



EAST COAST JAPANESE AMERICANS FOR REDRESS

Dear Commissioner:

We, who come from Christian, Buddhist, political, and civic groups, have joined as the East Coast Japanese Americans for Redress. The inspiration for our alliance is our common quest for the respected Commission's hearing in New York City.

The hearings you have conducted in major cities on the West Coast, the Aleutians, and most recently in Chicago, have been a unique and important service to the American people, as well as for the Japanese permanent residents and their American descendants. The extensive media coverage, at times controversial, have at least made the public aware of the cruel expulsion of our people from the West Coast during World War II.

We, on the East Coast, wish to further engage the concern of the public and to stimulate the thinking of more Americans on the ethical responsibility of our society and the serious encroachments against our Constitution. There should also be a response to the press's charge that the Commission's hearings are neither topical nor relevant. The considerations are as timely today as they were 40 years ago.

Statements given by a number of government spokesmen have been fair. Yet we feel there is a real need for further in-depth hearings on the government's and the public's involvement in the abrogation of basic rights for the Japanese people in this country during World War II.

Many of our present survivors fled as far east as they could, becoming isolated from their stable communities. Not only did they become psychological casualties from false imprisonment, they became seriously compromised as loyal American citizens. Even though many victims have testified for you, we wish to submit others to prove that the suspension of American democracy could happen to another vulnerable ethnic people.

Testimony given by the Department of Justice stated J. Edgar Hoover opposed the evacuation; testimony by the Department of Army stated General DeWitt initially opposed the evacuation. U.S. intelligence did not seem to think an attack on the West Coast was likely during World War II since Japan was concentrating its assault on Southeast Asia. It would seem fitting for the Commission to enlist a State Department historian to critically analyze how President Roosevelt and his cabinet arrived at their decision to rout an infinitesimal number of powerless citizens from their homes and livelihood and further degrade them with prolonged false imprisonment.

We recommend highly knowledgeable and respected persons to appear before your Commission. Our program committee suggest a partial list:

- U.S. Constitution--Senator William Bradley, former Senator Jacob Javitts, Senator Daniel Moynihan
- Ethics and morality--Bishops, National Council of Churches of Christ, U.S.A.; Bishop Dale, United Methodist Church, N.J.
- Law--Professor Lawrence Sager, New York University, Law School; Eugene Rostow, Yale University, former Dean, Law School; Judge Nanette Dembitz, New York State of Appeals
- History--Professor Richard Polenberg, Cornell University
- Press: Thomas Griffith, Contributor, Time; Monica Miya, Columbia University, School of Journalism
- Sociology--Stanford N. Lyman, Sociologist, New School for Social Research; Setsuko Nishi, Sociologist, Brooklyn College
- Psychology--Ruth Gage Colby, former psychologist, Manzanar
- Psychiatrist--Teruko Shimamoto Newalder
- Other Ethnic spokesmen--Seymour Samet, Director, American Jewish Committee; Vernon Jordan, formerly of the National Urban League
- Author: Michi Weglyn
- Author: James Michener
- Artist: Mine Okubo

For possible opposition:

- William F. Buckley
- A spokesman from Labor

Eminent people, such as Seymour Samet of the American Jewish Committee, and the Bishops of the National Council of Churches have already offered to testify in November. Their calendars are such, however, that they must know an exact date for the hearing as soon as possible.

Already accomplished are:

- o Logistics: The American Bar Association is presently available on November 9 and 10. Other secure, central locations are being scouted, such as Fordham University/Lincoln Center and CUNY/42nd Street.
- o Outreach: Letters to participate have been sent to individuals, business, civic and cultural organizations.
- o Media: Media contacts and releases have been prepared to coordinate with the Commission staff.
- o Steering: Past hearings were researched for guidelines; Tom Kometani was designated to maintain an open line with your staff.
- o Member organizations: First, second, and third generation Nikkei are being coached and selected for testimonies.

We support your efforts to have the hearing in New York substantive and meaningful. Our wish is to have a superlative roster of testifiers appear before the Commission. We entreat you, therefore, not to permit the momentum to diminish. Provide us with a definite date in November so that we may work proficiently and effectively with you.

Sincerely,

Sasha Hohri and Michi Kobi
Co-Chairpersons