

# Unfocused L.A. Hearings: "A Circus of Freaks"

## Sobstory Testimony of Nikkei Witnesses, Mob-Like Reaction of Spectators Hit Why Has the Commission Shunned Expert Testimony in Favor of Emotionalism?

Chinese American playwright/journalist Frank Chin has been researching the experience of Japanese Americans in America's World War II concentration camps for the past five years or so. He has been researching the histories of the Chinese and Japanese in America for more than a decade. Chin, creator of plays such as "Chicken Coop Chinaman," "Year of the Dragon," "Gee Pop" and "Oofy Goofy," attended both the Washington, D.C. and the Los Angeles hearings of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. A couple of weeks ago, this lanky Asian guy walks up and says, "Hey, here's something I just wrote up about the hearings... What do you think?" Well, after reading the 10-pages of stream of consciousness he handed me that day, I have come to feel that this former San Francisco State University and UC Davis faculty member's perceptions of the camps, Japanese America and the recent hearings ring painfully true.

—The Editor

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Ladies and gentlemen, friends...

The Los Angeles hearings of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians was a circus of freaks. Rep. Daniel E. Lungren sweats and looks desperate as the gallery became an audience at a show. They cheered, applauded, commented and Lungren sitting as chair, in place of Joan Bernstein, left them to clap and boo. They booed and jeered S.I. Hayakawa. They made Hayakawa look good. Hayakawa made the news.

Of course he made the news. Of course he's ridiculous and an asshole and everything everybody call dears old Sleepy Sam.

Who... who advised Lungren to allow applause and audience participation at the L.A. hearings to make the Japanese Americans look like a raving mob? No matter how they felt as individuals, the members of the audience joining in one big boo, with hate on their faces are wrong to mob Hayakawa. And Lungren is wrong to allow the guests to do anything more than listen. Applause is not proper in the courtroom, Congress, state legislatures and congressional commissions. The audience—if we must call it that—as Lungren did, attends at the whim of the chair. They are there to listen, not to influence the commission or the witnesses or attempt to... There was not applause at the Warren Commission on the Kennedy assassination. No applause at the war crime trials at Nuremberg. Applause in court at hearings is always extraordinary, never the

program of, yet another narrated slide show and panel of former internees remembering camp at Pine Methodist Church in San Francisco, or the Oakland Museum, 30 years of interviews, articles, panel discussions, forums, seminars, pilgrimages, where the Nisei have shown up to week in public. Amy Uno Ishii, late of L.A., had a slide show she worked on 'til the day she died. Jack and Dorothy Yamaguchi have been building and showing their slides for almost 20 years now. Aki and Juns Kurose speak to the American dream in

his organization's stand on redress. He was about to climax another JACL-inspired show. A good public show of Nisei veterans and vets organizations, laying their resolutions and great American slogans on the record. Kawaminami was disassociating the 100th/442nd from a letter to the editor by Lillian Baker, the blonde avenging angel. A Japanese flag taken as a was trophy was on display in Gardena. The Manzanar Committee objected. They took the flag as a racial slur. Lillian Baker's letter claimed the 442nd



Studs Terkel's "The American Dream." Pity! Pity! Pity! Open weeping. Wild applause.

At the commission hearings we are not hearing anything that has not been said before, by the WWII eager beaver social scientists of the Community Analysis Section of the War Relocation Authority. We're not hearing anything we haven't heard better said in the 1950s "Go For Broke!" a film directed by Robert Pirosh, starring Van Johnson and former members of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Dore Schary produced, Mike Masaoka was the technical consultant. No matter what else can be said about the former field secretary and executive-at-large of the JACL, the movie with his name on it is still be best, most complete, complex, detailed and dramatic portrait of Japanese America to come out of Hollywood, including "Hito Hata: Raise the Banner!"

Sob stories. Property loss. Financial ruin. Boo-hoo. Camp set back my career 15 years, six promotions, 20 raises in pay and big bonuses. Boo hoo. Wild applause. No questions from the commission. Next panel of witnesses. The Nisei vets. Paul Oda testifies. Boom! Pearl Harbor on the radio. Shock. Executive Order 9066. Property loss. Financial ruin. Questions 27 and 28 of the loyalty oath. Some go "No No" with the answers and off to jail or Tule Lake. Some go

vets organization joined her in supporting the display of the war trophy.

Then Lillian Baker stood up from the sixth row of the audience. "Be careful, because Lillian Baker is here" she said, rising to her aluminum four-legged cane. The crowd peered. "Sit down!" Then "Out! Out! Out!" and "Nazi!"

Lungren was slow, slower than slow about bringing his gavel into play and calling for order. Rachel Grace Kawasaki, a white woman stood on a chair by the witness table and faced the crowd and shook her fist, and shouted back at the crowd, calling them racists. Lillian Baker leaped and hopped to the table and grabbed at the notes in Nisei vet Kawaminami's hands. The security police moved in. A white woman cop and a black male cop. A strange wrestling match between uniformed police, a Nisei vet in his 70s, Lillian Baker in her white pantsuit and hanging onto her four-legged cane, towering over him, and Rachel Grace Kawasaki standing on a chair. And the jeering crowd. It's as if Hayakawa was right about the "small but vocal minority."

The blonde woman cop and black male cop hustled Lillian Baker and Rachel Grace Kawasaki out of the hearing room, without drawing their batons or using much force. No scratches. No punches. A little shoving. A lot of grabbing of wrists, perhaps an elbow. And

hostile crowd. Where is the expert testimony? Where are the penologists, the cultural anthropologists, applied anthropologists sociologists?—There certainly were enough of them working in the camps. Where are the psychologists, the historians? The experts and specialists?

It's clear the victims of the experience did not understand much beyond the immediate orbit of their family. They don't know what happened to anyone but themselves. And they're vague and full of protective rhetoric about that. They've read a few book and the Pacific Citizen, the Japanese American Citizens League weekly. They are neither technically nor temperamentally equipped to speak knowledgeably, factually and candidly about the depth, degree and kinds of damage they absorbed because of camp. They are victims still inhabiting the shock and horror of the unspeakable. They are not experts. No more experts than the victims of the Holocaust were experts on the Nazi's "Final Solution." The victims' testimony on damage done them by camp, is as expert as the testimony of the mentally retarded on retardation.

It is no accident that expert testimony has neither been sought nor encouraged by the commission. Unless the commission is so arrogant as to determine no experts on the camps and their effects on the various kinds and generation of Nikkei culture and history exist.

Michi Weglyn's research in the National Archives unearthed recently declassified government documents that confirm the Hollywood hint that the U.S. State Department looked on the camps as hostage reserves. The book she wrote with her research, "Years of Infamy," is universally recognized as the most original and thoroughly scholarly work on camps ever produced by a former internee. Ironically and sadly, she is not emotionally equipped to speak of her personal experience in the camps.

From the testimony heard in Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles, it's obvious everyone in the JACL, every Nikkei witness testifying before the commission, has read and memorized if not plagiarized whole sections of Weglyn's work. Her work is cited directly and indirectly in every piece written on the x camps since 1976. Michi Weglyn is a popularly recognized expert on the camps, the decision to create them and the damage they created.

She has neither briefed the staff or commissioners, nor appeared at the hearings. She was not even asked.

This is amazing, since no serious study of any aspect of the camps is complete without her.

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accepted form.

After making news for booing Hayakawa, the Japanese Americans came into Room 1138, the auditorium of the state building in L.A. ripe for a fight. They came not to listen but to cheer their side at a sporting event. They applauded the good guys, fumbling out their sob stories full of property loss, financial ruin and woeful career development, the story of the father returning to the family in camp, two years later told again and again, and not as well as the sappy but efficient telling of the same true story in "Farewell to Manzanar."

Listen to the stories, friends. You've heard them all before, at so-called writer's conferences, in group therapy. The endless procession of newspaper-interview-famous Nisei bleeding the same stories before Asian American Studies classes that didn't use books. You've seen these tears before staining the mimeograph

"Yes Yes" on to the 442nd. Medals galore. Heroes overflowing the eyes of widows and Issei mothers. Constitutional wrongs. "Even as I was serving in my country's army, my parents were interned behind barbed wire... I want to know why!" Thomas Kinaga said, and Paul Oda much the same thing. Phil Shigekuni read a statement by the Nisei Medal of Honor winner—he won the Medal of Honor in Korea, not in Europe with the 442nd. Shigekuni, a member of the original John Tateishi JACL redress committee, read the medal of honor winner's military record into the record of the commission. We've heard it before. What does it say about damage to Japanese America done by the executive order? Jim Kawaminami, president of the 100th/442nd Association, formerly of Amachi, was next after the applause.

The 100th/442nd Association president was winding up to pitch

the crowd applauded.

The press was totally bewildered. The sob stories were dull, and bland. Sob after sob, and awww the poor pitiful people. We've heard stories like this before. The Great Depression. The Bonus Marches. The Hobo Jungles. Riding the rods. The Okies abandoning the great Dust Bowl. Hardship. Ruin. Pulling on the bootstraps. The families following their soldier husbands and fathers, from camp to camp. Victim after victim. Soldier victims. Terminal Island victims. Issei victims. Pity me. Applause. Pity me. Pity me. Applause. Pity me, or else! Wild applause.

Vice chairman Lungren looked stoned, drunk, holding back nausea, mindblown and out of it. The crowd was in control. The victims and their mob. Of course they are victims. And of course the more they've repeated these stories from college campus to church meeting, from one kind of Asian American conference to Japanese American pilgrimage, the more aware they become of neither being heard nor understood.

The Japanese Americans at the L.A. hearing, in the audience and at the witness table were indulging themselves. Lungren five or six beats too late mumbles into the mike about summarizing your statement because we're running an hour behind schedule—"Let him speak!"—a few in the crowd shout. And Lungren without a call to order, lean back, blushes and lets them speak. Lungren blushes a lot. He can't stand up to challenges. Luckily, for him, his incompetence and flop-sweat aren't as visually interesting as the surley mob.

Without understanding the questions or knowing the history, the newshawks dive on the obvious emotional charge of the moment. Two old white women in dark glasses against an angry

Peter T. Suzuki, an anthropologist at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, has been doing a study on the camp anthropologists and sociologists for years. He finds all their social science "fishy." They and their Nisei "informants" and "assistants" manipulated behavior, created Issei fanatics, they reported the fanatics to military intelligence officers posted at the camps. The shoddiness of the published scientific work and the egregious violations of scientific methods and ethnics are defended rather than denied by the former camp social scientists, not emeritus and the "establishment" of their disciplines Suzuki's scholarly articles exposing the excesses and patriotically-motivated violations of scientific ethnics have been kept out of the "American Anthropologist" by the former mad scientists of the camps.

The books by the former camp social scientists that Suzuki's work and research cast doubt upon, include Leighton's "The Governing of Men," Thomas and Nishimoto's "The Spoilage" and "The Salvage," Rosalie Hankey Wax's, "Doing Fieldwork," the Community Analysis Section reports to the War Relocation Authority and the resulting, "Impounded People," that form the foundation of all Japanese American social science. The foundation is rotten.

Suzuki's research in the National Archives and the papers of former Community Analysis Section chief, Spicer, at the University of Arizona archives seem especially germane to the commission's study of psychological and social damage to individual Nikkei and Nikkei social integrity. Suzuki is the only expert in the area of damage done Japanese America by the social scientists in the camps. But, he has not been asked to brief the staff or appear before the commission.

The only experts on the camp the commission seems to recognize are members of the JACL, an advocacy, public relations organization, like the Moral Majority, as opposed to an organization like, say, the ABA or the AMA or the AIA that represents a standard of professional training, expertise and ethics.

So, no expert witnesses, other than JACL blowhards using the commission to write their past sins and the impact of their loyalty oath out of history. Only victims with their pocketfuls of sobstories, and antique white racists. The hearings are being populated with grotesques and pglies. Everybody looks bad. The importance and the purpose of the commission are made

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## Circus of Freaks...

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incomprehensible in the flakey theatrics raised by all the performers. Applause.

Arthur Goldberg leaned back in his thickly-upholstered chair to make a brief statement before he left the L.A. hearings early, because of his shipped disc. He was disturbed by the "hatred" he saw on the faces of the crowd today. He said he wanted to remove the hatred. "Dillon Myer is not a racist," he said, and mentioning his long friendship with Myer. He said Myer was a "victim of circumstance. He had an impossible situation foisted on him. He didn't do as well as he wanted. They were camps. Don't quibble over the word, 'concentration.' They were camps. Japanese Americans were forced into camps, on as short as 24 hours notice. Massive property loss. Financial ruin. Mental anguish. Family insecurity. American citizens were imprisoned without being charged or given a hearing

in clear violation of the constitution. The basis for imprisonment was race. Those are the facts.

"I make an appeal," Goldberg continued. "Let's get rid of this hatred. Let's get rid of this division..." Goldberg carried on for 20 or 30 rambling grandfatherly mellowing minutes. He was the great grandpa scolding his beloved grandchildren, giving them a lesson in manners. He was also, indirectly, scolding Lungren for a sloppy hold on his gavel. Lungren was defeated, crestfallen. Perhaps it was jetlag. All he could do was drop flopsweat and and look around the room like a lost boy in need of his mother.

Goldberg repeated the facts of short notice, property loss, financial ruin, no habeas corpus, no charges, no hearings, mass imprisonment in many and wonderful ways. The plain facts took wonderful forms in his contemplative old man's drift, like plain bread and American cheese whip becoming an array of charming canapes. The crowd loved him. He cared. He loved them. And they gave him a standing ovation. After all his mellowing lessons in manners, the audience was still out of control. The chair was still weak and the hearings still unfocused.

—FRANK CHIN



# Readers Highly Critical of Playwright Chin's Hearing Impressions

## Editor

We had mixed feelings about Frank Chin's satirical essay ("Unfocused L.A. Hearings: A Circus of Freaks"; R.S. 8-21-81). On the one hand, we feel it is important to criticize the political process, to expose it for what it is, and to warn ourselves of false hopes and our own vulnerabilities to paternalism, reacting) as oppressed people.

On the other hand we feel sad

that in the process of sharing his thoughts and feelings he was insensitive toward the persons who testified and attended to hearings. His cynicism came across as demeaning.

It's ironic that in his criticism of the unfocused, dehumanizing process of the commission hearings he victimizes persons by his cynicism.

Susan Kuwaye  
Amy Chuman  
Agape Fellowship

## Editor

This is a rebuff of Mr. Chin's article.

"A Circus of Freaks!" Sob-stories! We are wrong to "boo with hate on our faces" at Haya-kawa!

How many years passed before they had the Warren Commission on the Kennedy Assassination? How many years passed before the war crime trials at Nuremberg? Surely not 39 years. Apparently Mr. Chin feels that after having to hold our feelings and experiences of the camps for 39 years before something was done doesn't warrant anything.

He reprimands and criticizes the actions of the American Japanese, yet fails to mention that the Chinese wore badges stating, "I am Chinese" so as not to be mistakenly deprived of their rights and taken away.

His years of research and/or "expertise" on the camps could never give him the same experience of being there. He, like Hayakawa, never experienced the humiliation, suffering and sacrifices our parents experienced. Those who testified at the hearings are entitled to their tears and emotionalism after 39 years!

He asks, "where is the expert testimony? Where are the penologists, the cultural anthropologists, applied anthropologists, sociologists? There certainly were enough of them in the camps. Where are the psychologists, the historians? The experts and specialists?" What better experts and specialists can you ask for than those who experienced the humiliation, suffering, etc.? What better experts and specialists than those who lived every second, minute, hour, everyday in these camps?

The "experts and others" he asks about had the freedom of walking in and out of camp.

Come, come, Mr. Chin, of course you've heard sob stories before and "awww the poor pitiful people" by the Great Depression, Dust Bowl, etc. The difference is, Mr. Chin, they were never deprived of their constitutional rights. They were never deprived of their constitutional rights. They were never deprived of their dignity!

Joan H. Tada  
Los Angeles 90033

## Editor

I cannot believe that the editor of *The Rafu Shimpo* agrees with Frank Chin's description of the L.A. hearings as "A Circus of Freaks." I am sure that what the editor meant was that he agreed that Frank Chin's description of the hearings rang true.

It is right for an actor in a play to explode: "The hearings were a circus of freaks."

But for a former UC faculty member to call the witnesses freaks, hardly.

And who is he to belittle the work of the Research Department of the (WRA) Centers? I happen to know something of their contributions toward their smooth operations and well-being of the evacuees.

For I happen also to have studied and worked under both Drs. Leighton and Spicer, which puts me beyond twice his age. That gives me the Oriental privilege of giving unsolicited advice: No?

Perhaps it is the beauty and vanity of youth to explode in the wrong way... It is one sure way to erupt attention.

Regardless, it is too bad for Frank Chin. "A Circus of Freaks" will haunt him forever. Better let his next rest overnight.

Pure analysis, yes. What fruits... unkind words?

Chica T. Sugino  
Glendale

## Editor

Chinese American Frank Chin's write-up of the hearings as a "Circus of Freaks" and the accounts of the witnesses as "sob stories" is an appalling, shocking display of utter callousness and insensitivity on the part of a fellow Asian. He is the yellow counterpart of Lillian Baker with her historical inaccuracies and shrill anti-Jap sentiments. His sardonic ridicule of human suffering bared by the witnesses at the recent hearings reflect a bitter, angry man, scarcely qualifying him to write of the human condition. I wonder what in his own personal life fills him with such venom against other Asians? Does he not know that there were no social scientists in camp—the average age of Nisei in camp being under 20?

From my own experience as a physician, I know of the suicides and deaths of my fellow campmates; the shortened lives, the heart disease and cancers, the depressive states, all brought on by the terrible consequences of the Evacuation.

I have in my own practice three brothers with schizophrenia whose psychiatrist called me the day after the hearings to tell me that their psychosis was brought on by the camp experience. He told me that individual testimony does not have the impact that group statistics and hard facts demonstrate. Anyone knows that such hard facts take decades to accumulate—we are only beginning to delve into the effects of the degrading experience on ourselves and succeeding generations to come.

The only part of the entire article worth printing was the last three paragraphs pertaining to Justice Goldberg. Mr. Chin should stick to writing about his own chicken coop Chinamen. He lacks the sensitivity, perception and depth of character necessary to understand the Japanese Americans...

...I hope the day will come when all minorities, assisted by dedicated whites, will work for the common good rather than engage in petty, destructive inter-minority conflicts.

Dr. Mary S. Oda  
North Hollywood



## Editor

Frank Chin may be playwright but he ain't no observer of Japanese America. His piece in *The Rafu Shimpo* of Aug. 21 insults and injures the Japanese American community which has just borne witness to its most tragic and painful experience. His piece is outrageous and for the Rafu to print it is even more outrageous in view of the magnificent coverage that Dwight Chuman did of the Commission hearings.

For Japanese Americans to come to the commission ready for a fight after 40 years is the most appropriate thing that could have happened. We're tired of the sociologists and anthropologists who have been studying us and wondering why we haven't bared our souls. We came to the hearings as a community—we came and booed Hayakawa, and cheered for our 442nd veteran(s). It's something we needed to do after 40 years, and for Frank Chin to describe that demonstration as rowdy, rude and emotional—by golly, it was. Don't think, Frank that we're not proud for having done that. Most important of all, we stood up as a community, confronted the face of racism as it surfaced there in the form of Baker, Hayakawa and Lungren, et al. As a community we rose up in righteous anger to fight it.

Don't insult us with your unprincipled stand—you participated in the "Days of Remembrance" programs, the grossly inaccurate riot scene in "Farewell to Manzanar," in the redress movement and then in afterthought attacked the very victims of that racism.

Sure, we've had slide shows. The Manzanar Committee has all the audio-visuals necessary for classroom presentations, so what. Knock it off, Frank Chin, don't insult us, pity us, hate us or embarrass us for what we did Aug. 4, 5 and 6 and on other dates at other places. We let our pain, our anger and our bitterness show for all the world to see and by golly, for me personally, it was our greatest triumph.

Sue K. Embrey  
Los Angeles 90026

## Editor

It seems that many people were infuriated by the use of certain words and sentences in Frank Chin's editorial. The man is a playwright. By profession, his language is designed to be strong; his words intended to touch nerves. His message should not be dismissed because he says a few things you don't like.

To myself, the editorial said this:

"A-wrong was committed and the hearings are to determine what should be done to right the wrong. Yes, we know the Japanese suffered in the camps. Let us have personal experience evidence, but don't leave it at that. Get expert testimony. Get the psychiatrists, sociologists and anthropologists. Have them testify about the camp conditions and how they affected the people involved—mentally, physically and socially."

This country, contrary to its own beliefs and ideals, denied the Japanese their rights as citizens and human beings. The camps were wrong. The country must admit that and offer apology to those who suffered. This much is owed to the Japanese and it is long overdue. It is not something that should come about because of pity, but because justice and humanity demand that it be done.

Ann N. Mashiyama  
Long Beach 90808

## Editor

Maybe if "Chin Chin Frank" could remember the days of "Chin Chin Chinaman sitting on a rail, 'long came a train and cut off his tail," he would be less prone to call us "Freaks."

And then maybe he wasn't spat upon, kicked, beaten or called "Skibby with the Yellow Belly."

But one thing is certain, he was never there. "Was you Charlie?"

Joe Iino  
Los Angeles 90033



# Frank Chin's "Circus of Freaks" Commentary Continues to Draw Heavy Reader Response

Editor

Aw c'mon, Dwight! How can Frank Chin's fabricated account of the CWRIC hearings in L.A. (R.S. 8/21/81) "ring painfully true?" How can this wild, flailing diatribe be anything close to the truth?

First of all, I find his derisive tone an affront to those who organized for and attended the hearings, and most of all, to those who testified before the commission. It's in poor taste, the sarcasm is misdirected and if it doesn't work. It's like a tantrum-throwing infant saying, "Hey, pay is a literary gimmick, it simply more attention to me," and the substance of what's being said gets lost. What is the purpose of the statement?

Which brings me to the content of Chin's article. Does he think his five years of research on concentration camps make him more of an expert than those who lived through only four years of their lives in camp? I believe that it was an important part of the commission process for common people to "fumble out their sob stories," as Chin puts it. I deeply moved by and learned a lot from the testimonies from Issei and Nisei who lived through the experience, and from Sansei and Yonsei who were also affected by the camp experience. At the same time, I would have liked to have had "expert" testimony. But there should be no illusions about the commission. Chin says Michi Weglyn, "a popularly recognized expert on the camps..." was not even asked to appear before the commission. Well, the commission didn't ask anybody but present and former government officials. The rest—the community testimonies—were up to us. That's why groups like the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations did so much of the ground work to prepare for the hearings.

Frank Chin cowers from the "raving mob" (yeah, that's us) because we have feelings, because we have pride as a people. Frank Chin pouts because his "expertise" is not recognized. No spotlight for Frank Chin. No trumpets. The only "freak" at the hearings. Sob. Pity me! Pity me! Poor pitiful Frank Chin who has contempt for all. Boo hoo.

Well, the throng of Rafu readers and the Japanese American people say get this self-styled intellectual out of here. "Out, out, out." Applause. And for good measure, boycott his play. "Oofy Goofy." Wild applause.

Mike Murase  
Little Tokyo  
People's Rights  
Organization

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Editor

To add to the response from the community to Frank Chin's article, I doubt whether it matters if the last name was Chikasa instead of Chin. His contempt and condescension for the masses as a self-styled visionary is an old game.

What took place at the hearings was inspiring. Instead of that "me" approach (Chin's), the JAS proudly stood up in a united effort to protect injustice and inequality courageously. This was a significant and historical event and a big step forward for us!

Lillian Nakano  
Gardena

Editor

As one of the organizations that presented testimony at the Los Angeles Hearings, and struggled with the Commission to be more sensitive to the needs of the Japanese American community (provision for translators, evening sessions, and flexibility on time limits for testifiers), we in the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations (NCR) found Frank Chin's article calling the Hearings a "circus of freaks" extremely insulting to the Japanese American community.

To Chin, the testimonies by honest, hard-working Japanese people who suffered from the effects of four years of incarceration in concentration camps and the systematic racism of the California and U.S. government were "dull and bland sob stories." The NCR pays tribute to the strength and eloquence of these people stepped forward to make their family histories a part of the record, a record which clearly demonstrates the injustices perpetrated on the Japanese by the U.S. government. It took courage, not "self-pity" for the testifiers to come forward and confront the very government that put them behind barbed wire.

There is definitely a place for the "expert" and "professional" testimony that Chin calls for. When Larry Boss' testimony was cut short—a testimony detailing and documenting losses suffered by Nikkei in the Long Beach area during the evacuation—NCR struggled with the Commission to allow him to present his testimony the following day. And we

felt that the panels of mental health professionals and legal professionals added greatly to the Hearings. And we also agree there could have been more. But we see the equal importance of individual testimonies. Now, as ever before, the profound impact of the incarceration and evacuation on Japanese of all generations; and the Japanese communities destroyed by the forced dispersal and forced assimilation pushed by the government after the war; and of the camp experience's devastating effects on the pride, unity and identity of Japanese as a people, is all becoming crystal clear. Much can and has been learned from the testimonies, by We Japanese, ourselves; but also by the American public. This must continue. And also, we have waited forty years for this chance to face the U.S. government and have our "day in court."

We feel that the Commission Hearings are an important step—but only a step—in a much longer fight that is gaining momentum and numbers to win justice in the form of redress and reparations. NCR plans to continue pressuring the Commission to get the strongest recommendation possible, and we encourage others to do so as well. But regardless of the recommendation of the Commission, we will continue working to build the campaign, broadening our education and gathering together all who can agree with our goals to form a strong, united front to win justice and reparations.

We feel that the English section of the Rafu Shimpo has contributed greatly to building this campaign, as well, and were therefore disappointed to see the editor endorse Chin's callous, arrogant, egotistical diatribe.

Meanwhile, Frank Chin sits high up in the clouds, looking down on us ordinary people, criticizing and insulting us from above. Come down from the clouds, Frank Chin! Stop your self-centered ranting and raving for a minute and listen to the people you speak about with such contempt. You may learn something. As Yuji Ichioka, an "expert" historian/researcher of Japanese American history said in his testimony: "What I would like to do is pay a personal tribute to all those who came out and gave testimony. Because they, unlike us at the university, are the real teachers of history..."

Nat'l Coalition for  
Redress/Reparations



## Permanent Memorial Marker for Rohwer WRA Center Proposed

LITTLE ROCK, Ark.—A new and permanent memorial marker for the site of the Rohwer Relocation Center, which was used by the United States to intern Japanese Americans from California, was proposed here recently.

Originators of the idea are a Japanese American couple who are former inmates of the wartime camp—Mr. and Mrs. Sam Yada of Sherwood—and two Little Rock retired ministers who served on the Rohwer staff—Dr. Joseph Boone Hunter and Rev. Nat Griswold.

Rohwer was one of 10 centers—the furthest one east—used by the government to relocate 120,000 Japanese Americans from the West Coast during World War II.

About the only thing left of the Rohwer center is a small, well-kept cemetery in which there is a rapidly deteriorating cement tower that was erected following the war and that bears the names of 32 Japanese American soldiers, members of interned families, who died on European battlefields while serving with American military forces. Some of the men were from the Rohwer families while others were from families incarcerated at Arkansas's other relocation center at Jerome.

"We need a permanent marker to remind us Americans that America will never again do the sort of thing she did here, sending boys off to war while keeping their parents and sweethearts confined behind barbed wire fences," said Dr. Hunter, who served as an assistant director of the Rohwer center.

Hunter and Griswold, who were directors of community activities at the center, met recently with the Yadas at the Yada Greenhouse in North Little Rock to plan the fund raising campaign for the proposed memorial.

The Yadas were part of a very small minority of the Japanese who chose to remain in Arkansas

after the war instead of returning to California. Their two sons, one of whom was born at Rohwer, are graduates of the University of Arkansas and residents of the state, one of them living in Little Rock and the other in Fort Smith.

"What we will be able to do about the Rohwer memorial will depend upon the contributions we receive," said Yada. He said he had talked with some of the former Rohwer residents about the project and had found them interested in helping to promote it.

The Rohwer Cemetery Fund at Commonwealth Federal Savings and Loan at Little Rock will be kept open to receive contributions, Yada said.

Griswold recalled meeting incoming trains with a truck to transport the Californians, "standing like cattle," to the camp barracks.

"All of the staff, beginning with the director, were kindly disposed toward the people," he said. "The soldiers who had been stationed around the camp to guard it soon left the bayonets off their guns, and, soon, they stopped carrying guns."

The people were allowed to go outside the camp at their own will, but would not venture far because of danger from unfriendly civilian residents of the area, Griswold said. "The newcomers were fascinated with the Arkan-

sas surroundings, particularly with the cypress growing in the nearby swamps," he said. "They liked to gather cypress 'knees' for processing into highly polished souvenirs."

Hunter, still quite active at the age of 94, sees the incarceration of the Japanese Americans as a travesty of justice. "There was no such imprisonment of citizens of the same ancestry living in Hawaii," he said. A more accurate designation for the camps, he said, has been "Dislocation Centers," particularly for the two in Arkansas, which was so far from homes for the internees.

Hunter described the spirit of the people within the Arkansas camps as "amazingly cooperative."

"The officials quickly realized that these internees were gracious, patriotic and cooperative. The spirit was strengthened by the active and strong religious Sunday assemblies, both Christian and Buddhist," he said.

The large memorial monument, now needing to be replaced, Hunter reports, was sponsored by the United Service organization (USO) and the center's population and dedicated to the young men from the Arkansas camps who gave their lives while serving with the U.S. Army in Italy.

"There are 32 names which adorn the western side of this tall monument. . . There are people in Arkansas who want the families of these heroic soldiers whose bodies rest in Italy to be remembered with love and gratitude as the years come and go," Dr. Hunter said.

● Editor's Note—Checks made out to the "Rohwer Center Memorial Fund" may be sent in care of: Sam Y. Yada, fund director, at 8 Beaconsfield Court, North Little Rock, Arkansas 72116.