

Statement for the March to Send the Sha Home--Dec. 8, 1979

The blatant racism and hysteria that is being perpetrated against Iranians--both nationals and citizens--throughout America is a stark reminder of what we Japanese Americans experienced 37 years ago during World War II.

The similarity of the hostilities, violence, vandalism, taunts, and harrassments that is increasingly becoming a part of Iranian peoples' lives must stop!

Two days ago, a 15 year old Iranian student at up-state Chappaqua High School was beaten unconscious. Two Iranian students who were to be deported from Baltimore a few nites ago were whisked off the plane here and taken to in New York ~~and-arrested~~ jail but noone seems to know which jail. Seven from New York are being held in the Brooklyn House of Detention. Chicago has already deported two students.

Greenville Technical Sollege in South Carolina suspended 104 Iranian students on Nov. 22 and told them they would not return until all the American hostages in Iran are released unharmed.

Vandals ransacked an Iranian restaurant and smashed 2 plate glass windows of an Iranian travel agency above it in San Francisco. The Persian rug in the restaurant was torn off; tables were overturned, glasses were broken, seats slashed, and food splattered in the kitchen.

Iranian students in Berkeley had to paint over the name "Iran House" to keep a low profile. "We get 50 to 60 threatening phone calls a day," they said.

At San Francisco State, a drunken American socked an Iranian student in the face when he was strolling down the street. Business has fallen drastically at a Persian rug company in Marin County where the owner said, "Life has turned into a nitemare" since the take-over.

An Iranian student who was taken to the Santa Rita jail in San Francisco for deportation hearings was beaten while in custody; 3 others said they were mistreated; were denied food and water for 2 days; awakened at 3 in the morning and punched in the face. Other Iranians said they were taken to jail for mere traffic tickets and terrorized behind-the-wall.

Someone from New York called the State Dept. on Dec. 4 and threatened to kidnap and execute 50 Iranian students if harm comes to American hostages.

At the Los Angeles Coliseum, some 6000 Americans came together shouting before the television cameras: "Nuke Iran" and "Bomb Iran," "Zap the Ayatollah." In Columbus, Ohio, the chants were: "Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Why not Iran!"

The fury is definitely building. Hysteria can be very dangerous. We Japanese Americans can never forget. At the outbreak of World War II, within 24 hours, 1,300 Japanese were picked up by the FBI. In a short while, an 8 O' clock curfew and a 5-mile travel ban were imposed on all Japanese. Japanese-Americans lost jobs; were told to leave college campuses; were accosted on the streets. Japanese businesses were closed; their money was frozen. Houses were stoned. Some farms were set on fire. A Chinese in Seattle was mistaken for Japanese and gruesomely killed. An elderly Japanese committed suicide in the Terminal Island Prison.

Then on February 19, only 3 months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, which history has now surfaced that it was egged on by the U.S. government (just as is happening for Iran right now)--Pres. Roosevelt announced his Executive Order to evacuate all peoples of Japanese ancestry from the entire West Coast and intern them for the duration of the war in camps in the interior.

One of the reasons for the incarceration, as has been documented, was

for the purpose of using the incarcerated Japanese as hostages for American prisoner-exchange. And exchanges did take place twice during the war.

So--today, when we see the United States charging Iran in the United Nation's Security Council of taking hostages--we Japanese-Americans wonder how United States could have the gall to do so. United States did not not just grab 50 people. The number was 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry of which 70 % were American citizens; and not one of these people were given due process of law. Not one act of sabotage was ever committed. Sadly, no voices were raised for us.

But
We Japanese-Americans want to share this experience and speak out
THAT THIS WILL NEVER HAPPEN TO ANOTHER PEOPLE AGAIN!