

» CJA UPDATE «

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AUSPICIOUS SPRING 1983: ACTION ON REDRESS/REPARATIONS

» National Coalition for Redress/Reparations (NCRR) plans to reintroduce legislation this spring based on the bills introduced at the end of the lame duck session last year (see article for Bill details.) NCRR was founded to fight for individual monetary compensation, rooted in the belief that the way to achieve just R/R is to build a broad grassroots movement. Nationally, dialogue between JACL and NCRR has begun with the aim of having one bill which will contain the community's demand for direct individual monetary compensation as well as plans for community fund. NCRR sees that this unity is important to try to build, but that it must be done in a principled way.

» The National Council for Japanese American Redress (NCJAR) plans to file its class action suit in the Supreme Court after the Commission makes public its findings. NCJAR achieved its fundraising

goal of \$75,000 over the Christmas holidays thanks to its ronin and hundreds of financial supporters.

» The final report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) is due to be public sometime in February of this year.

From all this movement, we can see that this will be an auspicious spring for R/R. We will be bringing our case and issue before the highest court in the land and the highest law-making body. On every possible front, this government is being served notice that 40 years of suffering has been too long--that Japanese Americans are demanding redress and reparations now. We must be determined in our fight for justice. We may lose some battles but we will win the war. Our cause is just and our friends are many.

NCRR'S LEGISLATIVE CAMPAIGN

"It is now 2 years since the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations (NCRR) came into existence. The purpose was to create a platform through which individuals and organizations can express sentiments and actions on this most crucial issue facing our Japanese American (JA) community. Members of NCRR have since organized diligently towards broadening the struggle for R/R. Mobilizing our communities for the CWRIC hearings was a major focus in the summer of 1982. Our working jointly with various JACL chapters during the hearing period was again to maximize community participation throughout the nation in a coordinated effort with R/R groups. We have always advocated a stance of mutual cooperation when possible, because it is the interest of the community that is foremost to the issue.

"The hearings are now past and the voluminous heartwrenching testimonies must now be translated into DEEDS by the government and ACTIONS by the community. We are now at a most critical phase of the R/R campaign. It means objectively that we must focus all our energy towards fighting for justice. The U.S. government incarcerated its own citizens into concentration camps for 4 years, and the hardships, losses and denials of basic rights are glaring acknowledged facts. While our members may be small and our resources somewhat limited, our spirit is never to be deterred."

NCRR BANNER (July 1982) -Burt Nakano

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CONCERNED JAPANESE AMERICANS: WHO WE ARE

Concerned Japanese Americans (CJA) was formed in 1980 by a group of Japanese Americans who saw an alarming similarity between the hysteria against the Iranians in the U.S. which called for their deportation during the Iranian hostage crisis, and the panic that led to the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II.

Since then, CJA has joined with other groups concerned with fighting injustice and racism; we boycotted the film "Charlie Chan" which portrayed anti-Asian stereotypes and participated in the 1981 and 1982 Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week Festival.

The issue of Redress/Reparations (R/R) has been central to the activities of CJA. In

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DAY OF REMEMBRANCE - 1983

- *Pot Luck
- *Program
- *Discussion, NCRR Legislation

Saturday, February 19th - 4PM
Japanese American United Church
255 7th Ave. (between 24th & 25th)
Manhattan

call: 865-8134 or 964-6226 for info.

NCRR BILLS: A SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the major points included in the R/R bills, which were based on the NCRR position. They were introduced on December 8, 1982, into the 97th Congress by Congressman M. Dymally.

CJA encourages everyone to write to their Congressperson asking for a copy of these bills, in order to show them that their constituents are interested in this issue. Ask for:

*HR 7383: Japanese American and Aleut American Relocation and Internment Community Redress Act.

*HR 7384: Japanese American and Aleut American Relocation and Internment Individual Redress Act.

Both bills begin with findings and the purposes of the acts. They state that Congress shall admit the following:

(1) No legal, judicial, military or moral justification exists for the relocation and internment of 120,000 civilian individuals during WWII.

(2) E.O. 9066 and related actions of the Federal government caused economic, political and social loss to evacuees.

(3) The U.S. government has a legal and moral obligation to restore economic and social well-being to those who had losses as a result of its actions.

(4) Congress has the power to do this under Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

(5) In order to meet its obligations, Congress must set up a compensation fund for evacuees and a community restoration fund.

The bills define "evacuee" as any Nisei (person of Japanese descent who is a citizen or permanent resident alien of the U.S.), Aleut or individual who experienced any of the following:

(A) Detention in camps or any other places of incarceration, by actions of the Federal government, its agencies and employees, under E.O. 9066, Presidential proclamation, Act of Congress, or military directive.

(B) Forced evacuation from the West Coast.

(C) Suffered losses of property, earnings, educational opportunities, life, physical and mental disability, emotional distress, constitutional rights.

The WWII relocation period is defined as beginning 12/7/41 and ending 6/30/46.

The Individual Redress Act calls for monetary reparation and states:

Each evacuee, or in the event that the evacuee is deceased, the evacuee's surviving spouse, or, if the spouse is also deceased, the surviving child-

ren, shall be entitled to a single-payment benefit in the amount of \$25,000.

Those with losses greater than that can file with the Attorney General for a larger benefit based on supporting evidence. All monetary payments awarded to evacuees would be untaxed.

Administrative responsibility for the Individual Redress Act shall reside with the Attorney General, who will identify and notify those eligible for any funds, determine their eligibility, and instruct the Treasurer to make payments.

The Community Redress Act seeks to establish a method by which JA communities throughout the U.S. can be funded for projects to benefit the communities.

A "community" is defined as a group of 10 or more evacuees, spouses and/or children of evacuees residing within the same county on the date of application for funding.

Funds would be available for the following categories of benefits:

1. education and training
2. business and agricultural development
3. health care of the elderly
4. housing and daycare for the elderly
5. mental health, alcoholism, and drug abuse care and treatment
6. low income housing
7. health care
8. child daycare
9. cultural maintenance, research, and expression
10. improvement of communications within the evacuee community

The Community Redress Act sets up 8 geographical regions, each to be represented by a Community Fund Local Review Board (CFLRB). Each of these Boards would be made up of 7 persons elected by the evacuees residing in that region. These CFLRBs would:

(1) Inform the evacuee community of procedures and deadlines for grant and loan applications to the Community Fund;

(2) Make an initial review of the applications from the evacuee community;

(3) Make recommendations to the Community Fund National Board, based on a majority vote;

(4) Elect a representative of the region to the National Board; and

(5) Prepare an annual report.

The overall administrative responsibility for the Community Redress Act will reside in the Community Fund National Board of Directors. It would consist of 11 members: 3 appointed by the U.S. President with approval by

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Campaign con't

On December 8, 1982, two bills, entitled "Community Redress Act" (HR7383) and "Individual Redress Act" (HR7384), were introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressman Mervyn Dymally of California. Both bills reflect NCRR's position. (We have summarized the major points of these bills on page 2 in this issue of CJA UPDATE.)

NCRR chose to introduce these bills into the 97th "lame-duck" session of Congress to serve several purposes:

(1) to remind and reiterate to the Commission the testimonies and the demands put forth by the JA communities at the hearings;

(2) to provide a basis for other R/R organizations to compare and to share their proposed approaches to reparations;

(3) to be a vehicle by which we can seek concrete support from legislators and organizations within and outside of our communities; and

(4) to create the way for re-introducing an R/R bill in the 98th Congress (1983-84).

As members of NCRR, CJA actively seeks feedback and comments on this legislation from the New York JA community at large. We believe that input from the community is vital to forging a strong, unified position.

A United Community Effort

A positive development in our R/R cause has been the scheduled meetings between representatives from the NCRR and JACL leadership to develop a position of unity on legislation. Although the two organizations currently have their own proposals, the overall goal is to work toward a single piece of legislation to be introduced into the 98th Congress.

Both organizations are planning for their national representatives to meet together through the winter and spring of 1983, while they also gather feedback from their memberships and the JA community at large on the content of the proposed legislation.

Winning meaningful reparations for all JAs is the main objective of all groups. Building cooperation and developing a united effort will surely enhance our chances of waging a successful legislative campaign.

It will also help to strengthen our community's ability to fight, not only for R/R, but on numerous other issues facing us. Nothing will be handed to us without a fight. The key to our success is our willingness to take this on, to organize ourselves effectively, and to join together with all both within and outside of the JA community in this struggle to win justice from the U.S. government.■

CJA con't

early 1982, CJA joined the National Coalition on Redress/Reparations (NCRR) because we agree that there must be individual monetary compensation to those evacuated and interned (including restitution to our communities), and that the legal basis for the camps must be overturned. We also agree with the importance of a community-based approach which was put forward by NCRR.

Locally, CJA was actively involved in gathering signatures from the community on a petition to the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) for a hearing in New York. During the first public hearing of the CWRIC held in Washington, D.C., members of CJA met with Joan Bernstein, CWRIC chairperson to further elaborate our rationale for a New York community hearing.

As the promised hearing became more tangible, CJA called for the formation of an East Coast coalition of groups and individuals to plan and prepare for the hearing. New York Nikkei responded enthusiastically, and we were all soon involved in helping prepare local testimony, raising funds, doing publicity and outreach and the 101 tasks that were necessary.

The rest is history. Despite last-minute threats from the Commission staff, the New York Hearing was a memorable experience. It owed its success to a united community effort.

Concerned Japanese Americans will continue educating and mobilizing the New York Japanese American community around issues that concern us such as R/R, as well as other issues that deal with fighting the inequalities we commonly experience with other oppressed minorities. We will continue to work towards reaffirming and promoting the richness of our culture and history.

CJA is sponsoring a "Day of Remembrance" Program on February 19, 1983 which will mark the 41st anniversary of the issuing of Executive Order #9066. We invite the community to join us in a pot luck dinner, a short cultural program and an open discussion on the NCRR legislation introduced into the last congress. We need your active support! Community feedback is essential to forming a united front--please come join us!■

Bills con't

Congress and 8 elected by the Local Review Boards. All members would have to be from the evacuee community. The National Board would establish the rules by which communities would apply for grants and loans, and would make the final determination for awarding funds.

The Community Redress Act calls for an appropriation of \$3 billion to establish the community fund, effective 10/1/84. The Boards, both national and local, would dissolve within 6 months after the funds are depleted.■