

THE COMMISSION ON WARTIME RELOCATION
AND INTERNMENT OF CIVILIANS

WHAT WILL THE COMMISSION DO?

On July 31, 1980, former President Jimmy Carter signed Public Law 96-317 which created the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians.

WITNESS PREPARATION

INFORMATION PACKET

TO SUBMIT WRITTEN TESTIMONY AND TESTIFY BEFORE

THE COMMISSION ON WARTIME RELOCATION

AND INTERNMENT OF CIVILIANS

WHO IS ON THE COMMISSION?

The nine members of the Commission were appointed by the President, the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. The commissioners and their addresses are:

- 1) Joan Z. Bernhardt, Secretary, 300 19th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 828-1200
- 2) Congressman Dan Rostenkowski, 128 Cannon Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20513
(202) 225-4414
- 3) Edward A. Brooke, c/o O'Connor & Harlan, 1919 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 335-1400

SACRAMENTO COMMITTEE FOR REDRESS/REPARATIONS

MAY 14, 1981

WITNESS PREPARATION WORKSHOP

- 4) Dr. Arthur J. Levin, 1120 Vermont Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20125
(202) 335-1400
- 5) Ambassador Arthur Goldberg, 3401 New Mexico Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007
(202) 335-1400
- 6) Hugh B. Mitchell, 2575 25th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008
(202) 335-1400

- 7) Judge William Marutani, 307 Oak St., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107
(215) 686-2962

Principal Co-Authors:

Bernard Beckker

Paul Igasaki

Bryan Yagi

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THE COMMISSION ON WARTIME RELOCATION
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WHAT WILL THE COMMISSION DO?

On July 31, 1980, former President Jimmy Carter signed Public Law 96-317 which created the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians.

The Commission is charged with the following powers:

1) to investigate the events surrounding Executive Order 9066 and to review the U.S. military orders requiring the subsequent evacuation and internment of Japanese Americans and others in concentration camps during World War II;

2) to review the impact of such actions on the people put in the camps; and,

3) to submit to Congress a report of findings and recommendations of appropriate remedies.

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(202) 828-1200 Washington, D.C. 20036
- 2) Congressman Dan Lundgren, Vice-Chair - 328 Cannon Office Building
(202) 225-2414 Washington, D.C. 20515
- 3) Edward R. Brooke - c/o O'Connor & Hannan
(202) 887-1400 1919 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
- 4) Father Robert Drinan - Georgetown University
(202) 624-8000 600 New Jersey Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001
- 5) Dr. Arthur S. Flemming - United States Commission
(202) 254-7378 on Civil Rights
1120 Vermont Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20125
- 6) Ambassador Arthur Goldberg - 2401 New Mexico Ave., N.W.
(202) 293-2868 Washington, D.C. 20007
- 7) Hugh B. Mitchell - P.O. Box 88728
(206) 575-6800 Seattle, Washington 98188
- 8) Ismael Grommof - P.O. Box 40
(907) 581-1222 Unalaska, Alaska 99685
- 9) Judge William Marutani - 307 One E. Pennsylvania Sq.
(215) 686-2962 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107

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WHERE IS THE COMMISSION OFFICE LOCATED?

The Commission's office is located at:

Commission on Wartime Relocation
and Internment of Civilians
2020 New Executive Office Building
726 Jackson Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20506 (202) 393-5615

The Commission will have a full time staff. The Commission is currently in the process of hiring staffpersons. The newly appointed staff director is former California State Assemblyman Paul T. Bannai. The staff administrator is Lois Wilzewske.

HOW WILL THE COMMISSION INVESTIGATE AND REVIEW THE CAMP EXPERIENCES?

The Commission has until February 25, 1982 to complete its work and submit a report to Congress. The Commission will hold public hearings in June or July to gather testimony from witnesses. The Commission will hold hearings in Washington, D.C., the Midwest, the West Coast and Alaska. The Commission will probably consult attorneys, social scientists and other experts to assist in the fact finding process. The Commission may also request and subpoena documents, correspondence, books, memoranda, and other writings from government agencies and private parties.

WHERE WILL THE COMMISSION HOLD PUBLIC HEARINGS?

The Commission has not decided which cities to conduct public hearings. Chairwoman Bernstein indicated hearings in California will probably be held in San Francisco, Los Angeles and one other location (possibly Fresno). The Sacramento Committee for Redress/Reparations has requested public hearings be held in Sacramento. We have forwarded petitions signed by over 500 persons requesting hearings be held in Sacramento. Congressman Matsui, the JACL National Committee for Redress and the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations have supported Sacramento's efforts to secure hearings. If Sacramento is not chosen as a hearing site, then we may have to travel to San Francisco or Fresno to tell our stories and express our concerns. So far, we have not yet received a reply from the Commission.

WHAT KINDS OF THINGS WILL THE COMMISSION WANT TO INVESTIGATE?

In the hearings, the Commission will want to hear testimony and accept written statements on the Japanese American experiences during the war years. Information concerning the roundup of people, violations of civil and property rights in the evacuation, camp experiences, and problems following release from the camps are all important issues the Commission will want to know about. The Commission will want to know how people lost farms, store goods, homes, jobs, businesses, and other properties. Testimony by witnesses and written statements may also include disruptions in people's lives, humiliation and psychological effects, and other ways in which the Japanese Americans were wronged by the evacuation and internment in the camps.

COMMISSION HEARING PROCEDURES

HOW WILL THE HEARINGS BE CONDUCTED?

The Commission will accept all written testimony submitted by interested persons. All written testimony will be given full consideration by the Commission and it will be part of the official record.

If you wish to make an oral presentation, then you must request to be selected as a witness and the Commission and its staff will decide who will appear as a witness at the Commission hearing.

The Commission has not decided what procedures or formats it will use at the hearings. Chairwoman Bernstein said she would like to have hearings conducted in settings and formats which do not intimidate witnesses. She also wants to conduct hearings at locations easily accessible to the Japanese American community, such as church halls and schools. Requests, among others, have been made concerning the need for translators, scheduling hearings to accomodate working peoples, and allowing use of tapes and video presentations by witnesses.

WHAT KINDS OF HEARING FORMATS CAN THE COMMISSION USE?

Listed below are four possible formats the Commission may use.

1) Congressional Committee Procedure

The commissioners and some staff members will sit at a table facing the audience. Witnesses will be called forward in "panels" of three or four persons who will sit at a table facing the commissioners. Witnesses will be allowed five to ten minutes each to present their oral statements. After all witnesses are through with their oral presentations, the commissioners may wish to ask informal questions of witnesses.

2) Seminar Setting

Under active consideration is a "seminar" format in order to create a more informal setting to put witnesses at their ease. Under this format both the commissioners and witnesses will sit at a common table. The witnesses will make their oral presentation and may then be questioned by commissioners.

3) Town Hall Format

Another possibility is a "town hall" format whereby an "open microphone" will be used to gather testimony. This format is usually used to accomodate large numbers of witnesses. While this format will probably not be used to conduct the entire hearing, it may be used at the end of a hearing when all previously selected and scheduled witnesses have finished with their testimony.

4) Staff Field Survey

For those areas not selected as a hearing site, a "staff field survey" may be conducted. Commission staffpersons will interview members of the community individually or in small groups to gather information. This procedure does not have all the formalities of a public hearing, however, all information gathered on a staff field survey is given as much consideration as testimony presented at the public hearings.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO IF I WANT TO TESTIFY AT A PUBLIC HEARING?

If you want to testify before the Commission at a public hearing, you must "offer" to testify. That is, you must write the Commission to tell them you want to be a witness.

In your "offer" you should include the following information to aid the staff in considering you as a possible witness:

- 1) biographical information- age, occupation, camps located, pre-war and post-war status, etc.;
- 2) specific points you will talk about in your oral presentation; and,
- 3) your intention to submit written testimony, which goes into greater detail, sometime before the hearing.

If you want to testify, you should submit your offer to the Commission as soon as possible. Thus, right now you should be seriously considering the things you want to tell the Commission. You should then write the Commission with all the above information.

To assist Nikkei interested in submitting written testimony, making an oral statement and being a witness at a hearing, persons with experience in such matters will conduct "one to one" working sessions for testimony drafting. The "drop in" sessions will be conducted at:

Asian Legal Services Outreach
1520 V Street
Sacramento, California 95814

Saturday - May 30 and,
Saturday - June 6 from
10 A.M. to 5 P.M.

If you need assistance in drafting your testimony, you should sign up on the list to arrange for a meeting time. For more information please contact Bryan at 444-2826.

If you are selected to testify, the Commission will contact you of the time, date and place where you are scheduled to appear.

IF I AM SELECTED TO TESTIFY, HOW CAN I BEST USE THE TIME
GIVEN FOR MY ORAL PRESENTATION?

Depending on the number of witnesses selected to testify at the public hearing, witnesses will be given only a few minutes to make their oral presentation. For example, witnesses may be given a total of ten (10) minutes, consisting of five (5) minutes to make their oral statement and five (5) minutes to allow for questions to be asked by the commissioners.

In making your oral presentation, it is important that you emphasize only two or three major points of the written testimony previously submitted to the Commission. For example, your written statement can be 10 pages, but at the hearing, you should only stress and focus on the major points of the written statement. Finer details will probably be brought out during the question and answer session between you and the commissioners.

Generally, it takes 1½ to 2 minutes to read aloud one page of written testimony. It is crucial, therefore, that you reduce and summarize your written testimony prior to the hearing.

When you deliver your testimony, speak the way you normally talk. This is the most effective way to communicate your concerns to the Commission. Do not try to "over polish" your oral presentation.

Be sure to talk about your personal experiences and how you were affected. Be honest, clear, relaxed, and emotionally in control of the situation.

The Commission hearings are not going to be conducted like a formal court hearing. Rather, the Commission hearing will be a forum for you to express your feelings, reactions, and thoughts on your camp experiences.

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR WRITTEN TESTIMONY

WHAT SHOULD MY WRITTEN STATEMENT INCLUDE?

Written statements from all persons should be typed and double spaced. It should include the following items.

I. Biography

A. Self Description

1. Your name, age, sex, race
2. Occupation
3. Site first relocated to
4. Years interned at what camps

II. Pre-Evacuation

- A. What you and your family did immediately prior to evacuation
- B. How much time you were given to evacuate
- C. What you took to camp with you

- D. What financial losses you and your family incurred, for example, home, business, education, property, automobiles, belongings and other major items.
- E. Estimation of your losses.

III. Camp Life

- A. Which camp(s) interned at
- B. Living conditions- health, food, medical, sanitation
- C. Atmosphere of camps
- D. Relationship with director, guards
- E. Thoughts and impressions upon arrival at camp
- F. How camp affected family relations
- G. How the "loyalty oath" affected family and friends
- H. Events in camp which greatly affected you and your family
- I. What you did in camp- cook, farmer, truck driver, raise children, etc.

IV. Post War Experiences

- A. Problems in resettling
 - 1. Job discrimination
 - 2. Economic hardship
 - 3. Acts of violence or terrorism inflicted on you or your family and friends
 - 4. Belongings lost, damaged or never returned
- B. Occupation
- C. If your children know about the concentration camps

V. Conclusion

- A. What you would like to see come about from the Commission hearing process
- B. What sorts of remedies you would like to recommend to repay the Japanese Americans

These are only some of the many things you should mention in your written testimony. You may choose to mention some or all of the above, but do not limit yourself strictly to these questions.

POST HEARING PROCEDURES

WHAT WILL THE COMMISSION DO AFTER THEY CONDUCT HEARINGS?

The Commission hears public testimony also to decide what remedies to suggest for Congress to compensate the Nikkei. One remedy might be a Congressional bill granting a flat monetary amount to all those interned in the camps. Such an amount might be provided to those still alive, or to the living and the heirs of the deceased. There are other possible remedies, including, a community fund to be used for the cultural and social needs of the Japanese community as a group; a law removing time limitations so that people can sue in court for damages; an apology by the government along with a recognition of the wrong committed; and a gradation or priority system to assure that Isseis are the first to be redressed. The Commission will take testimony on how the community feels about the various remedies.

The Commission will meet to consider the evidence once public hearings are completed. In August, Chairwoman Bernstein would like to hold a legal conference to discuss the legal issues involved in the relocation and internment of Nikkei.

A recommendation will be delivered to Congress on what the Commission suggests as remedies. Any actual programs for payments or other relief must be introduced and passed by the Congress. Then either the President must sign the bill or it must have enough votes to be enacted without the President's signature. Only then will any actual redress or reparations take place. For the government to act, people must push for a remedy at all stages of this process, particularly to get a bill through Congress.

WHAT ARE GROUPS DOING IN THE REDRESS/REPARATIONS MOVEMENT?

Listed below are five groups, among many, currently involved in the redress/reparations effort.

1) Bay Area Attorneys for Redress (BAAR)

The BAAR is composed of attorneys and law students in the Bay area which formed an ad hoc committee to challenge the legality of the evacuation and the incarceration. The BAAR is writing a legal brief arguing the unconstitutionality of the federal government's actions to present before the Commission.

2) State Bar of California - Subcommittee on Japanese American Redress/Reparations

The State Bar has established a subcommittee composed of attorneys, law students and concerned persons who will do legal research on the possible remedies available to compensate the Japanese Americans interned in the camps. The subcommittee will then present its report to the Commission.

3) National Council for Japanese American Redress (NCJAR)

NCJAR is a Chicago based organization which is raising monies to file a class action lawsuit, on behalf of the Nikkei incarcerated in the camps, against the United States government. NCJAR has retained legal counsel who has just started the process of legal research and legislative work to make the suit possible.

4) National Coalition for Redress/Reparations (NCRR)

NCRR is a California statewide organization which advocates for and seeks the following goals: direct monetary compensation to persons interned; establishment of a Japanese American community trust fund; educating people so such acts shall never occur again; overturning the legal basis justifying the evacuation and internment; and supporting other groups subject to similar actions.

5) Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)

The JACL has formed a National Committee for Redress to coordinate the organization's Commission effort. The JACL strongly emphasizes the need to educate people about the camps and feels that, if the Commission chooses, reparations in either individual payments or for a community fund are appropriate remedies for the Congress to adopt.

WHERE CAN I GO TO GET HELP TO PREPARE MY TESTIMONY?

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