

Draft letter to organizations - new outreach 2/6/85

NO MORE INTERNMENTS!

1985 Day of Remembrance Committee for Japanese American Redress
(address)

(Organizations)

Dear

:

On February 19, we mark the 43rd anniversary of President Franklin D Roosevelt's tragic signing of Executive Order #9066 which resulted in the mass evacuation of 120,000 Japanese Americans and their parents to internment camps during World War II. The same Executive Order also authorized the removal of the Aleutian people from their homes on the Aleut and Pribilof Islands to abandoned canneries and mines in Alaska.

We are writing, at this time, to request the support of your organization in our struggle for redress and reparations for those unjustly uprooted and incarcerated, and hope you will join the movement to prevent the recurrence of similar acts and violations of constitutional rights.

Within a few months after E.O.9066 was issued in February 1942, the entire Japanese population on the West coast was evacuated to 10 major concentrations camps in isolated areas in the desert, mountains and swamplands of Arkansas, Wyoming, Idaho, Utah, Colorado, and Arizona. Only two of the camps were located in the eastern outskirts of California. Detainees were also held in North Dakota, Montana, New Mexico and Texas. The confinement lasted for the duration of the War. Six internees were shot and killed by U.S. soldiers from guard towers; 1862 inmates died during the incarceration from illnesses or from lack of adequate medical care. More than 1000 were later hospitalized in mental institutions and tuberculosis hospitals. Some Japanese on the East coast were jailed on Ellis Island in New York City. It is estimated that probably 10 percent of the evacuated Aleuts died during their two or three year stay in the Alaskan camps.

Citizens and permanent residents alike were publically branded as "the enemy," "disloyal," or "traitors" without a shred of evidence or due process. The loss of homes, farms, businesses, and other property, and the injury to careers, professional advancement and health, as well as the denial of freedom and dignity are irreparable. Over the past 43 years, many have sought justice and compensation. The results have been meagre and the issues largely ignored. In recent years, however, through persistent community effort, the movement for redress and reparations has been growing. National organizations in the Japanese American community, such as the Japanese American Citizens League, the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations, and the National Council for Japanese American Redress, have advanced various legal and legislative measures seeking

justice. They have been able to enlist the continuing support of many other organizations and individuals in the larger community in these efforts.

The well publicized report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, formed in 1980 by Congress to review the facts and circumstances surrounding E.O. 9066, concluded that, "a grave injustice was done to American citizens and residents aliends of Japanese ancestry," that the evacuation was not justified by military necessity, and that the decisions were

shaped by race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership. Their receommendations for redress and reparations are now embodied in legislation to be reintroduced into Congress this year. The U.S. Supreme Court in 1984

The wartime removal Japan ese Americans was actively supported by many in this country who had backed earlier discriminatory policies against not only the Japanese but other Asian Americans. The long history of violence and discrimination exemplified by the Chinese Exculsion Acts, 1924 Quota Act, Aliend Land Laws (forbidding resident aliens from becoming citizens), all document a climate of fear and prejudice mixed with economic hardships that cause us grave concern today. The recent incarceration of Haitians, the proposals to round up Iranians, and the rising incidence of violent acts against Asians, both new immigrants and old, call attention to a very dangerous trend once again--guilt by ethnicity. We call, therefore, for a broad network of organizations and inviduals to guard against this danger. It can--and it did--happen in this country. We need your help to see that this never happens again.

Our local Committee is composed of representatives from the Asian American Legal Defesne and Education Fund (AALDEF), Concerned Japanese Americans, 442 Veterans Association, Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)-New York Chapter, Japanese American Social Services, Inc.,

Your action on the following at this time will be appreciated:

1. A letter of general endorsement of all forms of redress and reparations that we may use in community and legislative efforts.
2. We invite you to attend our Day of Remembrance Program this year on February 23 (flyers enclosed), and ask your help in publicizing the event.
3. Suggestions for other organizations or forums where we may do education and outreach on this issue. We have speakers and more information available.
4. Return the section below for our mailing list.

Sincerely,

NAME OF ORGANIZATION

ADDRESS

PHONE

CONTACT PERSONS

____ Send more information

____ We would like to have a speaker.

____ Other organizations to contact: _____