

INDIVIDUALIZED ACTION FOR INDIVIDUALIZED REDRESS:  
IT'S TIME FOR A CHAIN LETTER CAMPAIGN  
by Philip Tajitsu Nash

There will never be a better chance for Congressional action to remedy the unjust treatment Japanese Americans suffered during World War II. Whether one favors direct compensation bills, like the Lowry (H.R. 3387) and Cranston (S. 1520) bills already introduced into Congress, or a bill that would enable the class action lawsuit to proceed (being considered by the National Council for Japanese American Redress, but as yet not introduced), the redress mandate of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians needs strong, immediate, and broad-based backing.

To both supplement the support letters that will be written by religious, ethnic, civic, social and civil libertarian groups, and to educate more of our friends about the nature of the camp experience, it is time for each of us to start a chain letter.

A chain letter? Yes, a redress chain letter. What follows is a sample letter that can be tailored to individual redress preferences. Let your voice be heard at this historic moment!

Dear Friend,

I'm sure you've participated in chain letters before. Well, this is a chain letter with a unique twist.

This is a redress chain letter! Instead of each of us receiving a few postcards, our Federal legislators will receive a ton of mail supporting individualized compensation for each of the 120,000 Japanese Americans and Alaskan Aleuts who were unjustly incarcerated by our Federal government during World War II.

Here's how it works. There are only two basic steps:

1) WRITE TO YOUR CONGRESSMEN

Read the enclosed sample letter. (And devise your own fact sheet if you want to; call me if you need more details). Then write or type your own letter. Don't copy this sample letter exactly, as Congressmen don't read form letters-- they weigh them. Personalize it by mentioning friends or relatives who suffered. Mention your own concerns about the terrible legal, political and social precedent involved in rounding up people on the basis of race.

If you don't know your Senators or Congressman, call information and ask for the number of your local League of Women Voters. Send mail to: Senator \_\_\_\_\_, United States Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510, and Congressman/woman \_\_\_\_\_, United States House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515. Copies should also be sent, for maximum effect, to

the chairpersons of the two committees that will be reviewing the bills (Rep. Peter Rodino, House Judiciary Committee; and Sen. Charles Grassley, Senate Judiciary Committee) and the two legislators who introduced the bills that call for individualized redress payments (Rep. Mike Lowry and Sen. Alan Cranston).

2) KEEP THE CHAIN GOING

Make five copies of this letter and the enclosed sample letter. Put your name, address and any message on an index card, and paste it over whoever's name appears on the bottom of this letter before photocopying it, so the recipients will recognize that you sent it. Mail the five copies to friends or family, particularly those who are certain to write. Make follow-up calls if you want to, and don't be afraid of overlap. If someone gets more than one letter, she or he will pass it along to someone else.

Try to send copies to those who live in states away from the West Coast, where most Japanese Americans live and where much support has already been mobilized. And remember, this is an American issue, and is supported by religious, civic, service and veteran's groups, by members of both major political parties, and by all who value individual liberties and property rights.

Please try to mail all your letters by the weekend after you receive this. Thousands of letters are needed by early 1984 for this effort to be effective.

Unlike most chain letters, there is no witch's curse or magic spell that will be cast on you if you don't participate, but if you don't, you'll be missing out on a chance to play a strategic role in an historic exercise in grassroots democracy. Thank you in advance for the time, money and energy you'll be spending.

Very truly yours,