these individuals. It is reported that this procedure was followed even in the case of Japanese nationals who were resident aliens of the United States visiting or on business in Japan. If this be true, it would mean that every Japanese alien returning to this country within the past two years has sworn to assist and uphold the present Japanese Government."

My father had, in fact, returned to this country within two years before Pearl Harbor.

The report continues with a listing of five names and descriptions submitted by the JACL of persons described as "ardent supporters of the Japanese cause and ones whose activities should be investigated by the FBI."

The revisionism continues with the Constitutional test cases. One gets the clear impression that the JACL supported these cases. But the chips were down in 1942. The individuals were imprisoned. When Hosokawa mentions the \$3,000 raised on behalf of Minoru Yasui's legal defense, he fails to note that the raising of such funds was characterized by Mike Masaoka as "a stab in the back." The JACL's opposition was bitter and unyielding. In March, 1942, the JACL circulated a bulletin which stated:

"The National JACL headquarters is unalterably opposed to test cases to determine the constitutionality of military regulations at this time, declared Mike Masaoka, national secretary, in a general bulletin to all chapters in reference to the Minoru Yasui case in Oregon."



We have reached this decision unanimously after examining all the facts in light of our national policy of 'the greatest good for the greatest number.'

Masaoka, in his statement said, 'We recognize that self-styled martyrs who are willing to be jailed in order that they might fight for the rights of citizenship, as many of them allege, captured the headlines and the imagination of many more persons than our seeming indifferent stand.'

Hosokawa writes that both Masaoka and Saburo Kido considered civil disobedience but rejected it for pragmatic, not philosophical, reasons. But the attack on Yasui sounds a bit more than pragmatism.

Even when he comes to the current history of the redress movement, he errs, mischievously. The movement for redress was initiated, pushed, researched in the seventies by the Seattle Redress Committee. The Lowry Redress Bill was initiated by the National Council for Japanese American Redress, mainly through its supporters in Seattle. And now NCJAR is embarked upon the course of initiating a class action lawsuit against the United States. None of this is mentioned. It's the JACL all the way.

It is clear that what we have here is only the house version of the JACL history. An objective history will require far more honesty and integrity, far more research and documentation. (The Chapter Notes are woefully inadequate. The repeated citations from Hosokawa's Nisei, shameless. No shame, as we used to say.) Unfortunately, this book, like other JACL sponsored books, will form the corpus of literature available on our history, with some outstanding exceptions, such as Michi Weglyn's Years of Infamy. We continue to squirm under the legacy of our bizarre internment. We continue to be oppressed by the self-imposed slogan of those years: The Greatest Good for the Greatest Number.

Ugh! I feel like the rapee. I want my hyphen back.

From THE NEW YORK NICHIBEI, Thursday, June 10, 1982

## Seeking Plaintiffs for Redress Suit

The National Council for Japanese American Redress is beginning the search for individuals who will serve as named plaintiffs in its class action lawsuit against the United States for the World War II exclusion and detention of 120,000 Japanese Americans. These persons will serve to represent the case as typical of the 120,000 victims. Together, they must represent the different types of individuals, experiences, and injuries within the class.

NCJAR has identified about 20 cases of actions (types of legal injury), including violations of due process, equal protection, freedom of speech, fair trial, and privacy rights. The named plaintiffs, NCJAR points out, must, as a group, be able to assert claims for all the courses of action that will be included in its complaint.

Last year NCJAR submitted a proposal to the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians for enabling legislation which stated, in part:

"In determining the proper measure of relief, the court may consider, among other things, prospective and retrospective losses due to: deprivation of constitutional rights, privileges, immunities, loss of property and earnings, personal injury, pain and suffering, emotional distress, and injury to reputation, and may award interest since the time of such injuries."

While NCJAR is seeking legislation to overcome legal obstacles, it is not dependent on the successful enactment of such legislation. It is prepared to file its complaint independently of any recommendation from the Commission.

According to William Hohri, NCJAR's national chairperson, the suit will probably be filed following the Commission's report, which must be submitted before the Commission's mandate expires at the end of this year.





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JAPANESE AMERICAN REDRESS  
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WILLIAM & MARY KOCHIYAMA  
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NEW YORK NY 10027

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- ☐ \$\_\_\_\_\_ and my very best wishes for success.

(All contributors will receive our newsletter.)

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