

MIDWEST REGIONAL OFFICE

Japanese American Citizens League

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WILLIAM J. YOSHINO
MIDWEST DIRECTOR

July 1, 1987

TO: Chiye Tomihiro, Henry Tanaka, Grayce Uyehara

FROM: Bill Yoshino

Today I had lunch with David Roth, the national ethnic liaison for the American Jewish Committee, at which time he informed me that he had responded to Grayce's action alert to contact the various congressmen and senators. Prior to this David had contacted me regarding the contents of the letter he was drafting for delivery to the members of the Illinois Ethnic Consultation. The enclosed letter with additional enclosures was sent to all the officers of the Illinois Ethnic Consultation and approximately 70 organizations. David indicated that there would be followup to this mailing.



illinois ethnic consultation

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June 29, 1987

ETHNIC ACTION ALERT!

ETHNIC ACTION ALERT!

TO: Consultation and ethnic leaders

FROM: Joe Frattaroli

RE: Support for Senate Bill 1009 and House Bill 442
on Redress for Japanese Americans

Bill Yoshino and Paul Igasaki of the Japanese American Citizens League have informed us that now is the time for full scale, grass-roots support for the House and Senate bills on Redress for Japanese Americans.

For more than a decade, Consultation leaders have worked to create awareness of the internment of West Coast Japanese Americans during World War II, and to build support for redress including compensating victims of this grievance injustice.

Therefore, IEC joins the Japanese American Citizens League-Legislative Education Committee (JACL-LEC) in urging you to take the following actions now:

1. Write a letter on IEC or your ethnic organization letterhead to your representative and senators urging them to support the redress bills. If they are already co-sponsors, write a thank you letter urging them to vote for the bills. Please do this even if you have written before.

OFFICERS: Chairperson—*Joseph Frattaroli*, Urban & Ethnic Education Section, Illinois State Board of Education; Vice Chair for Social Action Strategy—*Eileen Mackevich*, Illinois Humanities Council; Vice Chair for Programs and Training—*Lourdes Travieso-Parker*, Department of Training and Development, Chicago Public Schools; Vice Chair for Financial Development—*Ross Harano*, Mayor's Advisory Committee on Asian American Affairs; Vice Chair for Human Resources—*Gail Cohon Stein*, Travelers and Immigrants Aid; Treasurer—*Commissioner Raleigh Mathis*, Department of Inspectional Services, City of Chicago; Secretary—*Jim Wolf*, New Trier High School. **AT-LARGE BOARD MEMBERS:** *Dora Arechiga*, Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund; *Carole Balzekas*, Ethnic Cultural Preservation Council; *Dominic Candeloro*, Office of Conferences and Workshops, Governors State University; *Syd Finley*, Special Assistant to the Governor for Minority Affairs; *Commissioner Mathilda Jakubowski*, Illinois Human Rights Commission; *Marcia Lazar*, The American Jewish Committee; *Ngoan Le*, Vietnamese Community Service Center; *Abel Maxime*, Lutheran Child & Family Services; *Joseph McCord*, Chicago Urban League; *Maria Medina Seidner*, Transitional Bilingual Education Section, Illinois State Board of Education; *Ted Swigon*, Copernicus Foundation; *Jim Ylisela, Jr.*, *Fra Noi*. **HONORARY CHAIRPERSONS:** *Paul Gibson*, Small Business Assistance, Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs; *Luba V. Toloczko-Markewycz*, Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art; *Connie Seals*, C-Brem Communications Corp. **STAFF:** Coordinator—*Jonathan Shamis*; Honorary Coordinator—*David G. Roth*; *Heritage* Editor—*Pamela DeFiglio*; Office Manager—*Venetta Williams*.

2. To increase the number of constituent letters, please urge leaders of your ethnic organization in other jurisdictions to write to their representative and senators. If you own property (e.g., a vacation home) in a neighboring state, please write to your representative and senators in that state.
3. Send copies of your letter(s) and any replies you receive to IEC. We will forward them to the JACL-LEC office in Washington. This will help them determine the position of legislators with whom they have had little or no contact. These letters will also give JACL-LEC information for Hill follow-up.

Included with this letter are the following materials and information to help you participate in this letter-writing campaign.

- . A listing of redress co-sponsors and non-sponsors from Illinois. (Note that several key ethnic congressmen are non-sponsors. This does not necessarily mean they oppose the bill; your speaking to them may be critical in building support for Redress.)
- . A fact sheet on the House and Senate bills.
- . A model letter provided by JACL-LEC.
- . A brochure entitled "The Japanese American Incarceration: a Case for Redress."
- . Newspaper articles describing IEC's involvement in the Redress issue.

If you would like further information or if you have suggestions, please call JACL's Chicago office. (312) 728-7170.

JACL-LEC and IEC thank you for supporting the campaign to correct a gross miscarriage of justice. In her letter to IEC, JACL-LEC Director Gracye Uyehara noted that: "It is only through your response to this request that we can look forward to the day when the bills are passed in Congress. Then Americans of Japanese ancestry can truly join in the celebration of the Bicentennial of the Constitution and feel that our nation is truly an example of liberty and justice for all."

JF:vw
Enc.

THE HOUSE REDRESS BILL

Illinois Co-Sponsors of H.R. 442

	PARTY	DISTRICT
Terry Bruce	D	19
Cardiss Collins	D	7
Lane Evans	D	17
Kenneth Gray	D	22
Charles Hayes	D	1
Henry Hyde	R	6
Edward Madigan	R	15
John Porter	R	10

Illinois Non-Cosponsors of H.R.442

	PARTY	DISTRICT
Frank Annunzio	D	11
Philip Crane	R	12
Jack Davis	R	4
Richard Durbin	D	20
Harris Fawell	R	13
Dennis Hastert	R	14
William Lipinski	D	5
Lynn Martin	R	16
Robert Michel	R	18
Melvin Price	D	21
Dan Rostenkowski	D	8
Marty Russo	D	3

THE SENATE REDRESS BILL

Illinois Co-Sponsors of S.1009

	PARTY
Alan Dixon	D
Paul Simon	D

FACT SHEET

- * In 1940, 127,000 people of Japanese ancestry lived in the United States, about 113,000 of whom lived on the West Coast. Nearly 80,000 were American citizens.
- * On February 19, 1942, two months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, providing for the mass evacuation and incarceration of Japanese and Japanese Americans living on the West Coast. The government argued that these individuals were a threat to the region's strategic shipyards, airfields, and factories.
- * 110,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans were incarcerated during the war. The detainees were originally held in 15 temporary assembly centers in California, Oregon, Washington, and Arizona. In the summer and fall of 1942 they were moved by train to 10 relocation centers, each of which housed 10,000 to 20,000 people. The detainees lived in crowded tar-papered barracks under the surveillance of armed guards. The centers were:
 - Manzanar and Tule Lake, California
 - The Colorado River Relocation Project (Poston) and Gila River, Arizona
 - Jerome and Rohwer, Arkansas
 - Heart Mountain, Wyoming
 - Central Utah (Topaz)
 - Minidoka, Idaho
 - Granada (Amache), Colorado
- * While their families lived in the camps, some Japanese Americans served in the U.S. Army. Japanese American volunteers made up the famous 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team - the American units with the highest casualty rates and most decorations of the war.
- * Many of the detainees remained in the camps until 1945, long after many government officials had admitted privately that they posed no threat to the nation.
- * Many of the detainees lost their farms, businesses, and homes. In 1983 the congressional Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment estimated the internees' economic losses at \$2.5 billion to \$6.2 billion. The Japanese American Evacuation Claims Act of 1948 paid 37 million dollars.
- * Today, two bills, S. 1009 and H.R. 442, regarding redress to Japanese Americans are pending in Congress. The information on the bills are on the other side.

SAMPLE LETTER

The Honorable (Date)
U.S. Senate/U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510 (Senate), 20515 (House)

Dear Senator or Representative:

I am writing to urge your support of S. 1009/H.R. 442, which seeks to implement the recommendations of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians.

This legislation addresses the basic civil liberties and constitutional rights that were violated by the evacuation and internment of American citizens of Japanese ancestry during World War II. The uprooting of an entire population of one ethnic group from the West Coast and placing them into guarded compounds for a period of up to four years, without due process of law, is an event that should be appropriately redressed by our government.

These Americans bore the stigma of having been branded potentially disloyal and suffered the loss of their constitutionally guaranteed liberties for no reason other than an accident of ancestry. That is not the American way.

Ironically, thousands of these Japanese Americans emerged from the humiliation of these camps and gave their lives for this country, while parents and families remained prisoners within this country. These men fought with honor and distinction in the European and Pacific theatres, many of them dying while attempting to preserve the very principles which they and their families had been denied.

Our great nation has the strength of a free society to acknowledge its own errors and then right that wrong by providing symbolic compensation to the victims of this grievous injustice by our government. To do so would add greater credibility to our portests against the repressive actions taken by other governments around the world.

I ask you to cosponsor S. 1009/H.R. 442 and help us defend individual freedom and due process for all Americans. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

(Your name)

NOTE: This letter can be used for writing to either Senators or Representatives. Be sure to use the correct zip and the bill number in each instance.

Backers See Obstacles to Compensation of Japanese-Americans

Special to The New York Times

CHICAGO, June 17 — It might take up to six years for Congress to act on a federal study commission's recommendation that Japanese-Americans who were interned in World War II be compensated, Representative Norman Mineta, Democrat of California, said today.

Mr. Mineta, who himself was interned with his family at the age of 10, spoke at a news conference that focused on anti-Asian prejudice. "I believe these recommendations will serve as a powerful vehicle, but I am bracing for the imminent controversy which shall follow," he said, referring to "the fact that our economic difficulties and tensions over international trade has been accompanied by sharp and dangerous increases in prejudice" against Americans of Asian ancestry.

"I can't give a definitive answer on how Congress will deal with this," Mr.

Mineta said of the recommendations issued Thursday by the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians Without Legislation.

The commission requested that a total of \$1.5 billion be appropriated by Congress for compensation, which would include payments of \$20,000 to each of the 60,000 surviving former prisoners. The commission was established by Congress in 1980.

Mr. Mineta said Congress might hold hearings on the report soon or delay "until some legislative vehicle is drawn up." He estimated that the long process between drafting legislation and winning final passage would take five to six years.

"We must not let debate focus on the issue of reparations alone," he added. "Most people in our country are not even aware of the fact that the American Government ever illegally imprisoned more than 100,000 U.S. citizens and

law-abiding emigrants. That is a fact which must be learned."

"It takes little imagination to gain a sense of the wrong which was committed," he said. "How many people in America would fail to cringe at the prospect of losing one two or three years of their lives in a prison camp? We must point out that the commission's recommendations do not include any attempt to estimate the immeasurable losses incurred at such a loss of freedom and honor."

'A New Racism on the Rise'

The news conference, sponsored by the American Jewish Committee's Institute on Pluralism and Group Identity, and by the Illinois Consultation on Ethnicity in Education, was called to draw attention to the rising sentiment against and physical attacks on Americans of Asian ancestry. Representatives of civil rights, ethnic, education

and labor organizations were present in what one participant called "a mutual support system."

"There is a new racism on the rise in America," said Connie Seals of Illinois Consultation, "a racism born of a country's history of uneven treatment of Asian-Americans, and exacerbated by a nagging recession, persistent unemployment, and competition for existing jobs in hard-hit industries."

"Because they are a visible minority," she said, Asian Americans "become easy targets for those who seek economic and political scapegoats."

The state of the automobile industry has made the problem especially acute in Detroit. Some owners of Japanese-made cars have reported that their windshields were smashed while they were waiting at intersections.

Last June 19 Vincent Chin, a 27-year-old American of Chinese descent, was bludgeoned to death with a baseball bat

by an unemployed auto worker and his son. According to the father, Ronald Ebens, they told Mr. Chin, "It's because of you," and used an obscenity "that we're out of work." Mr. Chin's last words were, "It isn't fair."

Mr. Ebens and his son, Michael Nitz were sentenced to three years' probation and were each fined \$3,000, to be paid at a rate of \$125 a month. The decision has enraged Asian-Americans and civil rights groups around the country.

Supporters in Congress

WASHINGTON, June 17 (Reuters) — Senator Alan Cranston, Democrat of California, said today that he would introduce legislation next week to provide the compensation recommended by the commission. An aide to Senator Cranston, who is a Presidential candidate, said that the outcome would be "hazardous to predict."

Sun-Times CHICAGO, SATURDAY, JUNE 18, 1983

Focus: Chicago Area

JAPANESE PROTEST: A coalition of ethnic, civil rights and religious leaders Friday deplored "a rising tide of racial prejudice" against Japanese-Americans caused by U.S. economic conflicts with Japan. The group, coordinated by the American Jewish Committee, began a legal and public relations campaign to combat "this savage, senseless breed of hate." Joyce Tucker, state director of human relations for the committee, said she will hold hearings this fall "on the problems being experienced by

Prejudice against Japanese assailed

By Charles Nicodemus

A coalition of ethnic, civil rights and religious leaders Friday deplored what they said is "a rising tide of racial prejudice" against Japanese-Americans caused by this country's economic conflicts with Japan.

The group, coordinated by the American Jewish Committee, launched a legal and public relations campaign to combat "this savage, senseless breed of hate."

Joyce Tucker, state director of human relations, told a press conference in the American Jewish Committee's headquarters, 55 E. Jackson, she will hold hearings this fall "on the problems being experienced by Asian-Americans because of discrimination."

Rep. Norman Y. Mineta (D-Calif.) noted that on Thursday a federal commission recommended that Japanese-Americans interned during World War II receive reparations as high as \$1.5 billion. Mineta said he hopes the recommendation "will not fan the flames of prejudice" against Japanese-Americans.

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Plan to pay \$1.5 billion to interned Japanese-Americans faces rocky path

By Lucia Mouat

Staff correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

Chicago

The request that Congress pay \$1.5 billion as partial compensation to the 60,000 surviving Japanese-Americans placed in detention camps during World War II may prove more controversial than it first appeared.

Certainly there is ample precedent for payments as restitution for past injustices. American Indians have received cash grants from Washington for land illegally seized. And blacks and women have received payments as redress in court suits charging past discrimination.

The US Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians — established by Congress in 1930 — has urged Congress to pay the compensation and make a formal apology. But the call comes when Congress has been making deep budget cuts. Indeed, Rep. Dan Lungren (R) of California, the only congressman on the commission, voted against

the bid for compensation. He reasoned that not only would it be hard to get congressional approval, but also that Japanese-Americans, though victims of injustice, are no more entitled to individual reparations than are US Indians or blacks.

The recommendations also come during a period of rising concern in the US about economic competition from Japan. Occasionally, that concern has erupted into open acts of racial hostility. Asian-Americans in Detroit are urging the US Department of Justice to investigate possible violations of civil rights law in the killing last year of a Chinese-American by an auto worker who thought the victim was Japanese. And many schools and communities have reported other, less blatant instances of discrimination against Asian-Americans.

The Illinois Consultation on Ethnicity in Education, a coalition of Chicago ethnic and education leaders, has taken the lead here in urging that all the facts surrounding the internment be clearly defined in order to quash any backlash against Asian-Americans. Leaders urged, for instance, that

the February findings of the federal commission — that the internment was based on "race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership" — be well publicized.

Rep. Norman Y. Mineta (D) of California, a Japanese-American who himself was placed under military detention when he was 10 years old, attended the Illinois meeting. He stressed that the proposed reparations — amounting to about \$20,000 per person — account for less than a third of the material losses actually incurred by those interned.

When reporters suggested there did not appear to be many overt anti-Asian incidents, Mr. Mineta said, "You don't let this kind of thing smoulder underneath — you have to talk about it." He recalls when someone painted the word "Jap" on his garage door in California. "I believe if someone does something like that, you tell the world. . . ."

Mineta says it is not clear whether Congress will hold hearings on the commission's findings or whether the House Judiciary Committee will wait until a specific bill is drafted.

Witnesses favor payment to Japanese internees

By Howard A. Tyner

WITNESSES testifying Tuesday in Chicago before a special federal commission voiced overwhelming support for payment of reparations to Japanese-American civilians forced to live in internment camps during World War II.

None of the witnesses, however, would venture an estimate of how much should be paid to the former internees or their families, many of whom lost their homes, businesses, and personal effects when they were sent to the camps after war broke out between the United States and Japan in December, 1941.

"I'm not sure," said one witness, author and radio personality Studs Terkel, when a commission member asked him about the amount of compensation. "But I think some dough should be involved. It can't just be an 'I'm sorry, dear.'"

TERKEL'S REMARK drew chuckles and scattered applause from the predominantly Japanese-American audience of 350 persons that crowded into Alumni Hall at Northeastern Illinois University, 5500 N. St. Louis Av., for the first of two days of commission hearings.

Congress created the nine-member Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians last year. Its task is to study the detention of 120,000 Japanese-Americans in camps during the war without

criminal charge and then to determine what, if any, thing, should be done in compensation.

The commission, which includes former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg and former Massachusetts Sen. Edward Brooke, has had hearings in six other cities. More than 100 witnesses were to testify in Chicago.

Like Terkel, who has written about the Japanese-American experience in the United States, representatives of groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Jewish Committee, and the United Church of Christ all testified in favor of the controversial reparations question.

THE JAPANESE-American community is far from unanimous on the issue. While some seek monetary compensation for their losses, others say they would be satisfied with a public acknowledgement by the U.S. government of what Terkel described as "a shadow that lies over our heads."

Some compensation was paid through the Japanese-American Claims Act of 1948, although total losses in business and personal property are estimated to be many times greater than the \$38 million given out then.

"If you take into consideration inflation and other economic factors, then you are talking in terms of

billions of dollars," Minoru Yasui, a Denver attorney, testified.

The bulk of witnesses were called to tell their stories of internment and how it affected their health, their family lives, their attitudes towards this country, and other areas.

THE COMMISSION heard Tuesday from three Japanese who were living in Peru when World War II began, but were forcibly shipped to the United States and into internment camps on grounds they represented a security threat.

Elsa Kudo, a 26-year Chicago resident who now lives in Honolulu, broke into tears and her voice cracked when she told how her father, a businessman in Lima, Peru, had been taken away at gunpoint in 1942 on orders of the U.S. government.

Dr. C. Harvey Gardiner, a retired history professor from Southern Illinois University, testified that approximately 1,800 Japanese-Peruvians were seized and shipped to this country, although none was charged with crimes.

Few ever were permitted to return to Peru, and others fought into the 1950s against U.S. attempts to deport them to Japan, even though many never had been there.