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To Miss Yoshiko Hosoi
27-13-1
IFUPP
JULY
1947
ARIZ

NISEIS AND THE GOVERNMENT

By Joseph Y. Kurihara

tune: "Joe Hill"

words by William Hohri, 1980

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- I dreamed I saw Joe Kurihara
'live as you and me.
Says I, "But Joe, you're a deportee."
"I'm still around," says he.
"I'm still around," says he.
- "I served this land in World War I.
I served it well," says he.
"But still they stuck me in a camp.
We Japs could not be free.
We Japs could not be free."
"They framed you, Joe, in Manzanar.
They framed you, Joe," says I.
"The MP's fired their guns," says he,
"And caused two youths to die.
And caused two youths to die."
- "They tried to make us demonstrate,"
says I, "our loyalty.
And those who won't are shipped away,
Becoming deportees.
Becoming deportees."
- This country's never made ammends
to rectify that wrong.
So, compensation's what we ask.
The time we spent was long.
The time we spent was long.
- "Well, gam-ba-re, and fight for right.
You can't give up," says he.
"For I can't rest 'til justice' done.
You make this country free.
You make this country free."
- I dreamed I saw Joe Kurihara
'live as you and me.
Says I, "But Joe, you're a deportee."
"I'm still around," says he.
"I'm still around," says he.

note: gambare is Japanese for "hang in there!"

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National Council for Japanese American Redress

925 West Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Illinois 60614

July 1, 1980

Dear Friends,

Where were you Chicago folk? We had a fine meeting on June 22nd, but noticed few of our Chicago supporters there. In a sense, I suppose, that was good because the 70 or so who showed up were mostly new faces. Still, it would have been good to meet some who just remain names on our mailing list and to see "long time no see" friends. Besides y'all missed some fine words and a new song (see cover).

Mike Yasutake, asked to speak for the JACL, had to make clear at the outset that he was not being permitted by the JACL to speak for the JACL, even though he was presenting the JACL position. Curious. Mike chaired the JACL's Chicago Redress Committee for a year or two and is currently a vice-president of the JACL's Chicago Chapter. We asked Mike to present the JACL position because we thought it should be presented. On an earlier occasion, we had tried to get JACL participation in a public meeting and failed to get a response. Despite the prohibitions, Mike did a good job of presenting the JACL's Study Commission Bill and described its recent history through Congress.

Rev. Kubose of the Buddhist Temple of Chicago made a characteristically simple, direct statement of his perceptions of the event and the remedy required. He supported compensation as the proper response to the injustice.

Maynard Krueger (pronounced KREE-ger) gave perhaps the best presentation. He spoke of his own experiences, as a leader of the Socialist Party and as a professor at the University of Chicago, during the internment period. He and Norman Thomas visited all the camps. He said the internment was immediately recognized as a serious civil liberties issue.

He pointed out that in other periods of American history there had been mass hysteria to various threats (French Revolution, Ku Klux Klan, and Russian Revolution) but that no such hysteria provoked the internment of Japanese Americans. The action was done by the government in response to pressures by organized labor and agricultural interests in California. He pointed out that the state very often fails to exhibit the moral sensitivity of its citizens.

He concluded by stating that the American people should make the effort at a giant apology, accompanied by quantitative terms (i.e., money).

Greg Dell, using the prophet Amos as his text, made a powerful statement for justice on this issue. He argued that redress is not a Japanese American issue, is not even a WWII issue. What is at issue, he stated, is the very fabric of U. S. identity and the question of whether we can continue to persist in our casual and convenient application of the Constitution. He also argued that justice needs to roll down as monetary redress and not trickle down through a bunch of hearings.

My own comments are recorded elsewhere in this newsletter. Judging from its content, the meeting was quite successful. Tom Jamison, acting as our timekeeper, had trouble with an electronic alarm clock which kept going off uncontrollably and unpredictably. We raised around \$275 by passing the hat and selling buttons. We're certainly going to have another meeting. Hope you can make it next time.

* * * *

The Study Commission is on its way in Congress to becoming a 1.5 million dollar reality. The Lowry Redress Bill is dead for this session. The report reprinted from the New York Nichibei indicates that the Commission Bill refuses to be "tainted" with even the consideration of monetary compensation. Masaoka said he didn't think the amendment was necessary. The JACL said, once again, Mike Masaoka does not speak for the JACL. In contrast, the Aleuts have much stronger leadership in Senator Stevens of Alaska. His statement in the Congressional Record (May 22, 1980) concludes with:

"The provisions of S.1647, as amended to include the Aleut experience, could provide the basis upon which appropriate restitution could be based."

(emphasis added)

In my speaking with the two Aleuts who testified before the Judiciary Committee, they agreed that a study was not necessary for the J-A experience. They are clearly after compensation. Why is the JACL so timid?

* * * *

One habit I should stop is the practice of inventing bad jokes:

"What is the most socially embarrassing question when discussing redress?"

(puzzled pause)

"Are you a member of the JACL?"

Undauntedly:

"What's the difference between Superman and the JACL?"

(painful pause)

"Superman flies ahead by undressing, while the JACL crawls backwards on redressing."

Stubbornly:

"Why does the JACL have no babies?"

(pregnant pause)

"Because they practice contravention."

Peace,
Wm Hohri
William Hohri

Joe Kurihara: Founder of the Redress Movement

The National Council for Japanese American Redress formed a year ago in Seattle, from two small groups, one in Chicago, the other in Seattle. In this first year, we have had a redress bill introduced in Congress and held meetings in Seattle, New York, Los Angeles, and now in Chicago. We have conducted a survey of Japanese American opinion on redress. We have a lobbyist in Washington and have become a significant influence. But the redress movement goes back much further than one year. The Seattle group has been working on redress since the early seventies. It was their ideas that were incorporated into the Lowry Redress Bill. But even before that, in 1970, I heard the late Edison Uno make one of the first proposals for redress before the national convention of the JACL, which was held here in Chicago. But actually, it goes back even much further than that.

I read a letter which places the first proposal for redress way back to June, 1943. The letter was written by Joe Kurihara. Joe Kurihara was, at that time, considered to be the baddest of the bad. He was writing from a special high security camp in Arizona, where there were two soldiers for every inmate. He, along with 15 others, was sent there in the wake of the Manzanar riot. Of course, these men were never tried or convicted of anything. They were arrested on the word of an informer. Joe proposed that \$5,000 be given to every internee of voting age.

I'd like to propose that today we honor Joe Kurihara as the founder of the redress movement and as one of the real heroes of the Japanese American internment period. To do this, I'd like to reflect a little on his life and decision.

Joe was born in Hawaii in 1895. At the age of twenty, he moved to California. But he found the racism there intolerable, so he moved to the midwest, to Michigan. When World War I broke out, he volunteered and served in the military.

After his discharge, he returned to California and went to college and graduated in accounting. He became a successful businessman and later became a navigator for fishing boats. He was on a fishing expedition when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Two months later, he witnessed the ordeal of the 48-hour forced evacuation of Japanese American families from Terminal Island. It was before the camps. On practically no notice, these families had to sell, pack up, leave, and try to find friends, relatives, anybody, with whom they could live. That cast the first doubt in Joe's mind about the American practice of democracy.

When the exclusion order came down, he was prepared to fight. His loyalty had been demonstrated. He believed that the second generation Japanese Americans, as American citizens, were protected by the Constitution. He went to a community meeting which was sponsored by the JACL. He expected to find support for a fight. But he was very disappointed. As he said, "the goose was already cooked." The JACL leadership was urging the Japanese American community to comply with the order. Going to camp was to be a demonstration of our loyalty. He vowed to fight the JACL in whatever camp he was sent to. His decision was forming.

He went to Manzanar, my alma mater, with the second contingent of volunteers in late March, 1942. He was to discover a systematic pattern of informant activities by persons who were members of the JACL. This probably crystallized his position. He was outraged.

On December 6, 1942, two demonstrations occurred in Manzanar. They centered on the physical beating of Fred Tayama of the JACL, an alleged informer, and the subsequent arrest of Harry Ueno as a suspect. Mr. Ueno was taken from the Manzanar jail to the Lone Pine jail, outside the camp. The demonstrators wanted him returned to Manzanar. The project director agreed, provided there were no further demonstrations. Unfortunately, a second meeting had to be called to announce the agreement and that meeting turned into a second demonstration. This time there were no negotiations. There were, instead, armed troops. Mr. Ueno was back in the Manzanar jail. A crowd gathered there. The troops fired tear gas at first, then bullets. Ten were wounded. Two youths were killed. Joe was trying to negotiate. He and 15 others were arrested on the word of an informer. That was the final turning point. He decided to go to Japan. He was through with America.

But there was this significant difference. He was going, in his own words, "with Democracy my goal."

I think Joe Kurihara is a very worthy hero of that period. I am proud to identify with him. I think he is a worthy founder of our redress movement. He fought against an unjust action of the government. He was crushed by that government and by informers. But his protest was the proper response. His anger against those who counselled active co-operation with the exclusion order was righteous.

The mentality that urged co-operation as a demonstration of loyalty is the mentality that, today, believes we should not be asking for redress. It is the mentality that is foisting the Study Commission on us. During the recent hearings in the Senate and the House of Representatives, it became very clear to me that the study commission bill, which is supported by the JACL, is not a bill for redress. In fact, judging from the arguments made on its behalf, the bill is an anti-redress bill.

Let me explain. Not one of the proponents of the study commission supported the concept of redress. House Majority Leader, Jim Wright, said that the injustice was so severe it could not be redressed. A novel concept of justice, don't you think? Mike Masaoka, who is "Mr. JACL," said that money would cheapen the Japanese American experience. In the House hearings, he went on for 25 minutes to attack the concept of redress.

The JACL is involved in some fancy footwork. They tell their members that monetary redress is their bottom line, that that's what they're really after. But they tell Congress that money would cheapen the Japanese American experience. They explain this quick shuffle by saying they are involved in political reality, whatever that is.

Now I am inclined to be a lot more simple-minded. I am inclined to believe that the practice of justice is a little like the practice of honesty. No matter how hard you say you believe in honesty, it does no good if you fail to practice it. Likewise, you can't believe in justice if you fail to protest injustice. No matter how much you tell the folks back home you favor redress, it does no good if you fail to tell the Congress.

The case for redress is quite simple.

Article I, section 9 of the United States Constitution states:

"The Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended."

The Writ of Habeas Corpus is the right to a trial before imprisonment. Without the Writ, all other civil rights, Constitutional rights, fall by the wayside. For 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry, the Writ was suspended. We suffered a massive miscarriage of justice.

The remedy, too, is quite clear. It is compensation. Article 10 of the American Convention on Human Rights states:

"Every person has the right to be compensated in accordance with the law in the event he has been sentenced by a final judgment through a miscarriage of justice."

We suffered a serious miscarriage of justice; therefore, we should be compensated. The question is not one of need or greed. It is one of justice. It is our burden. It is also our opportunity.

The redress movement is our unique opportunity to make our mark in American history, to make our contribution to American democracy. There is no grandiose plan, however. I offer three simple steps.

One, realize that we are citizens and that we, the citizens, are the movers and shapers of our own history. We must stop yielding and deferring to what we tend to see as superior wisdom and experience coming from Washington. Members of Congress know very little about this issue. The so-called Washington experts seem to know very little about justice. So let's learn to stand on our own two feet and to speak directly for ourselves.

Two, write to Congress. Writing is a simple act. You don't have to be eloquent, just clear and direct. There are surprisingly few letters written to Congress. Don't worry about the honorable this or that or the hard to remember office numbers. Write as you would to anyone else. The address is United States Congress, Washington, DC. Remember, this is a very tiny issue to the average member of Congress. Your letters are very important.

Three, support an organization that supports your position. That's the easiest of all. Here we are. Many of you already support us. We can use your hands and feet. Tom Jamison of our organization walked five miles yesterday planting posters around town. A few more hands and feet would have helped. We can use your wisdom and your talents. And we can use your money. We meet the first Thursday of each month right here. You're welcomed to join us. This is our movement. Join in.

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W.H.

"Nisei Lobby" Opposes Lowry Bill

(This is a continuation of a report on the hearing held on June 2nd by the House Subcommittee on Administrative Law and Governmental Relations on the subject of the wartime internment of civilians.)

(Continued from last week)

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Congressmen Norman Mineta and Jim Wright presented testimony identical to that which they submitted at the Senate hearing on March 18th. Both of them and Rep. Robert Matsui gave their support to S. 1647 / H.R. 5499, the study commission bill.

Rep. Mike Lowry of Seattle, author of H.R. 5977, the "World War II Japanese American Human Rights Violation Redress Act," invoked the Bill of Rights and the Constitution as he told the Subcommittee that "in 1942... we violated all those principles (of human rights)... protection of property, of individual rights, of due process, individual liberty..." He called the detention of the Japanese Americans "an abuse of the very premises of this great country," and said that "compensation is the answer."

When Rep. McClory remarked that "civil rights have been denied racial groups since the beginning of time," Rep. Lowry countered,

"What happened to the Japanese Americans was an action by the government, not simply discrimination or prejudice, but an action by the government; and these people were put into internment camps."

Mike Masaoka's testimony on behalf of the Nisei Lobby consisted of a 15-page personal statement, three pages of testimony which he gave as national secretary and field executive of the JACL at a House hearing in 1942 pertaining to "Problems of Evacuation of Enemy Aliens and Others from Prohibited Military Zones," and a 15-page chapter of the book, "The Japanese American Story" by Budd Fukui in which Mr. Masaoka recalled the events which led to the removal of Nikkei from the West coast. Last week's report carried quotes from his written testimony.

In addition, although speakers had been allotted ten minutes in which to testify, Mr. Masaoka spoke for 25 minutes, arguing for the bill to establish a study commission and against the Lowry redress bill.

Of the measure which would pay compensation to those interned, he said, "We (the Nisei Lobby) find it has certain flaws."

"Are you going to pay the same amount for a child?" he asked. "Grandchildren? Legal heirs?"

In what was probably a reference to the provision of the Lowry bill that waived citizenship as a requirement of eligibility to receive redress payments [many of those interned, it must be remembered, were Issei who were prevented by law from becoming citizens], he declared,

"It's quite possible that you will have Japanese nationals who were never in the United States as beneficiaries of this legislation. Not only that, you may have certain Japanese who served the Japanese war effort against the United States. You had a situation where brothers of American citizens with relatives who were Japanese nationals fighting each other Should they be given this?"

He then went on, "We in the Nisei Lobby say, if the commission makes that determination, that recommendation, the Congress is more likely to accept it. We think the quicker route, the surer route, is the study commission."

Suggesting alternatives to individual redress payments, he said,

"(The government) might have one large lump sum payment (to be) used for a national civil rights defense fund... for all Americans regardless of race or ancestry, creed or religion, or some other kind of center, an international cultural center or whatnot..."

Although Mr. Masaoka was billed as the spokesman (and president) of the Nisei Lobby, his name has for so many years been associated with the Japanese American Citizens League that he has in the past been frequently referred to as "Mr. JACL." And because several times in his testimony, he made references to the JACL (e.g., "We in the Nisei Lobby, and the overwhelming majority of JACLers, prefer the so-called commission approach..."), listeners could be led to believe that his position is also that of the JACL.

There is, therefore, understandable confusion in the Nikkei community about precisely what the JACL position is.

As recently as two weeks ago, John Tateishi, chairman of the JACL's Committee on Redress wrote,

"Our position is clear: our 'bottom line' is to seek compensation based on the Salt Lake City (1978 national convention) guidelines."

What had previously been referred to as the Salt Lake City convention "mandate" for monetary compensation has become "guidelines handed down by the JACL National Council."

(To be continued)

House Unit Bars Mention of Money In Internment Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Having heard testimony from Congressional and citizen panels and a spokesman from the Department of Justice on two separate bills related to the wartime internment of civilians, on June 2nd, the House Subcommittee on Administrative Law and Governmental Relations held a mark-up session on the proposed measures on June 9th to make whatever revisions it deemed appropriate.

An amendment which would have introduced consideration of monetary compensation into the text of the bill which the full House would ultimately receive was submitted by Rep. Carlos Moorhead (R. Calif.), but was withdrawn owing to a lack of support from other members of the subcommittee.

What Rep. Moorhead was proposing was to amend a section of S. 1647 (the JACL-sanctioned "Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians Act) which describes the purpose of the bill.

As passed by the Senate, the purpose of the Act is stated as follows:

- "...to establish a commission to—
- "(1) review the facts and circumstances surrounding Executive Order No. 9066, issued February 19, 1942, and the impact of such Executive Order on American citizens and permanent resident aliens;
 - "(2) review directives of United States military forces requiring internment of Aleut civilians; and
 - "(3) recommend appropriate remedies."

Rep. Moorhead proposed to insert the following as sub-section (3):

"review the feasibility and desirability of establishing a monetary claims program to redress any violations of civil rights which are found to have occurred; and"

What is now sub-section (3) would then become sub-section (4) "recommend appropriate remedies."

(The mark-up is a process which proposed legislation undergoes following a hearing on a subject, not a specific bill, said Rep. George Danielson, chairman of the Subcommittee. In actual fact, of course, the Subcommittee had heard testimony supporting specific bills—the House and Senate study commission measures and the Lowry bill calling for monetary compensation. The bill which the Subcommittee chose to use as the vehicle for a mark-up was S. 1647, the Senate version of the study commission bill, which would include a review of the wartime internment of Aleut civilians.)

U.S. gropes for means to pay 'shameful' debt

WASHINGTON (UPI)—The House Democratic leader called it an "everlasting shame," a Chicago man said the government should pay the victims \$100 billion and a congressman said his mother still has nightmares from the ordeal.

They all referred to the impact of Executive Order 9066, signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on Feb. 19, 1942, which caused 120,000 Nisei—Americans of Japanese ancestry—to be interned after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

"THERE IS no way in which we can ever repay those proud and loyal Americans for having questioned their patriotism," said House Democratic leader Jim Wright (Texas).

"We cannot give them back the months of their lives nor redress the shame to which we subjected them by impugning their loyalty to this land," he told a House Judiciary subcommittee.

The panel this week is considering action on several bills that would study the situation and provide \$3 billion—\$15,000 plus \$15 for every day interned—to the internees or their survivors.

"In our unreasoning fear and misguided zeal at the outset of World War II, we did a great disservice to our fellow Americans of Japanese heritage those 30 odd years ago," Wright said.

"INGLORIOUSLY and to our everlasting shame, the [Supreme] Court upheld as constitutional the act of our government in rounding up the Japanese-American citizens, almost as though they were cattle, and herding them into corrals," he said.

Wright said an apology was the least the nation could do.

But William Hohri, of the Chicago-based National Council for Japanese-American Redress, said more should be done. He said internment victims should be paid \$100 billion. "Maybe if we started there, we'd wind

up with \$3 billion," he said.

Such payment, he said, would "redress the victims of America's unjust internment camps and thereby... repair the damage done to our Constitution."

Nisei is a Japanese word meaning second-generation Japanese and is applied to Americans born of native Japanese parents. The bulk of internees were Nisei, but many were their parents, Issei (first generation born in Japan). Children of Nisei are called Sansei (third generation).

REP. ROBERT Matsui (D-Calif.), an American of Japanese ancestry, said his mother "has nightmares once a week or more about those days in the camp. Yet she is reluctant to tell my sister and me what happened there.

"It is clear that not all Americans have learned from our lessons. ... An example of this is the recent suggestion that Iranians in this country be rounded up and treated similarly to the Japanese during World War II."

Dear Mr. William Hohri:

Who Started The War? Japan of course
Has Japan ever paid us for the damages at Pearl Harbor?
What other country is as brutal as the Japanese?
The Thousands of boys who lost their lives in the Pacific war, has Japan paid anything to these families?

The Thousands of our men who lost their lives in the "The March on Bataan" No other Nation could match the Japanese when it comes to brutality. Your people beheaded our men as though they were cattle.

So, Rep. Matsui's mother has nightmares, big deal - Lucky she wasn't an America Mother who's son was beheaded or beaten to death by the Japanese, then she would have reasons to complain.

If you don't like America, leave it We have been ripped off by the Japanese too long. If you feel we owe you a 100 Billion Dollars, I am sure The Japanese owe us and China, Korea, 500 Billion Dollars.

I suggest you forget about this, Remember the United Nations Security Council will not send peace troops to parts of the world Because no Country will trust a Japanese soldier. No Country trusts Japan.

Get off America's Back, we don't need you.

THE ONLY TIME YOU WILL GET US AMERICAN'S TO CONTRIBUTE ANY MONEY TOWARDS THE JAPANESE IS WHEN THEY SAY THEY WILL USE THIS MONEY TO SHIP BACK ALL THE JAPANESE WHO FIND FAULT WITH OUR COUNTRY AND ARE TRYING TO RIP US OFF AGAIN.

I SUGGEST YOU READ THE "MARCH ON BATAAN" PLUS MANY OTHER BOOKS ABOUT JAPANESE BRUTALITY DURING WORLD WAR II ----REMEMBER THE SNEAKY JAPANESE STARTED IT ALL

THE JAPANESE PEOPLE WERE INTERNED IN CAMPS, BUT AT NO TIME WERE THEY BEATEN, ABUSED, BEHEADED, ETC. AMERICA FED THEM AND PROVIDED THEM WITH CLEAN QUARTERS, THAT IS MORE THAN THE JAPANESE WOULD DO FOR ANYONE.



NATIONAL COUNCIL for
JAPANESE AMERICAN REDRESS
922 West Gateway Parkway
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AN AFTERNOON AT MANZANAR

Desolation
on every side
As far as my eyes could take me

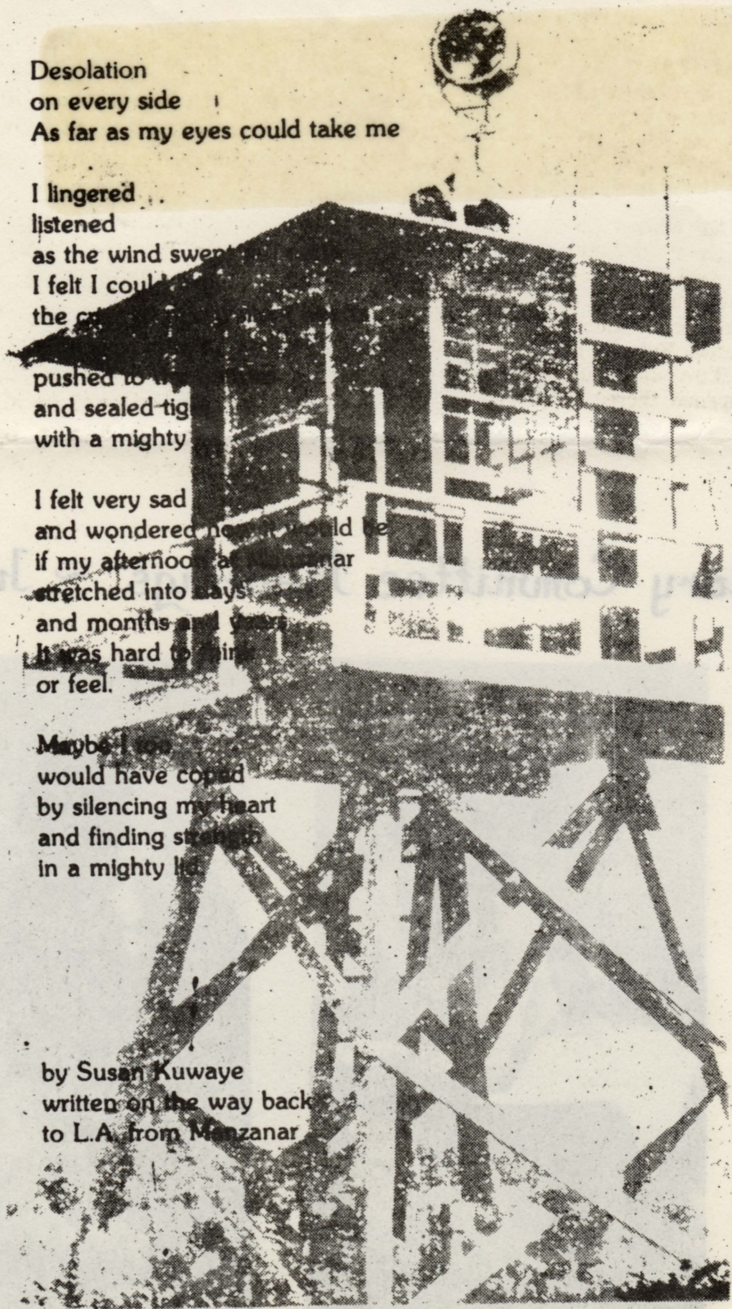
I lingered
I listened
as the wind swept
I felt I could
the

pushed to
and sealed tight
with a mighty

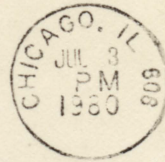
I felt very sad
and wondered how it would be
if my afternoon at Manzanar
stretched into days
and months and years
It was hard to
or feel.

Maybe I
would have coped
by silencing my heart
and finding strength
in a mighty lie

by Susan Kuwaye
written on the way back
to L.A. from Manzanar



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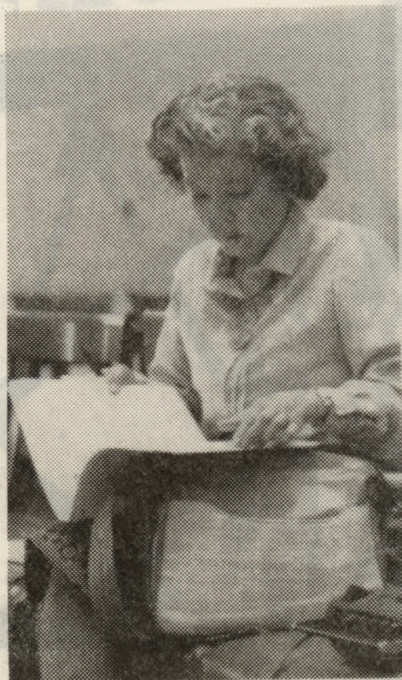


MS SASHA HOHR I
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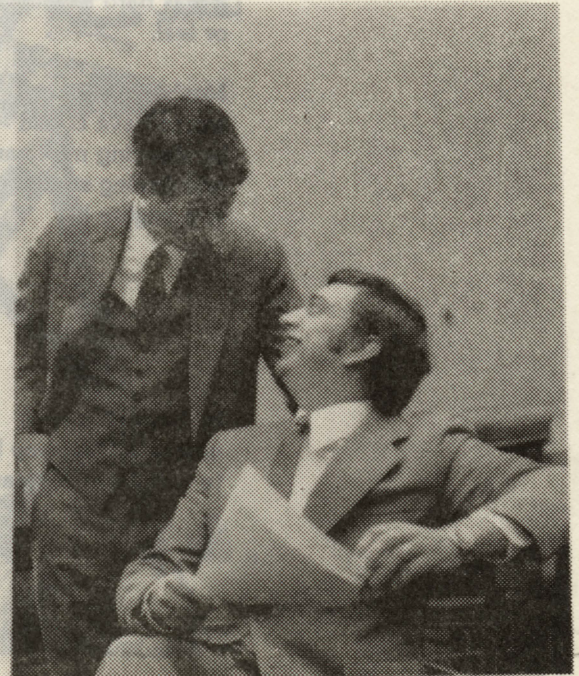
House Judiciary Committee Hearings ~ June 2, 1980



Wm Hohri



Aiko Herzig



Reps. Matsui & Lowry