

5/10/78

To: Chicago JAAC Chapter Board, Reparation Committee and others
From: S. Michael Yasutake, Chairman, Reparations Committee, Chicago Chapter
Re: Reparations Proposal Discussion Meeting

The enclosed papers set forth ideas and plans on Reparations project.

Section I is a summary of what the National Reparations Committee plus regional representatives decided on regarding the proposal to be presented to the July, 1978 JAAC convention.

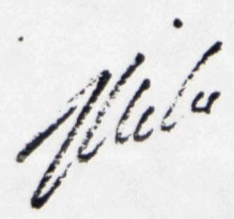
I like to present Section I to the Board, the Reparations Committee and others for their response and suggestions.

Section II is a proposal based on the discussions held with the Chicago Reparations Committee. This could serve as background information.

We will hold a meeting as indicated below:

Date: Tuesday, May 30, 1978
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: JAAC office, 5415 N. Clark, Chicago
728-7170

Your attendance will be appreciated.



P.S. Enclosed also is a summary report of the meeting which was submitted to Pacific Citizen by Dr. Clifford Uyeda, Chairperson of the National Committee on Reparations.

SECTION I

REPARATION COMMITTEE meeting in San Francisco,
April 29-30, 1978.

The following are the results of the proposal writing done by a group of close to 20 people on the Reparation legislation. Further refinement will be made by the National Reparation Committee during May. The finished product will be presented to the July, 1978 JACL convention for its adoption.

PURPOSE - To provide reparative compensation to those persons of Japanese ancestry and their immediate families ^{who} during World War II, suffered injustice by official action of the United States government, and thereby make such injustice less likely to recur.

Three main ideas are to be incorporated in the purpose:
1. restitution for the wrong done, 2. official recognition of the injustice perpetrated, 3. avoid recurrence of this kind of event.

BASIS FOR CLAIM -

Expulsion from their homes, imprisonment and/or severe harassments as consequences of presidential Executive Order 9066. These unconscionable acts were performed deliberately in gross violation of human rights and solely based on ancestry.

Recognizing that the wrong of this magnitude can never be fully rectified, the U.S. Congress can and should provide a meaningful restitution to those victims of injustice.

ELIGIBILITY -

All persons of Japanese ancestry, their spouses and immediate family members who, during World War II, were 1) detained or interned in U.S. government camps, or were 2) directly affected by the consequences of the Executive Order 9066 while living within the Western Defense Command area.

Those eligible include Latin Americans who were incarcerated and "repatriated" to Japan, who for reasons of the so called "loyalty oath" administration were considered "disloyal", as well as the Issei who were arrested by the FBI.



RESTITUTION SUM -

The U.S. Congress to make direct appropriation of \$25,000 for each victim. The total sum for the 120,000 persons affected to be three billion dollars. The sum received to be free from any federal, state or local taxes and any other benefits.

METHOD OF DISBURSEMENT -

The sum received to be deposited into a trust from which individual direct payments are due to all those who qualify as defined under "eligibility."

Individual certification of residence within the camps and in the Western Defense Command area during the period 12/7/41 to 6/30/46 to be determined by confirming their names with the Wartime Civil Control Administration (WCCA), the War Relocation Authority's (WRA) record of all detainees, the Department of Justice's record of internees, or by a satisfactory proof.

The sum remaining after individual payment will be kept in trust, which will be used for the benefits of Japanese Americans as determined by a Nikkei commission.

NIKKEI COMMISSION -

It will consist of about 12 representative group of Japanese Americans plus two appropriate government officials as ex officio members. The selection of such broad representative group of Japanese Americans will be initiated by a "recommending committee", composed of the JACL Executive Committee membership and governors, who will open up ^{for} nomination, individuals in their respective areas for possible membership in the Commission. Such groups as the national Buddhist and Christian organizations will be encouraged to submit names of possible candidates. This larger recommending committee will then do the selection of the NIKKEI COMMISSION membership. The Commission structure will include proportional representation, full accountability, recall provisions, staggered terms, etc. Since JACL is the only national Japanese American organization, open to all Nikkei, it will initiate the setting up of this Commission.

SECTION II

A REPARATION PROPOSAL

Chicago JAAC Committee - April 29, 1978

prepared by S. Michael Yasutake on behalf
of the Chicago Committee on Reparation

RATIONALE

Seeking Restitution

The main reason for reparation is compensation for liberty denied Japanese Americans during World War II. The basis for Reparation is moral rather than legal. Evacuation-detention was wrong, immoral and inhumane. Although making amends for the depriving of freedom cannot be reduced to monetary terms, it is a recognized practice for the aggrieved party to seek restitution through financial transactions.

Community Building and Development of Self Identity

Japanese American communities were shattered and the sense of self worth negatively affected by the evacuation experience. It is hoped that through joint effort to rectify in part past injustices, Japanese Americans would find strength and confidence in each other for the common suffering endured. The Reparation program, we hope, will help coalesce Japanese Americans as a significant ethnic Asian American group.

Racism

Racism continues to exist in North American cultures, often in covert ways, and manifesting itself overtly especially in times of crises. Evacuation-detention symbolizes the ultimate culmination of racist practice, which actually victimized a minority people in a democratic society. The Americans of Japanese ancestry are in a position to provide leadership to right the wrong perpetrated by demanding reparation.

Education

An important by-product of the Reparation project, whether it achieves its goal or not, is the providing of public platform for Japanese Americans for articulating their own group-racial views and feelings on the evacuation experience. Japanese Americans of different biological as well as immigrant generations can share their thoughts with each other, and they in turn together with the public at large. It is hoped that this type of exchange would lead to deeper appreciation of the multicultural roots and composition of American cultures.

~~(SECRET)~~

PAYMENTS

Individual and Group Payments

Payment of reparation is to be made to individuals. However, a common fund (trust, corporation) is to be established, so that if individuals so choose, they may contribute their shares to such a fund to be allocated for purposes of cultural or educational development or for the promotion of equal opportunity for Japanese Americans and other Asians.

Recipients

Payment will be to individuals who were evacuated "voluntarily" or involuntarily or incarcerated in concentration camps of the Army, the War Relocation Authority and the Department of Justice. Whereas most surviving evacuees are now living in the United States, others were forcefully "repatriated" to Japan and remained there. They are also entitled to receive payment.

Latin American Evacuees

Where the Japanese from Latin American nations were incarcerated in the United States concentration camps mainly because of the instigation of the U.S. government and not primarily of the respective Latin American nations, the reparation payment includes those evacuees. If the fault for detention lay mainly with these Latin American countries, then such Japanese are not included in the Reparation claims.

Deceased Evacuees

As to payment to rightful heirs of evacuees, it is commonly accepted practice to allocate funds to beneficiaries of the deceased, such as in insurance claims.

Trust Fund Administration

It is preferred that a trust fund be administered by a private group rather than by a government agency.

STRATEGIES

Funding

A special fund should be established for Reparation work. 1979 is the odd year for contributions for political purposes other than to political candidates. A semi-autonomous committee or commission for lobbying and legislative work (comparable to the legal defense committee of the NAACP) would safeguard the tax deductible status of JACL.

A sizable funding is needed for the national, regional and local Reparation campaign and promotion. A direct national appeal is necessary. Guidelines are needed for chapters for their fund raising, if funds are to be raised by them. Also, guidelines for national and local fund allocations are necessary.

Staffing and Coordination

An efficient network of national, regional and local groups through JACL structure needs to be spelled out specifically for the Reparation campaign.

The Washington D.C. JACL staff and member leaders will play a vital role. Additional staff of money raisers and lobbyists could be essential. A centralized network of information flow and feedbacks is needed.

Political Action

A national strategy is necessary for informing politicians across the country of the nature of the Reparation project. Each chapter will build up support among politicians for Reparation. The responses of politicians could be fed back to the Central Committee and the Reparations staff for further strategizing, well before the National JACL Convention in summer (July), 1978. In this process, Japanese Americans will gain political education by ^{political} engagement, which in turn can build a political base for the Reparation campaign.

Promotion

The promotional materials (brochures, news releases) should be given over to professional-promotional writers. The resource people for promotion are Asian American playwrights, actors, musicians, artists, etc. Extensive exchange of speakers and idea people would stimulate the flow of communication and expedite project development across the nation.