

WORLD WAR II JAPANESE AMERICAN REPARATIONS PROJECT"COMMUNITY INPUT" QUESTIONNAIRE

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STATEMENT

JACL recognizes that mental and physical suffering and loss of personal freedom cannot be computed in terms of dollars and cents, that actual 1942 real and personal property and other economic losses cannot readily be verified and calculated in 1977 monetary equivalents, and that economic and political realities of the times dictate congressional reluctance to appropriate public funds for reparations or redress payments for the sacrifices, deprivations, and travail experienced in World War II as a consequence of being of Japanese ancestry.

Nonetheless, the National JACL at its 1976 National Convention in Sacramento, California, unanimously adopted as a matter of organizational principle and highest programmatic priority a resolution calling for a national effort to secure token monetary reparations payments from the Government of the United States for the World War II tragedies and denials of those of Japanese origin, especially those then residing on the West Coast.

The basic principle involved is one of equity, justice, dignity, and freedom.

While conceding that the probabilities of success in persuading the Congress to provide substantial and meaningful token reparations are slim, JACL intends to campaign vigorously for the enactment of this corrective and remedial legislation.

Collateral benefits that might accrue to JACL and those of Japanese race from a legitimate effort include:

(a) Developing the legislative capability and influence of JACL and those of Japanese origin at all political levels--national, regional, state, and city or county;

(b) Securing an appropriate opportunity to "educate and inform" a new generation of Americans--organizations as well as public officials--most of whom never heard of Evacuation and the other unconstitutional actions committed against those of Japanese background in World War II;

(c) Seizing this chance to warn our fellow Americans that we must be ever vigilant against any effort--no matter what the given rationale--to arbitrarily detain and incarcerate unpopular individuals and/or minority groups, as was done with those of Japanese descent in World War II; and

(d) Providing an opportune rallying point where all American Japanese may unite again in a common cause that will make our lives more significant and worthwhile.

As for the so-called Japanese American Evacuation Claims Act of 1948 and its subsequent amendments, JACL now considers that program to have been totally inadequate, both as to the number of claimants paid and as to the amounts awarded. Fewer than one-third of those evacuated were compensated less than ten cents on the dollar at 1942 prices. While more recent congressional action is repealing the detention provisions of Title II of the Internal Security Act of 1950 and the presidential revocation of the original Executive Order No. 9066 were most welcome and salutary, neither provided even token compensation for the Japanese American experience of World War II.

JACL appreciates its limitations, but it believes that of all Japanese American organizations it is better prepared to spearhead the educational and political campaign required. Nevertheless, JACL understands that it does not represent every individual and organization within the Japanese American community. So, in an unprecedented effort to develop a "community" consensus of the scope and the beneficiaries of any reparations effort, JACL is sponsoring so-called "Community Input" meetings in various centers of American Japanese population and inviting concerned individuals and organizations to attend and contribute their ideas, concepts, and thinking about the many implications of this project. JACL is hopeful that the results will be a realistic, attainable, and worthy congressional request.

INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

We would appreciate your answers in order that we may develop a responsible community consensus as to what the scope of any reparations program should be and what specific provisions should be included in any legislative package. We also hope that these questions will suggest other information and recommendations that you may wish to write on the back of these pages for the development of the consensus we seek.

Please answer the following questions.

I. Personal Information

This information will help us analyze and better understand the answers and/or responses.

1.  Male  Female. 2.  Nisei  Sansei  Yonsei  Issei. Other \_\_\_\_\_
3. Not Detained. 4. Detained in:  Assembly Center  Relocation Center  Internment Camp. 5. Total Time of Detention:  Years  Months
6. Pre-Evacuation Residence (City, State) \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many major moves after leaving camp? \_\_\_\_\_
8.  NonVeteran. 9. Veteran of:  WWII  Korean War  Vietnam War. Other \_\_\_\_\_
10. Received WRA Financial Grant or Aid.  Yes  No
11. Filed Under Evacuation Claims Act.  Yes  No. 12.  Claim Paid  Not Paid

II. Eligibility for Reparations

It is generally agreed that the chances for passage of a bill claiming damages against the Government are the best when eligibility requirements for filing claims are strict, restrictive, and most easily defined and justified.

Please check only those you feel should be eligible for "reparations":

- 1.  All evacuees detained in WCCA Assembly Centers, plus
- 2.  All evacuees detained in WRA Relocation Centers, plus
- 3.  All "voluntary" evacuees, plus
- 4.  "Enemy Alien" Japanese internees, plus
- 5.  Evacuees from Territories of Hawaii and Alaska, plus
- 6.  Those arrested and confined in Territory of Hawaii, plus
- 7.  Non-Japanese spouses and children who accompanied evacuees, plus
- 8.  All persons of Japanese ancestry in Western Defense Command, plus
- 9.  Persons of Japanese ancestry who were forced to move or were denied "due process" in the United States, plus
- 10.  All persons of Japanese ancestry who were in the U.S. armed services prior to evacuation, plus
- 11.  Japanese Americans stranded in Japan during World War II, plus
- 12.  Persons of Japanese ancestry evacuated from Latin American countries and detained in the United States, plus
- 13.  Heirs of eligible persons, plus
- 14.  Others (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

There are some who feel that certain groups of evacuees should NOT be eligible for "reparations". Please check only those groups you feel should NOT be eligible.

- 1.  Those who requested repatriation to Japan
- 2.  Those who renounced United States citizenship
- 3.  Those who refused to report for military service
- 4.  Those who accepted Evacuation Claims Act awards and signed receipts "in full and complete settlement of all claims against United States".
- 5.  Dependents     Students     Minors     Infants
- 6.  Others (explain) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7.  No opinion on this matter

### III. Computing Reparations

Perhaps the most difficult issue is finding the most acceptable formula for determining the amount of reparations JACL should seek.

Should it seek a lump sum total for the entire program? And should this total amount be divided equally among all eligible claimants? Or, should each individual claim on his own account?

If each eligible party is to claim as an individual, how does one distinguish and differentiate between claimants, such as from the infant and the adult, from one who left camp early for schooling and the one who remained until the centers were closed, from those who volunteered for military service and those who volunteered for sugar beet harvesting, from one who was injured while in camp and those who evacuated "voluntarily," etc.

1. Which approach would you favor in computing the amount of reparations?

- Establish Special Commission
- Authorize Courts to Act
- Spell out details in legislation

2. If you favor the commission or court approach, should the commission or courts --

- Determine total amount of group reparations to be paid
- Set guidelines, procedures and amounts for payment to individuals

3. If you favor spelling out details in legislation, should the bill specify --

- Total amount of group reparations to be paid.

4. Or, should the bill specify --

- Guidelines and procedures for payment of individual claims
- Who would be eligible and how much each would be paid
- Payment to detainees only. If so, how much per day? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

5. If you favor group reparations payment, what should the total amount be?

- \$500 million     \$1 billion     \$5 billion    Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

6. If you favor individual payments, how much should each person be given?

- Less than \$10,000     Over \$10,000     \$10,000    Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

7.  Attempt to re-open, with amendments, the 1948 Evacuation Claims Act.

IV. Reparations Beneficiaries

While it would appear most simple and equitable if the individual American Japanese who were victims of World War II mistreatment were the direct beneficiaries of any reparations program, most knowledgeable Washingtonians agree that the Congress would more likely authorize reparations appropriations for a lump sum payment to a foundation, commission, organization, program, or project that would administer the payment for the "good" of, and in the public service of, those of Japanese ancestry, particularly those remaining victims who are in urgent "need" of financial and other aid, than for individual payments to thousands.

An exception to such lump sum payments to individuals is in amending the Japanese American Evacuation Claims Act of 1948. And, even in this case, the amendments would have to be "reasonable" and justifiable.

Moreover, in any individual payment program, Congress no doubt would consider the relatively high cost of the administration and settlement of each claim.

Although it is recognized that all persons of Japanese ancestry in this country suffered to some extent in World War II, the degree of deprivation and hurt varied even among evacuees. So, any general automatic payment to individuals would be unfair to some and overly generous to others.

World War II ended more than three decades ago. Most of the Issei who were subject to evacuation or internment, for instance, are now dead and more often than not their heirs are not in financial need. Any direct payments to individual victims would probably take so long because of bureaucratic operations that help from an organization or foundation, for example, would be much quicker, expeditious and probably more helpful in the case of older Issei.

On the other hand, since individuals were mistreated and humiliated and lost individual property and economic opportunities, it would seem only logical and proper that reparations should be paid to the individual victims or their lawful heirs.

1. \_\_\_ Favor individual payments

\_\_\_ An arbitrary but equal sum to each eligible

\_\_\_ Based on amounts requested by individual claimants

2. \_\_\_ Favor payment to a federal commission or national organization

\_\_\_ Establish a federal commission to approve and direct use of funds

Commission should be composed of --

\_\_\_ All non-Japanese Americans      \_\_\_ Combination of Japanese Americans and non-Japanese Americans

\_\_\_ Have a single national Japanese American organization direct use of funds

The federal commission or national Japanese American organization should establish criteria and guidelines for --

\_\_\_ Regional Japanese American organizations to apply for, receive and use -- with appropriate oversight -- funds on a regional basis

\_\_\_ Local Japanese American organizations to apply for, receive and use -- with appropriate oversight -- funds on a local basis

3. If the reparations payment is to be given to a federal commission or national Japanese American organization, for what purposes should these funds be spent --

For JA community services, including needy Issei

For JA legal defense and anti-defamation work

To strengthen US-Japan relations

To promote and improve JA image in the United States

Scholarships for JAs.  Based on need  Based on merit

Specific programs to be determined from time to time by commission/organization

Other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Please add whatever comments and suggestions you may have. Your opinions are not only solicited but welcomed. Thank you for your cooperation and interest.