



# National Council for Japanese American Redress

925 West Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Illinois 60614

## JAPANESE-AMERICAN REDRESS: A TIME FOR DECISION

A major decision is unfolding for all Japanese-American victims of World War II internment:

**WHETHER WE SHOULD BRING LEGAL ACTION AGAINST THE UNITED STATES INCLUDING A LAWSUIT FOR THE VIOLATION OF OUR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES, SEEKING COMPENSATION THROUGH THE COURTS.**

An affirmative reply can only be made if Japanese-Americans respond in numbers and dollars sufficient to underwrite the cost of mounting a major lawsuit. A retainer will be \$75,000. The suit will be for the entire class of victims. Several thousand dollars have already been pledged by a few people, but thousands more will have to be raised if we are to proceed.

### THE DECISION IS CLEARLY OURS.

The law firm of Landis, Cohen, Singman and Rauh has agreed to undertake this historic case. In the initial phase, they will expend approximately one full lawyer-year in research, planning, and filing suit. The cost is for this effort. The objective is to overcome previous Court decisions and the statute of limitations, 35 years after the camps were closed. The task is monumental and the risk is substantial. This must be clearly understood by all supporters.

Should the Court allow us to present our case, then class action status will be sought and chances for success improve significantly.

There is overwhelming evidence that Japanese-Americans did suffer a massive miscarriage of justice. The practice of compensation to such victims is well established in the American practice of law. Should we reach the second phase, legal counsel could apply to the Court for further compensation for services rendered on behalf of the class membership, but the National Council for Japanese American Redress will continue to cover on-going expenses of litigation.

\$75,000 is substantial. But it is a burden we should bear and share. We need to take leadership. It is a lawsuit on our behalf. Each of us must form his or her response to this historic decision. If you believe we should proceed, cast your vote with a pledge. (We are asking for a pledge now, instead of a check, in order to allow time for the establishment of a Redress Legal Fund. As soon as the Fund is established, we will ask those who have pledged to make their contribution.)

We seek forty-seven Ronin\*, who will contribute one thousand each. And many others who will contribute one hundred each or whatever they can. (Give 'em a hug and a kiss for Christmas this year instead.)

Peace,

*Wz Hohri*  
William Hohri





# National Council for Japanese American Redress

925 West Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Illinois 60614  
November 11, 1980

Dear Friends,

This is a moment of truth.

It is a moment of fear and trembling.

The symbol I fall back upon is that of the \*Forty-seven Ronin. Ronin were samurai without masters. The Forty-seven Ronin obtained justice by a collective act of self-sacrifice. A thousand dollars is not self-sacrifice, but it may feel like it for most of us. And, too, we are leaderless. Those who command broad allegiances within the Japanese-American community are simply not there when it comes to redress.

The JAACL, with its 27,000 members, is behaving in a strange way. No one seems to know where they stand on redress. They passed a set of guidelines on August 1, 1980 and have yet to publish these in their newspaper, The Pacific Citizen. They nominated a list of people for the Study Commission and kept their list a secret until just this past week. And we've learned that they didn't even bother to ask all the people on the list if they would serve. James Reston, one of the nominees, didn't know anything about the Commission, hadn't been asked, and would not serve if asked.

The Japanese-American members of Congress are good at using the term "redress" but careful to avoid any commitment to the principle implicit in the term. Their latest position, I have on good authority, is simply "Forget it for the Reagan administration." They are skilled politically but void in redress leadership. Religious leaders are curiously out of character by seeming reluctant to speak publicly about redress, with one or two exceptions.

So, we are leaderless Ronin. But we can still act without leaders. We simply have to find strength within ourselves to make the tough decision, say to ourselves, "This is the time to act." We make it happen if we have the will.

For our part, we intend to be as responsible as we can about the money and the decision. We will proceed only if we can see our way clear to the finish. If we cannot proceed, we will refund all the money. We are working at establishing a contingency plan for shortfall in receipts so we will not have to stop.

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Aiko and Jack Herzig have exhumed thousands of pages from the National Archives. The stuff is really dynamite. Most of know quite a bit about the stratagem of E.O.9066, whereby it would allow the military to exclude any and all persons without racial bias from military zones and then allow all but the Japs to return. It was a method to circumvent the Constitution. But I was astounded to read a set of papers



which disclosed proposed legislation to have Congress suspend the Writ of Habeas Corpus. This was in response to Mitsuye Endo's application for the writ. The Judge Advocate General of the Army writes a learned and intelligent argument in support of such drastic action. And then you get to the punch line rationale which characterizes us as "the wily enemy."

Then I've read about the 258 cases of individual exclusion (as of August, 1943). These were non-Japanese and from the Eastern and Southern Defense Commands, as well as the Western. How reasonable, by contrast to our mass exclusion, these individual cases seemed to proceed. There were hearings. There was paid transportation to a new location of your choice. There was no detention. Yet, despite this reasonableness, the Justice Dept. refused to prosecute violators of individual exclusion orders on the grounds that they had violated the constitutional guarantee of due process! And the Army, significantly, was intimidated enough to refuse to go in and force violators out at gun point.

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The enclosed postcard is a simple means people can use to obtain verification of their internment dates. The form on the card has been approved by the National Archives as sufficient to obtain verification. Yuriko and I have both tried them out and they work. The further purpose of this verification is its use in obtaining Social Security credits if or when retired. If you were 18 or older in the period of your internment, Social Security credits will be granted. We'll have more information on this as we learn more.

The other use for this verification is just in case we win our lawsuit!

Peace,

*William Hohri*

William Hohri

ENC: Article from Pacific Citizen, 4 April 1969  
CC: Congressman James C. Gorman



1150 Park Hills Road  
Berkeley, Calif. 94708

October 31, 1980

The Honorable Jimmy Carter  
The White House  
Washington, D. C. 20500

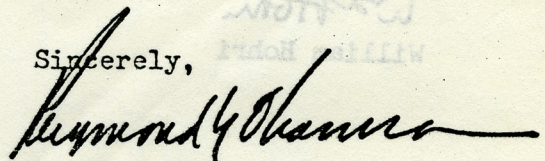
Dear Mr. President:

I wish to endorse the nomination of Mr. Ralph Lazo of Los Angeles Valley College for the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians authorized by Public Law 96-317 (94 Stat 964, 31 July 1980).

Mr. Lazo is uniquely qualified to serve on this commission. Although he is not of Japanese ancestry, he spent two years incarcerated at the Manzanar Concentration Camp in California. When our government ordered Americans of Japanese ancestry to report for imprisonment in 1942, Mr. Lazo knew it was wrong. He saw no difference between himself and his Japanese American friends: if his friends had to be locked up, so would he. Since he was not a crusader, nor publicity-seeker, he quietly turned himself in and was sent to Manzanar. It was a simple act of conscience.

I am reminded of an example in Nazi-occupied Denmark when Hitler ordered all Jews to wear a yellow Star of David. Thousands of non-Jewish Danes, including the King himself, promptly appeared in public wearing the yellow star. This simple but extremely courageous act made a mockery out of the order and it had to be rescinded. If there were more good people like Ralph Lazo in the United States, perhaps the incarceration of innocent Japanese Americans could have been stopped.

Sincerely,



Raymond Y. Okamura

ENC: Article from Pacific Citizen, 4 April 1969

CC: Congressman James C. Corman