



National Council for Japanese American Redress

925 West Diversey Parkway
Chicago, Illinois 60614

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME VII, NUMBER 8

NOVEMBER 1985

DEAR FRIENDS,

READING, EVEN THIS, is such a chore these days. Watching or listening is easier. So, I guess we can be grateful for small favors when a book comes along as not recommended. In my opinion, such is Donald E. Collins' Native American Aliens. First of all, it's expensive: \$29.95 for a slim 218 pages, including index, bibliography, notes, and appendices, leaving 144 pages of text. It's definitely a book for which library cards were invented. Even reasonably priced, it would suffer from reliance on secondary sources and popular but fuzzy distinctions, leading the reader into the conceptual trap of loyalty as a legitimate issue and victimization as its own cause, i.e., victims without victimizers.

The book is about Japanese-Americans who renounced their U.S. citizenship during WWII. Collins' account is informative and sympathetic to the plight of these renunciants. He argues that the renunciants were not so much disloyal as they were frustrated and fearful from the stress of removal, detention, and public hostility. This is an attractive thesis. But is disloyalty illegal? Think of the thousands, even millions, of citizens who despised their president as Lincoln, Roosevelt, or Nixon. Were their opinions criminal? Moreover, what was the loyalty issue for Japanese-Americans in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor but the concocted rationale by our government—not simply DeWitt and other racist crazies—for a manifestly illegal and unconstitutional act? To argue that the renunciants were not truly disloyal may be well-intentioned but it legitimates loyalty as a legal principle.

Latter-day apologists for mass exclusion and detention can argue that there was no way to separate the loyal sheep from the disloyal goats—although, of course, the Office of Naval Intelligence did exactly that before Pearl Harbor. And we Nisei victims still feel compelled to wave the banner of our loyalty as demonstrated by the military exploits of Hawaiian and mainland Nisei. Maybe the disease is fatal.

BUT I GUESS I believe in exorcism or, at least, excism. It comes with truth. One of our bad memories from that time are the trouble-makers. These "incurribles" were taken from our midst in Manzanar, Topaz, Granada, Gila River, Heart Mountain, Jerome, and Rohwer and cast into the outer darkness of the prison camp at Leupp.

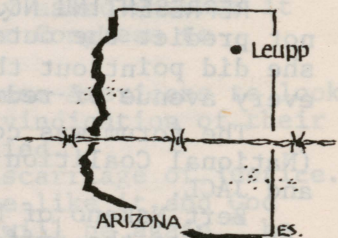
In reading the primary documents, I was struck by the reason these "baddest of the bad" were ultimately released. Leupp Project Director, Paul G. Robertson, wrote this to WRA Director Dillon Myer:

"At the present time we have sixty-seven men at the Leupp Relocation Center. In reviewing the dockets of these evacuees, I was very much amazed at the lack of evidence which I had believed necessary to warrant a transfer to this center."

Further on he writes:

"I am, however, very much concerned with our present procedures. In nearly every case where an evacuee is transferred to Leupp, he has been told that he would be given a fair and speedy hearing... No formal charges have ever been made against these evacuees, and no hearing has ever been held."

Myer is compelled to agree with Robertson's assessment of this blatant illegality and ordered the closing of Leupp. (Note the grossly inapt use of "relocation center, evacuee, and transfer" for prison camp, prisoner, and incarcerate.) But why did



Leupp:
CITIZEN
ISOLATION
CAMP

Continued on page 8

Forum on Redress

LOS ANGELES—Speaking at a forum held at the Venice Japanese Community Center on Saturday, October 5th, Peter Irons, author of JUSTICE AT WAR, said:

"You can't get two better judges for concern about civil rights and justice."

Irons was referring to Skelly Wright and Ruth Ginsburg, two of the three judges on the panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals.

Said Irons: "Wright played an enormous roll in protecting the rights of Black Americans during the 50's, 60's and 70's. And Ginsburg knows more about discrimination law than virtually anyone in the country."

"To the extent that judges make a difference, the class action suit certainly got a break," Irons said.

AS FOR THE coram nobis case of Gordon Hirabayashi, Irons emphasized that it "promises to be the most important in terms of its potential impact on the redress movement."

In the evidentiary hearing which took place last June in Seattle, Irons said, "the government put witnesses on the stand to defend the wartime internment...arguing that there was evidence of espionage and sabotage by Japanese Americans... It appalls me that the government can put on this kind of defense with a straight face."

Irons feels that Judge Donald C. Voorhees "will write an opinion which completely demolishes the government's claim—forty years after the internment—that military necessity required the evacuation."

REPRESENTING NCJAR, Joyce Okinaka did not predict the outcome of the appeal, but she did point out the importance of exploring every avenue of redress.

The forum was co-sponsored by NCRR (National Coalition for Reparations/Redress) and JACL.

Bert Nakano of NCRR stated that the joint efforts of the different groups "signals a community united and committed on all fronts to win redress... We have all come together in the interest of and for the good of all Japanese Americans."

■ NOTE: Edited from J.K. Yamamoto's Redress Groups Urge Cooperation
PACIFIC CITIZEN October 25, 1985

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LETTERS

THANK YOU!

I truly appreciate receiving the newsletter.

I'm sorry I don't do more.

JANET AISAWA
New York, NY

THANK YOU

for your information, energy, and infectious spirit.

YOSHIO NARITAS
Lincroft, NJ

ARREST

MP o matasete
nare ga totonoeshi
namida komorishi
kaban no omoki

While the MPs wait
You fill my suitcase
And spill your tears.
How heavy its weight.

Sojin Takei

from
POETS BEHIND
BARBED WIRE
Bamboo Ridge Press

- For the record, here is a report sent to NCJAR of the September 24th hearing. It was written by Chris Chrystal.

JAPANESE-AMERICANS NO THREAT TO SECURITY

WASHINGTON (UPI) Japanese-Americans living in the United States during World War II posed no threat to national security, but they were taken to detention camps anyway in violation of their rights, a federal court was told.

Benjamin Zelenko, a lawyer for the National Council for Japanese-American Redress, argued before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Tuesday that documents surfacing after the war showed the government knew there was no military need for the massive internment.

Zelenko represents 25 Japanese-American camp survivors in a 1983 lawsuit seeking \$25 billion reparation for violation of their rights and loss of property.

Each would receive about \$210,000, or \$10,000 for each of 21 separate claims, if the suit was won, Zelenko said.

It was dismissed last year by U.S. District Judge Louis Oberdorfer, who said it was filed too late. But Oberdorfer noted that government documents coming to light after the war showed the U.S. officials were told the West Coast Japanese-Americans were loyal.

ZELENKO, SEEKING TO overturn the dismissal, told a three-judge panel that recently revealed documents from the FBI and Federal Communications Commission to the Justice Department showed "the plaintiffs posed no threat to national security."

The government "persists in claiming there was military necessity," even though documents withheld in previous court cases involving Japanese-Americans showed otherwise, he said.

The Supreme Court, in upholding the convictions of Japanese-Americans for curfew violations during the war, were not given the evidence either, Zelenko said.

The government, defending the suit, has taken no position whether there was military necessity.

Jeffrey Axelrad, a government lawyer, argued the statute of limitations had run out. He said the appeals panel lacked jurisdiction in the case, and the claims of the Japanese-Americans should have been filed years ago under a 1948 act.

A Missed Statute of Limitations

I WOULD LIKE TO make one comment about the case before the federal court. This is in regards to a missed statute of limitations.

I'm making a correlation with medical malpractice. In medicine, if a physician harms a patient, no matter how many years ago, the time clock for the statute of limitations begins ticking when the wrongful act is discovered—not when the act took place.

This is the current legal standing at this time, and has been enforced many years past.

JOHN IWAKIRI
Lakewood, Colorado

Some did file claims, but others "did nothing for many years," even though historians and scholars were contesting the military necessity theory, he said.

WHILE THE UNITED STATES was at war with Japan from 1941-1945, the government evacuated about 120,000 Japanese-Americans, forcing them to leave homes, farms and personal property behind.

Many lost their possessions and were separated from parents, children, husbands and wives. Others died in the camps of disease.

The suit claimed that 70 percent of the internees were American citizens who were punished for several years without having been charged with any crimes, a violation of their constitutional rights.

Zelenko argued "the case should be treated as an example of national violation of basic rights and concealment as well."

Judge Howard Markey asked whether it wouldn't be better for Congress to rectify the claims.

"To tell the Japanese-Americans to look to Congress is not a vindication of their rights," Zelenko replied.

"It was a grave miscarriage of justice. There never was a case like it and God willing, there never will be again," he said.

The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians recommended in June 1983 that Congress create a \$1.5 billion fund to compensate 60,000 survivors of the evacuation and internment. Legislation has been introduced to implement the recommendations, but no hearings have been held this year. □

Excerpted: RAFU SHIMPO
November 29, 1979

Six Years Ago: THE FIRST REDRESS BILL INTRODUCED

IN NOVEMBER OF 1979, the first redress bill was introduced in the House by Rep. Mike Lowry (D-Wash.). That was six years ago. The Congressman said at the time, "It will be about a four year process leading up to the passage of the bill." In 1980, the bill—which NCJAR supported—was defeated by the proposal to establish a congressional commission. That commission was later to be the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC). Lowry presented the following speech when he introduced his bill.

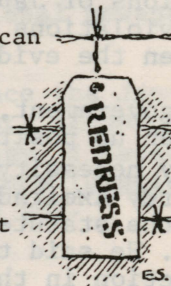
ON FEBRUARY 19, 1942, soon after the United States entered World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066. By doing so, the United States government violated the Constitutionality-guaranteed rights of 110,000 Americans. This Executive Order and other related Administrative, Congressional and Judicial orders forced Americans of Japanese ancestry residing on the Pacific Coast to submit to relocation and confinement in detention camps. No concern was shown for the basic right to due process. Individuals were torn from jobs and had educations interrupted. Homes, farms and businesses were abandoned in compliance with relocation directives. In the camps, internees were crammed into barrack-like living quarters, their time and activities severely regimented and restricted. Freedom of movement was dictated by barbed-wire fences that surrounded the compounds. For those Japanese Americans who were interned, normal business, family and community life ceased to exist.

THIS TOTAL DISREGARD for due process was supported by the belief at the time that the United States' security was threatened from within. Fundamental legal procedures were swept aside by all levels and branches of government. Racial prejudice fueled by wartime hysteria allowed Japanese Americans to be singled out and persecuted. Their loyalty to the U.S. was held suspect and questioned before the world. Over two-thirds of those interned were American citizens, and the vast majority of the others were resident aliens, legal guests in our country. There were never any direct accusations against individuals, no formal arrests, no trials. Not a single person was ever convicted of any crime in connection with his or her internment. The average internment period was about three years. This was truly an inglorious chapter in the history of our country.

OVER THE YEARS, a general acknowledgement has emerged from the American government and the American people that a grievous injustice had been perpetrated against Japanese American citizens and others of Japanese ancestry during World War II. Numerous government officials, private organizations and individuals have come forth to acknowledge this gross violation of civil rights, and to resolve that such an act must never be allowed to recur. While those admission and acknowledgements of wrongdoing do serve to bring visibility to the injustice of internment, I believe that stronger measures are necessary to provide fair redress and to ensure the continued integrity of Constitutional rights and procedures. Significant compensation to those interned for material and personal losses must be made.

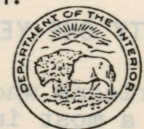
TO THIS END, I am introducing "The World War II Japanese American Human Rights Violations Redress Act." Its purpose is to assure that this nation will never again allow the mass violation of civil liberties of citizens and legal residents of the U.S. and make a direct financial reimbursement to the people who were interned as a minimal repayment for their losses incurred.

The serious abuse of governmental power that caused the unfair imprisonment of 110,000 Americans must be condemned in the strongest possible manner. We must clearly admit our mistake and make redress to the people who were interned. America cannot afford to do less.



MIKE LOWRY

Forty-One Years Ago: A LOCAL PROBLEM?



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes issued the following statement in San Francisco on April 13, 1944, regarding the program of the War Relocation Authority.

For Release at NOON, THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 1944.

Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes issued the following statement in San Francisco today regarding the program of the War Relocation Authority:

IMMEDIATELY AFTER the President, on his own motion, transferred the War Relocation Authority to the Department of the Interior, we began to study its policies and administration. I have recognized from the beginning the difficulty and complexity of the problems, and I realize that the manner of their treatment is of vital importance, not only to the thousands of Japanese Americans who are immediately involved, but to the American civilians who are interned by the Japanese and the families of these Americans. The character and reputation of our own democracy are also involved.

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"The War Relocation Authority was given an unenviable job. It was not responsible for the evacuation of the Japanese Americans from the West Coast. That was a military decision. The War Relocation Authority was given the job of providing for the care and welfare of the people who were uprooted and transferred and of arranging for the restoration to normal life of those among them who are the blameless victims of a war-time program. I think that there can be no doubt that the program has, in general, been handled with discretion, humanity and wisdom. WRA did not persecute these people, and it made no attempt to punish those of a different race who were not responsible for what has been happening in the far Pacific. The War Relocation Authority — make no mistake about it — has been criticized for not engaging in this sort of a lynching party. Under my jurisdiction, it will not be stampeded into undemocratic, bestial, inhuman action. It will not be converted into an instrument of revenge or racial warfare.

"There is a place in this war for deserved anger and for punishment. I have on many occasions called for the punishment of the war criminals whether they have committed their outrages under Tojo and the fiendish military caste of Japan, or under Hitler. Let us see that the guilty are made to feel the heavy hand of justice; but let us not degrade ourselves by injuring innocent, defenseless people. To do this would be to lower ourselves to the level of the fanatical Nazis and Japanese war lords. Civilization expects more from us than from them.

"In resisting the onslaughts of those who would have the War Relocation Authority initiate the savageries of the ruling factions in the nations with which we are at war, I am sure that we have the support of virtually all Americans. I am particularly grateful to those groups and individuals on the West Coast who have been brave enough and Christian enough to speak out against the vindictive, bloodthirsty onslaughts of professional race mongers.

(over)

146-13-7-2-0

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Continued from page 5 FORTY ONE YEARS AGO...

"All of the Japanese Americans who were evacuated from the West Coast have undergone and are undergoing a most intensive investigation. Those concerning whom there is any basis whatever for a suspicion of disloyalty have been sent to internment camps or are being segregated at Tule Lake. This segregation process is virtually complete, and the thousands of Japanese Americans who remain at the other centers are, by all reasonable tests, loyal American citizens or law-abiding aliens. They are entitled to be treated as such. Those who do not believe in according these people the rights and privileges to which they are entitled under our laws do not believe in the Constitution of the United States.

"All of us recognize that, in time of war, we are subject to orders and restraints which would be intolerable in time of peace. All of us—regardless of race or religion—are subject to the overriding demands of military necessity in time of war. No one who is loyal to the United States objects to this. But when military necessity does not require it, no one of us who is an American citizen or a loyal alien can be deprived of his rights under the law. I believe that the only justifiable reason for confinement of a citizen in a democratic nation is the evidence that the individual might endanger the wartime security of the nation.

"THE MAJOR EMPHASIS in War Relocation Authority operations is now restoring the people of all WRA centers except Tule Lake as rapidly as possible to private life. Over 20,000 people have already left the centers to make new homes and engage in new jobs in hundreds of communities stretched all of the way from Spokane, Washington, to Boston, Massachusetts. These relocated evacuees are establishing themselves in cities and on farms and many have indicated that they plan to remain in their new locations during the post-war period. Thus the relocation program is contributing to a more widespread dispersal of Japanese Americans throughout the country.

"We must all face the problem of the eventual status and treatment of those Americans of Japanese descent who were taken from their homes and transported to evacuation camps. Most of them, after a thorough investigation, the doubts being resolved in favor of segregating them, have been proved to be loyal and devoted to this Nation. It is intolerable to think that these people will be excluded from a normal life in this country for long. It is intolerable to think that merely because they resided on the West Coast—in California, or Washington, or Oregon—they must be wards of the Government for one moment longer than the necessities of war require. I know of no virus in these three States which has infected them so that they must be treated differently than the Japanese Americans who reside in other States. And it is intolerable to think that decent people would suggest that this Nation would for a moment consider sending loyal Americans of Japanese descent to a land which most of them have never seen and in which most of them have no interest.

"To a large extent this is a local problem. It is a problem of you people in California, in Washington, in Oregon. I hope that the clamour of those few among you who are screaming that this situation should be resolved on the basis of prejudice and hate will soon be overwhelmed by the stern remonstrances of those among you—an overwhelmingly majority—who believe in fair play and decency, Christianity, in the principles of America, in the Constitution of the United States." ■

From the NATIONAL ARCHIVES

P.N. 70163

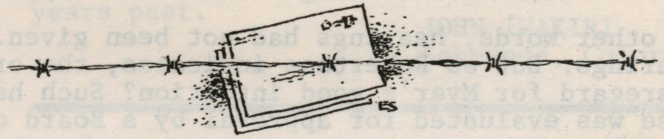
CONCENTRATION CAMP POSTMARKS

THE POSTMARKS pictured appeared in Richard B. Graham's column "Postal History."

His story on the internment camp postmarks were in the August 19th issue of Linn's Stamp News.

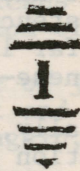
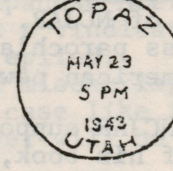
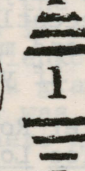
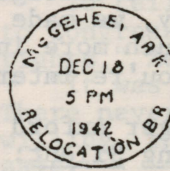
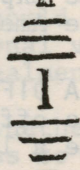
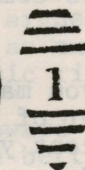
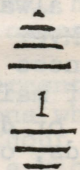
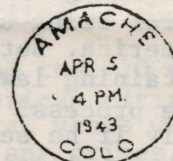
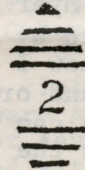
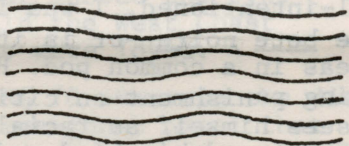
Post Office

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|-------------------------|----------------|
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| Rivers, Arizona | GILA RIVER |
| McGehee, Arkansas | ROHWER |
| Denson, Arkansas | JEROME |
| Manzanar, California | MANZANAR |
| Tule Lake, California | TULE LAKE |
| Amache, Colorado | GRANADA |
| Hunt, Idaho | MINIDOKA |
| Topaz, Utah | TOPAZ |
| Heart Mountain, Wyoming | HEART MOUNTAIN |



GRAHAM WROTE that copies of covers sent to him proved they had originated from the internment camps.

The postmarks also indicated that some of the mail was routed through post offices in towns located nearby such as McGehee, Arkansas (below) Relocation Br.



THE HEART MOUNTAIN, Wyoming marking (above) was on a post card addressed to a lady living at 27-14-E. (The address indicates that she lived in Block 27; Barrack 14; Apt. E.)

The postmark on the card has no year date, but the message on the card was dated 1943.

■ NOTE: The item of interest from the LINN'S STAMP NEWS was submitted to the editor by Berry Suzukida (Chicago).

Continued from page 1 DEAR FRIENDS

Leupp come into existence? How did 83 men manage to pass through its gates? A few months earlier, Director Myer writes of Leupp:

"Previously some of us had conceived of the isolation procedure as being primarily one to facilitate the maintenance of law and order within the relocation centers. It was not conceived as punishment for the transferees."

The officialese is thick! It almost sounds like the "transferees" were being made to stand in the corner. And then there is this self-indictment by Myer:

"Surely, therefore, we should give an evacuee a hearing before convicting him of being an aggravated and incorrigible troublemaker and transferring him to the Leupp Center."

In other words, hearings had not been given. Myer then issues an order requiring hearings. But as Robertson indicates, the order was never implemented. Is this disregard for Myer's good intention? Such hardly seems likely since each transferee's case was evaluated for approval by a Board of Review in Washington and Director Myer. With only 83 cases in 8 months, they were hardly overworked. Then why Myer's memorandum and order for hearings? I think these make sense when we give them devious and demonic intent.

AT ABOUT THE time I was reading these documents and trying to figure them out, I began reading Professor Richard Drinnon's manuscript on Dillon Myer. I first received excerpts from my good friend Harry Ueno and then the entire manuscript from Drinnon. Drinnon writes of Myer's entire career and overwhelmingly pushed me to conclude that Myer was a victimizer. I must confess that this was a truly liberating experience for me. (Drinnon's manuscript is being published and should be available late next year or so. It will be a "must read" book.)

I'd always thought of Myer as benign and well-intentioned. I was inclined to defend Myer from being used by Lillian Baker, the bete noire—or is it bete blanche?—of Japanese America. But now I saw them as two peas in a common pod. How can Myer write of maintaining law and order while inflicting punishment on citizens without charges or due process? He can do it only if he sees himself as racially superior to his wards, only if he sees the law as applying to him and his kind and not to them "Japs." And when Lillian Baker writes, in her attack against the redress movement, that she expects America to come out "smelling like a rose," she is clearly thinking of white America's odor.

ON A DIFFERENT tack, you may have noticed an ad for the Pacific Citizen newspaper. It's the official newspaper of the Japanese American Citizens League. I think the PC has come a long way in recent years. There was a time when it wouldn't even mention NCJAR by name. It would, for example, describe me as "Bill Hohri of Chicago," as though I had organized the city of Chicago into a redress machine, rather than reveal the existence of NCJAR. Recently, we made the PC's front page as NCJAR. The PC has become far less parochial and much more interested in becoming a national newspaper of Japanese-American news. If you're interested, subscribe.

Finally, NCJAR supporter Roger Axford has written to me to announce the January publication of his book, Too Long Silent: Japanese Americans Speak Out. If you receive a promotion and it's not too expensive, please consider ordering a copy. I haven't read it so I can't recommend it. But with an introduction by Peter Irons (Justice at War) and a foreword by Studs Terkel ("The Good War"), it can't be all bad.

Peace

William Hohri

A Gift for Christmas ?

Place your order now!

AVAILABLE THROUGH NCJAR

- JUSTICE AT WAR by Peter Irons
A dramatic reappraisal of WWII constitutional test cases of Korematsu, Yasui, Hirabayashi, and Endo based upon newly discovered documents. This historical analysis forms the basis of recent writ of error coram nobis appeals of Korematsu, Yasui, and Hirabayashi. (hardcover) \$20.00
- OBASAN by Joy Kogawa
A first-rate novel of the Nisei in wartime Canada. Must reading on both sides of the border. (hardcover) \$14.00
- YEARS OF INFAMY by Michi Weglyn
Still the best history of the mass exclusion and detention of Japanese Americans. \$12.00
- YANKEE SAMURAI by Joseph D. Harrington
A nam-filled account of the military intelligence role performed by the Nisei in the Pacific. \$8.00
- GANBARE! (An Example of Japanese Spirit) by Patsy Sumie Saik.
It is the story of Hawaii Japanese interned during WWII: their hardships, despair, fleeting moments of hope and most of all, their spirit of ganbare! \$8.00
- MINISTRY IN THE ASSEMBLY AND RELOCATION CENTERS OF WORLD WAR II by Lester E. Suzuki
The role of the Protestant, Catholic and Buddhist churches in camp. \$6.00
- POETS BEHIND BARBED WIRE
A compilation of tanka poems edited and translated by Jiro and Kay Nakano. The poets from Hawaii who were incarcerated in America's concentration camps on the Mainland were Keiho Soga, Taisanboku Mori, Sojin Takei and Muin Ozaki. (Includes pen and ink sketches by George Hoshida.) \$6.00
- CAMP NOTES AND OTHER POEMS by Mitsuye Yamada
A collection of Mitsuye's poems evocative of her camp experiences. \$4.50
- NCJAR COMPLAINT
This 43-page copy clearly defines our injury and is written in language a layperson can understand. \$3.00
- MOVING FOR REDRESS by Philip Tajitsu Nash
An objective summary of the redress movement and a capsule review of John Tateishi's oral history, "And Justice for All."
(Reprinted from the Yale Law Journal of January 1985.) \$2.00

All prices include postage

- T-Shirts: 100% cotton
SMALL (blue)
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