



National Council for Japanese American Redress

925 West Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Illinois 60614

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 17, 1983

Contact: William Hohri
(312)588-8483

Redress Legal Fund Tops \$75,000

The Redress Legal Fund fulfilled its goal of raising \$75,000 for the cost of legal preparation for a class action lawsuit against the United States by Japanese-Americans for their mass exclusion and detention during World War II. The goal was achieved after two years of organizing and fund-raising by the National Council for Japanese American Redress. In its final stages, several \$1,000 contributions were received from ronin, a term fashioned by NCJAR from the tale of the Forty-seven Ronin to apply to major contributors. Twenty-seven ronin contributed over \$31,000.

The complaint defines the injury with over sixty allegations of fact and cites twenty causes of action which consist mainly of violations of constitutional and civil rights. The suit is asking to have the injury redressed by the United States in the amount of \$10,000 per cause of action or \$200,000 per victim. The total sought by all 120,000 potential members of the class is twenty-four billion dollars.

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The complaint is now in its final stages of preparation by the firm of Landis, Cohen, Singman and Rauh. Twenty-five named plaintiffs have been selected to represent the total class of 120,000 victims. They are from the District of Columbia, where the suit will be filed; New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Jose, and Seattle. They include Issei, Nisei, Kibei, veterans of the 442nd, JACLers, the handicapped, draft resisters, professionals, retired folk, a cross-section of Japanese America.

The suit will be filed after the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians files its report to Congress. "This is expected to occur in February," states William Hohri, NCJAR spokesperson.

* * *



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925 West Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Illinois 60614

"I will appear before you in court, prompt to testify against...
those...who thrust the alien aside."

Malachi 3:5

Sponsors, Redress Legal Fund

- *Kiyoharu and Edith Aburano
- Rev. Fred Berchtold
- Kay Boyle
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- Kazu Iijima
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- *Mr. and Mrs. Richard Kitsuse
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- *Ralph Lazo
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- *Tomio Moriguchi
- *Michael Morisaki, M.D., J.D.
- Peggy Nagae, Esquire
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- *Tamaki Ogata
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- Sam Outlaw
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- *Rose Sakata
- *Yone Ushikubo Stafford (1902-1981)
- Rev. Lloyd Wake
- Chiyeko Watanabe
- Prof. John Pitman Weber
- Walter M. Weglyn
- Joseph B. Wiley
- Wakako Yamauchi
- Prof. Mitsuye Yamada
- The Rev. S. Michael Yasutake
- Mr. and Mrs. Kazuo Yoshinaka
- *Amy Yoshinaga

*designates ronin,
contributors of \$1,000 or more.
Some remain anonymous.

Dear Friends,

Once again we've been overwhelmed by the rush of events. We topped our goal of \$75,000 with the acquisition of six ronin since our last newsletter. Four came in over the year-end, within a week's time. Two prefer anonymity. Harry Ueno, Henry Masuda, Dr. Blanche Kimoto Baler, and Rev. Mike Yasutake are the others. Their home towns are diverse: San Jose, Honolulu, Ann Arbor, Chicago, La Jolla, and Denver. We made our final \$5,000 payment to our attorneys on January 6th, twenty months after we made our first payment on May 5, 1981.

It does seem like a long time. I remember when we first heard the terms of the legal preparation for a lawsuit. As I was leaving the office of Landis, Cohen, Singman and Rauh with Aiko and Jack Herzig, Jack turned to me and remarked, "Well, William, I didn't see you blanch." "It's beyond my comprehension," was my reply. Not only did I never own \$75,000, I had no idea who the potential donors might be. As the fund drive unfolded, it became clear that the bulk of our support came from heart not money. We have ronin who disabled, retired, sending kids to college, paying alimony, working for ordinary wages -- as well as those who are more successful. We received one gift from an institution, the United Church for Homeland Ministries of the United Church of Christ, for \$7,500. That plus the ronin comprise around half of the \$75,000. The remaining contributors averaged around \$50. Two of the ronin, Ralph Lazo and Tom Jamison, are not Nikkei, although Ralph insists that in his heart he is Japanese. Many of our contributors were non-Nikkei.

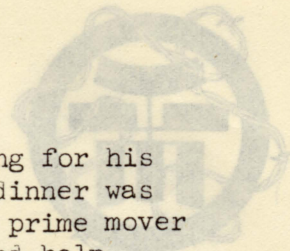
One of the true rewards of this whole effort has been the making of new friends and the reassuring support of old ones. The list is long. Its recitation, gratifying. Each is a story. Each is part of an audience that observes, criticizes, prods, applauds -- the class of the action.

And now to the newsletter as it was originally written.

* * *

I had the opportunity to preach on the text from Malachi at Sage United Methodist Church in Monterey Park, CA on December, 5th.

National Council
for Japanese American Redress



It was a deal with Sage's pastor, Wes Yamaka, to trade my preaching for his help in putting together a dinner for Harry Ueno. Actually, the dinner was put together mainly by Hannah Tomiko Holmes. Hannah works like a prime mover in things she puts her mind to. The rest of us sort of fill-in and help where we can. Wes MC'd, which is something Hannah cannot do. She is deaf. The dinner was a success by several standards. We could have had more people with eating the food, which was tasty Chinese. But the 75 or so had a good time. Chicago NCJAR was well represented by chairperson Merry Omori and Nelson Kitsuse. We got a chance to see Don Date and meet Albert and Mary Kurihara, cousins of Joe Kurihara, and Arthur Hansen. It was nice to see June Shimokawa, transplanted from NY, NY, and greet Mitsu Yamada, Ralph Lazo, Frank Chin, Richard Kitsuse. We also met Ed Tokeshi, a named plaintiff, Kaku, an old friend of Harry's. Hannah made many things to give away and to display. Her handiwork was everywhere in evidence, from a large sign identifying the National Council for Japanese American Redress, to the NCJAR emblem with real barbed wire, to bags and brief cases to sell, to pillows to give away, and to certificates of appreciation to award. The whole affair was her inspiration, her sweat and anguish, her accomplishment.

The highlight of the evening was a long, rambling account of the events of Harry's life by Harry himself. He described his effort to represent the interests of the residents of Manzanar through his organization of the Kitchen Workers Union, to which he was elected president. He described his investigation of the very substantial shortages in sugar allocation, the attack on Fred Tayama, his arrest and incarceration at the jail in Bishop, California, the Manzanar uprising, his second seizure and incarceration with 15 others in the jail at Lone Pine, then at Moab, Utah, a special WRA high security center for so-called incorrigibles -- incorrigibles without a criminal record. My wife, Yuriko, described the event as a reconciliation. Wes called it a celebration of our heroes. To my brothers and sisters in the Christian faith, I saw it as another sign of God's presence. To all, a gradual emergence of our total self as Japanese America; an acceptance of righteous anger and resistance to injustice.

We will be going to court soon. Our group of around 25 named plaintiffs is just about complete. We are incorporating their stories into our complaint. We finally did obtain named plaintiffs from the District of Columbia, in whose Federal Court we shall be filing. We now have an Issei who was interned in a Department of Justice internment camp. We have representation from the Pacific Northwest, the San Francisco Bay Area, L.A., Chicago, N.Y. and D.C. We are waiting on the report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. It was to have been released December 20th, then 23rd.* Then, we thought, mid-January. Now it appears to be the end of January. So we will probably file in February. The filing will be an historic occasion. The word becomes substance. We will publish our complaint as soon as it becomes reality. It will state for the first time in our history the nature and extent of our injury in page after page of allegations of fact, including their documentation. It will state for the first time in our history the remedy required for twenty causes of action. \$10,000 per cause of action. \$200,000 per victim, including heirs. Twenty-four billion for the class of 120,000.

* Sp
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JOY KOGAWA'S OBASAN IS NOW AVAILABLE! *

"Reading Joy Kogawa's novel is an emotionally wrenching experience, lightened by the sensitivity and grace of her prose. Its angry and bitter moments are balanced by tenderness, poetic imagery and wit."

- Victoria Times

"Her words flow in lyrical prose-poetry into a story that has at long last been written about the Nisei experience. A writer has emerged with a telling to match the tale."

- William Hohri

AVAILABLE THROUGH NCJAR

<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Briefcases, Buttons, T-shirts</u>	<u>Price*</u>
_____	Briefcase, 11-1/2 x 14-1/2", in taupe vinyl	\$ 7.00
_____	Buttons, 1-7/16" round, black NCJAR symbol on yellow background	.50
_____	T-shirts made of 100% cotton in blue, yellow, or tan; S, M, L, XL with NCJAR symbol in black	8.00
<u>Literature</u>		
_____	"Obasan" by Joy Kogawa; David R. Godine, Publisher, 1982	14.50
_____	"Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps" by Michi Weglyn; William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1976	10.00
_____	"Camp Notes and Other Poems" by Mitsuye Yamada; shameless hussy press, 1976	4.50
_____	Amerasia Journal, Fall 1974, Vol. 2, No. 2; Asian American Civil Rights and the Law, Part I	6.00
_____	Asian and Pacific American Experience: Women's Perspective; edited by Nobuya Tsuchida, Asian/Pacific American Learning Resource Center & University of Minnesota, 1982	15.00
_____	Gift subscription to NCJAR newsletter, 12 issues	15.00

*All prices include postage.

Please send order with check to: National Council for Japanese American Redress
925 West Diversey Parkway
Chicago, Illinois 60614

*Special!

Joy Kogawa will be at our program on February 19th. (see opposite.) She will read from her poetry. Plan to be there.

It's a good time to become part of the action. It's not too late. There is nothing more powerless and debilitating than to be unable to put forth fifty, a hundred, or a thousand bucks when the chips are down, when a decision of such magnitude is at hand. True, we now have paid our attorneys the \$75,000 for the cost of legal preparation. But we continue to have costs in staying organized, for our newsletters, travel, research. We have no paid staff or rental space. And far too much of our costs have been borne by a few individuals. We also need to begin preparing funds for the costs which will arise if we gain admittance to the court. Remember, serious legal obstacles bar our way into court, such as the expiration of the statute of limitations and the protection of sovereign immunity. If we surmount these then we must be prepared to notify members of the class and to pay court costs. Most of these legal costs can be recovered if we win.

* * *

Chicago NCJAR will be holding a program on the occasion of the 41st anniversary of the issuance of Executive Order Number 9066 called "EO 9066 on Trial." It will feature a panel discussion with audience participation on the lawsuit and include statements by named plaintiffs from the Chicago area as well as recognition of ronin contributors. It will be held at the Japanese American Service Committee, 4427 N. Clark, Chicago at 7:30 PM, Saturday, February 19, 1983.

Why don't y'all try to make it an occasion to get together to meet the Chicago supporters of NCJAR, to meet some of the NCJAR board? We'd really like to meet you.

Peace,

William Hohri

William Hohri

P.S. Many, many thanks to my brother Sohei for the beautiful scrolls he lettered -- using gold leaf no less! for Hannah and in memory of Joe Kurihara. My thanks to N. Kashiwabara of San Diego for correcting me on Senator Hayakawa's middle name. It's Ichiye, not Ichiro. Thanks most profuse to the Crossroads Foundation for a donation of \$1,000 to NCJAR to enable us to buy an Osborne I micro-computer -- the better to index and analyze the 30,000 documents we have and to help with other tasks.

*P.P.S. The latest revised date for the CWRIC's report is towards the end of February, 1983.

*Plan to be there.
19th (see opposite) she will read from her poetry.
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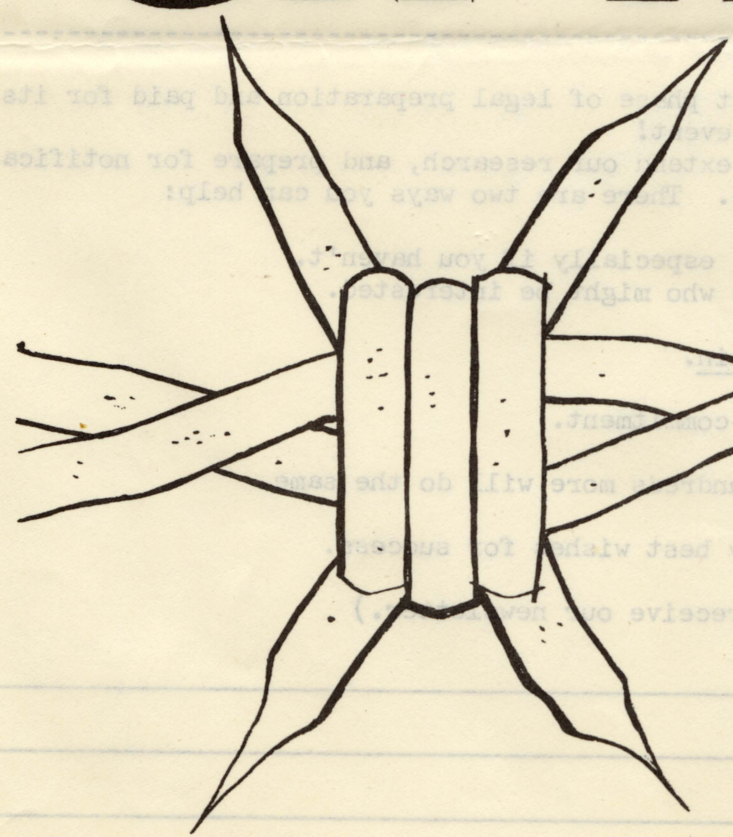
invites you to their

COMMEMORATIVE PROGRAM

EXECUTIVE ORDER

9066

ON TRIAL



SATURDAY,
FEBRUARY 19, 1983
7:30 p.m.

JASC BUILDING
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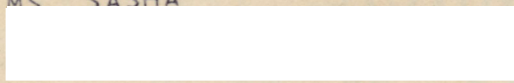
NATIONAL COUNCIL for
 JAPANESE AMERICAN REDRESS
 925 West Diversey Parkway
 Chicago, Illinois 60614



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

MS SASHA

HOHR I



Now that we've completed the first phase of legal preparation and paid for its cost, let's get set for the main event! We need to keep ourselves going, extend our research, and prepare for notification of the class and court costs. There are two ways you can help:

1. make a contribution now, especially if you haven't.
2. send us names of friends who might be interested.

- \$1,000 as one of our ronin.
- \$500 as a measure of my commitment.
- \$100 and my hope that hundreds more will do the same.
- \$_____ and my very best wishes for success.

(All contributors will receive our newsletter.)

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

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