

My name is Sally Kazama, co-chairperson of the Asian/Pacific Women's Caucus which was formed in 1976 because of the continuing need to counteract racism, sexism and agism, a triple jeopardy to Asian women in all aspects of life.

Thank you for the opportunity to read the Caucus statement and to speak as one of the interned 120,000. (Read Statement) Although signed by Maria Batayola and myself as co-chair of the Caucus, I would like to thank Teresita Batayola for composing this eloquent statement.

"Why 40 years later? ", people ask. In the few moments allowed let me try to share why:

The emotional scarring of people subjected to racism can never be measured. Like the rape victim who must bear the humiliation, trauma, pain and fear of her experience, suppressing the memory in order to survive, we also have been traumatized all these years.

The story does not begin with Pearl Harbor..that was merely the excuse to bring to climax many years of racism against people of color.

RACISM IS: Denying citizenship to those who crossed the Pacific instead of the Atlantic Ocean, and using that alien status as a reason for denying ownership of land and other rights.

RACISM IS: An elementary school teacher telling me as a 6 year old taking my mother to my first Open House that I should be ashamed that she could only speak "Chinese. This is America! ". In profound humiliation I did not correct her ignorance, I did not ask my mother to another Open House, and I did not speak Japanese for many years.

RACISM IS: To be deemed guilty by reason of Race...Japanese in name and look.

March 30, 1942, the day the Bainbridge Island Japanese Americans were taken away amidst soldiers lined up with rifles, I turned 21 years old. That birthday was forgotten in the trauma and sorrow of my friends' tribulations.

About that time I graduated in my parents' perception from child to adult. I was a student at the U. of W.; I suddenly became spokesperson, decision-maker and generally the one in charge of selling, packing, etc. of our belongings.

Contrary to Col. Boris T. Pash's contention that the camps were ~~not~~ "concentration camps" because we were not locked up, I submit we were. The Puyallup Assembly Center consisted of 4 distinct areas: Areas A, B and C were parking lots, while Area D was the fairground proper. My parents and I were in Area A, while the temporary hospital was in Area D. I volunteered to be a nurse's aide, but to get from one area to the other I not only had to have a special pass, I had to be escorted by a Military Police across the street from gate to gate each day. Visiting between the areas was not allowed.

I remember the very first meal served in Puyallup. Responding to metal spoons clanging metal pans, people hesitantly lined up as a family, parents closely hovering over their offspring. Within a few days, children were sitting with friends, men clustered together, the breakdown<sup>of</sup> the family unit had begun.

When we first arrived in Minidoka, my parents and I were assigned to a room with a couple who had a young child....strangers sharing a single room for several weeks!

At this time I would like to acknowledge the untiring, constant help and support given us by the American Friends Service Committee. Thanks to their efforts, I was allowed to leave camp and attend Berea College in Berea, Kentucky. During those two years I did not mention to anyone why my parents' address was 42-10-F Hunt, Idaho....it was like telling people they were in Alcatraz!

My personal recommendation to the Commission is that not only a public acknowledgement of wrongdoing by the government by incarcerating without due process thousands of innocent men, women and children but monetary compensation for all survivors and heirs for immeasurable loss incurred.

Perhaps after that we may be able to put all this to rest, and finally find peace within ourselves.

Respectfully submitted,

*Sally S. Kazama*  
Sally S. Kazama

# Asian/Pacific Women's Caucus

---

---

August 21, 1981

Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians  
Suite 2020  
New Executive Office Building  
726 Jackson Place, N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20506

To the Commissioners:

Forty years of silence on an official act of racism is finally being broken by the hearings being conducted by the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians Act. Forty years of silence, shame, and guilt borne not by the federal government but by the victims of Executive Order Numbered 9066 - the 120,000 Japanese Americans and others of Japanese ancestry dispossessed of property and sent to "concentration" camps.

The Asian Pacific Women's Caucus strongly supports a formal acknowledgement of this official act of racism and steps to be undertaken to prevent future official acts of racism against people of color. More importantly, the APWC strongly advocates for reparations to be made to the victims.

Executive Order Numbered 9066 was invoked in the name of national security. There was not and has not been any evidence of military threat from the Japanese Americans and Japanese living in this country. Racist hysteria and economic motives singled out those of Japanese ancestry for dispossession and displacement in the "internment" camps.

Families were torn away from their communities and placed in barren plains enclosed by barbed wires and closely guarded. Women were separated from fathers, brothers, husbands and sons. Children grew up in Little Americas with soldiers on watch while they played. The elderly were robbed of a productive way of life and forced to lead a sedentary way of life alien to them.

This country's recorded and demonstrated history of racism is unconstitutional and unconscionable. Many have stated that this government can never satisfactorily make restitution to the victims of internment. This may be true. However, this country's system of social and criminal justice has established precedents in providing monetary compensation to innocent victims. Not only did those of Japanese ancestry suffer untold mental, psychological, and emotional anguish, they incurred personal economic losses. We feel that monetary compensation is critical to the federal government's acknowledgement of wrongdoing in identifying, herding, and incarcerating 120,000 victims whose only crime laid in their ancestry.

Forty years of silence has been ended. It is time that justice is served.

Sincerely,

*Sally Kazama*  
Sally Kazama, Co-Chair

*Maria Batayola*  
Maria Batayola, Co-Chair