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EAST WIND

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Cover Art: Concept and design by Pamela Matsuoka; photography by Curtis Fukuda

Laying the groundwork

As the Asian American and Pacific Islander movement prepares to enter the 1990s, it is a good time to review significant victories and advances that were achieved in 1988. Last year was an eventful year in which we witnessed the historic victory of Japanese American redress and reparations. That victory, won after a decade of hard struggle, is the focus of this issue of *East Wind*.

Asian/Pacific empowerment

Major advances in Asian/Pacific empowerment were achieved in 1988. By impressing on the powers that be that Asian/Pacific Americans have the will and the power to rally sufficient forces to block an appointment by a powerful governor, the defeat of Rep. Dan Lungren as California treasurer constituted a breakthrough and a major upset victory for Asian/Pacific Americans. The article, "Asian American Political Clout" examines the political fallout from the successful, redress-related campaign against Lungren.

The Asian/Pacific community also had, at all levels of the political process, a much higher profile in 1988 than in any previous election year. Former *East Wind* editor Eddie Wong, who served as National Field Director in the Jesse Jackson '88 presidential campaign, recounts his experiences and reflects on the significance of the Jackson campaign for Asian/Pacific Americans in his article. The article reviews the growing Asian/Pacific support for Jackson and Jackson's outspoken support on issues of concern to the Asian/Pacific communities.

Asian/Pacific political power, however, rests ultimately on our strength and organization at the grassroots level. In her article, Mabel Teng reviews the accomplishments of the Chinese Progressive Association, a community-based organization in San Francisco that celebrated its 15th anniversary in 1988.

Alarming rise in anti-Asian violence

However, in 1988 anti-Asian violence also continued to grow at an alarming rate. It has become an increasing concern on many U.S. college and university campuses. In their article, Hei Wai Chan and Marta Ho tell

of an ugly incident of anti-Asian violence at the University of Connecticut last year and the organizing carried out by students and supporters in response. We also include excerpts from an account of the incident by the Asian students involved in it.

The cold-blooded murder of five Southeast Asian school children at Cleveland School in Stockton, California, in January 1989 underlines the seriousness and urgency of confronting the challenge of anti-Asian violence. Authorities have denied that the killings were racially motivated, but the fact that all the fatalities and most of the wounded were Asian, speaks for itself. Furthermore, a former co-worker of the gunman revealed that the killer has expressed his hatred for Southeast Asian immigrants.

This issue of *East Wind* is dedicated to the five innocent victims of anti-Asian violence and racism.

Asian-American culture

In the cultural section we would like to call attention to the article on Pilipino Cultural Nights by Ted Benito and Meg Malpaya Thornton of Los Angeles. This article examines the renaissance of traditional culture taking place among Pilipino college and university students. At a time when Pilipino students are being cut from affirmative action programs and Pilipino student college enrollment is falling dramatically, cultural nights are an important source of unity and strength.

We are also pleased to present poetry by three talented Asian/Pacific poets, two of whom recently published collections of poetry: author Genny Lim, from her first book of poetry, *Winter Place*; Jeff Tagami from his book, *October Light*; and poet and Philippine support activist Thelma Estrada.

Focus on redress/reparations

Forty-six years after their mass incarceration in U.S. concentration camps, Japanese Americans won an historic victory when President Reagan on August 10, 1988, signed into law the redress and reparations bill known as the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. Once widely believed to be unwinnable, the bill was passed by the U.S. Senate on April 20, 1988, by a 67-27 vote and passed by the House of Representatives on September 17, 1987, by a vote of 243-141. The bill calls for an official apology, payments of \$20,000 each to surviving former

for the 1990s

internees, and other measures. Its enactment into law was greeted by joyous celebrations in Japanese American communities around the country.

The redress/reparations focus section begins with a speech by Bert Nakano, Spokesperson of the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations (NCRP), one of the organizations that had worked for passage of the bill. In his speech, "Our Historic Victory," Nakano discusses the significance of the victory and the critical role played by the grassroots. He also points out the importance of redress supporters continuing their efforts in order to win appropriations, so that former internees can be paid as quickly as possible, before many more pass away. This is especially critical since the outgoing Reagan administration proposed no money at all in its 1989 budget and only \$20 million in its 1990 budget. Redress forces have already mounted a major letter writing campaign to press the Bush administration for maximum appropriations of \$500 million per year.

East Wind is pleased to present interviews with Reps. Norman Mineta and Robert Matsui, two of the key Congressional movers behind the redress bill. The congressmen discuss how the victory was won and where the movement should go from here.

Profiles of grassroots activists

The centerpiece of the focus section is a series of profiles of grassroots individuals, most of them former internees, who are an active part of the redress movement. Their stories help explain why redress and reparations are important and how the movement was sustained all these years.

Former National President of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) Clifford Uyeda reviews the development of the redress movement and the role of various redress forces such as the JACL, NCRP and National Council for Japanese American Redress (NCJAR) in his article. A selection of redress-related photos by noted New York photographer Corky Lee is presented in the piece entitled, "Time of Remembrance." Meg Malpaya Thornton and Jerry C. Yu of Los Angeles address the issue of redress/reparations and the broader Asian/Pacific movement.

We close the focus section with a personal reflection on the Japanese Canadian redress movement by Terry Watada of Toronto. In 1988, Japanese Canadians also



Cleveland School, Stockton, Calif.

won redress and monetary reparations for their wartime incarceration, which was even harsher than that in the U.S.

Acknowledgement and notes to our readers

East Wind gratefully acknowledges the generous financial donation by the people who formerly published *Gidra*, a pioneer Asian American newspaper that was published in Los Angeles from 1969-1974. With its progressive politics and innovative style, *Gidra* was an inspiration to many activists and other publications, including *East Wind*, and we are proud to include many former *Gidra* people among our writers, staffers, contributors and support network.

A note on the new *East Wind* masthead: we updated it to give it a more finished and modern look while retaining an Asian/Pacific feel. Many thanks to *East Wind* Art Director Leon Sun for the new design.

A note on terminology: Japanese words, such as *Nisei* (second generation Japanese American) are explained in parentheses the first time they appear in the body of the issue, rather than in each article.

John Ota



SONNY KIM

“Inaction would have meant that you can do what you want to Asians.”
Don Tamaki

ASIAN AMERICAN political clout

A look at the defeat of redress foe Rep. Dan Lungren

By John Ota

After the vote, the word went out: Don't mess with Asian Americans," says Maeley Tom, special assistant to California state Sen. David Roberti. She is referring to the 21-19 vote on February 25, 1988, in the state Senate rejecting Gov. Deukmejian's appointment of Congressman Dan Lungren to the powerful post of state treasurer.

Lungren's defeat, upheld by the state Supreme Court on June 23, was a major political upset. At the start, Lungren's confirmation was considered a "walkover," according to San Francisco attorney Don Tamaki, spokesperson for Californians for Responsible Government (CRG), a coalition formed to oppose the appointment.

But when Deukmejian completely disregarded those who were outraged at Lungren's appointment because of

his outspoken opposition to reparations for Japanese Americans, Asian Americans took the lead, and in a few weeks built a broad and winning statewide alliance. The victory over Lungren drove home to the political establishment, says Miya Iwataki of Los Angeles NCRR, "the political clout of the Asian/Pacific community."

A right-wing demagogue

Lungren, a right-wing ideologue from Long Beach, was not just any

opponent of redress. As Vice Chair of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC), he was in a sensitive position, one he exploited to the limit. Lungren was the only dissenter when the CWRIC voted to recommend \$20,000 in individual payments to Japanese American incarcerated. The CWRIC recommendations became the basis of the reparations bills in Congress.

Even at the 1981 hearings, when the CWRIC was just beginning its work, Lungren made it clear he opposed reparations. Not bothering to attend most hearings, he had one of the worst attendance records on the CWRIC.

Yet during the Sept. 17, 1987, House of Representatives debate on the bill, Lungren reminded colleagues that he was the only sitting member of Congress who had been on the CWRIC. Worst of all, during the debate Lungren demagogically hammered away at the "Magic Cables," secret wartime cables of the Imperial Japanese government which referred



California Gov. George Deukmejian with Dan Lungren (left).



JULIAN LOW

(Above) The fast-growing Asian American communities are increasingly making their political influence felt. (Below) Alice Bulos, of the Filipino American Democratic Club, San Mateo County, and others helped change state Sen. Kopp's mind about voting for Lungren.

to alleged use of Japanese Americans as spies for Japan. He raised this sensitive issue of loyalty even though he knew that thorough investigations by the FBI and military intelligence agencies during the war turned up not a single Japanese American spy or saboteur.

Under fire during the confirmation period, Lungren would later claim that he supported the redress bill — except for one small part: the monetary compensation. But the compensation, while symbolic, was the very heart of the redress bill, the part that kept it from being a token apology that would have been forgotten as soon as it was passed.

A pointed slap in the face

When rumors of Lungren's appointment surfaced, many Asian Americans were appalled that Deukmejian would consider appointing him to such a high post in complete disregard for Asians, who, at close to 10% of the population, are now the second largest minority group in the

state, after Latinos. In a letter to Deukmejian on Sept. 24, 1987, the NCCR said that most Japanese Americans would consider the appointment a "pointed slap in the face." The National Democratic Council of Asian/Pacific Americans (NDCAPA) and others also expressed their opposition. But Deukmejian went ahead and announced the appointment by Thanksgiving, after Lungren assured him that Asian opposition would not be a problem.

A concerted campaign to stop Lungren's confirmation was not a given, however. Redress forces already had their hands full. The House of Representatives had passed the redress bill in September and the Senate vote was expected soon, although it was delayed until April. Also, several Japanese American and Asian American Republicans, including some redress supporters, such as Rep. Pat Saiki of Hawai'i, publicly endorsed Lungren.

The JACL, the largest and best known Japanese American organization, did not take a public position on Lungren, although some JACL



COURTESY OF A. BULOS

leaders, such as then Executive Director Ron Wakabayashi, acting as individuals, actively opposed his nomination. Conservatives in the JACL argued that if JACL took such a stand, the Reagan administration might retaliate by vetoing the redress bill. Lungren hinted at this threat in a discussion with Rep. Robert Matsui, who came out publicly against the nomination.

A new generation of activists

But fortunately, a new generation of Asian American activists had emerged who were willing and able to take risks to show that Asians and Pacific Islanders will stand up for their interests. "If we didn't do anything," explained Don Tamaki, "it would have sent the wrong message: that you can do anything you want to Asians."

In the San Francisco area, a core formed, comprised of Tamaki, Henry Der of Chinese for Affirmative Action, Ron Wakabayashi, attorney Karen Kai, Steve Arevalo of Filipino American Democratic Club, Hoyt Zia of Asian American Bar Association, Mari Matsumoto of NCRR and others. In the Los Angeles area, Miya Iwataki, G. Akito Maehara, Kim Hee and Mike Yamada of NCRR, Pilipino activist Royal Morales, George Kodama and Kaz Umamoto of Japanese American Democratic Club and Fred Fujioka of Japanese American Bar Association and others took up the issue.

From Sacramento, Maeley Tom and Georgette Imura of Sen. Roberti's Office of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs, with their political experience and contacts, provided invaluable direction and guidance.

CRG researched Lungren's voting record, documenting his ultra-conservative stands on a wide range of issues. Publicizing a record that made him, as Tamaki put it, the "Jesse Helms of the House," with something "to offend just about every group in California," CRG was able to win support from Black, Latino, civil rights, labor, environmental, women's, seniors, housing and other groups, in addition to a seemingly endless list of Asian/Pacific organizations and individuals.

Support from non-Asian groups, especially in the Assembly and Senate hearings, was critical to Lungren's defeat. It showed that Lungren was unacceptable not only to redress supporters, as depicted in the media,

but to a broad cross-section of Californians.

CRG also met with and lobbied state lawmakers and, with help from Sacramento insiders, identified swing votes. Supporters then mobilized their networks to lobby legislators and flood their offices with phone calls. NCRR and others, drawing on their experience and network from the redress campaign, organized some 3,000 letters to legislators.

Deukmejian had put his prestige on the line, and surprised observers by even offering political deals to win Lungren's confirmation, but in the end he had underestimated his opponents. Lungren was defeated in a close vote in the state Senate on February 25. The key swing votes were state Senators Quentin Kopp and Rose Ann Vuich. Kopp explained

on the Senate floor that he had planned to vote for Lungren, but had received an unprecedented number of letters and phone calls opposing the nomination and felt compelled to change his mind. Having won his first term in a close election, Kopp "couldn't afford to offend the many Asians" in his San Francisco district, says Tamaki.

A force to be reckoned with

The vote was one of the first major political defeats for the governor. Many observers believe that Deukmejian was grooming the slick and up-and-coming Lungren to succeed him as governor. In fact, despite the defeat, we probably have not seen the last of Lungren. But meanwhile, Lungren gave up his seat in Congress in his bid for the post of treasurer.

Lungren's fate was watched closely in Congress, according to Miya Iwataki, a former aide to Rep. Mervyn Dymally. She says "everyone in Washington was watching this. For them, too, Asians are now a force they have to reckon with."

To Maeley Tom, the defeat shows "that the Asian/Pacific community is not as fractionalized as people think it is. We'll always be diverse, but when there are issues that unite us, such as Asian college admissions, anti-Asian violence, etc., Asian/Pacifics can respond as one community."

But despite the victory over Lungren, there is still a long way to go. For instance, not a single Asian or Pacific Islander sits in either house of the California legislature, and there are only a handful of Asian elected officials in San Francisco and Los Angeles together, despite the high proportion of Asians in those cities.

While savoring this as a major success, Tamaki believes that "the next campaign and the one after that will be more telling" for Asians and Pacific Islanders. □



COURTESY OF M. TOM

“The Asian/Pacific community is not as fractionalized as people think it is. Asian/Pacifics can respond as one community.”

Maeley Tom

John Ota, East Wind editor, is active in the NCRR and was part of CRG.

Asian Empowerment and Jackson

*Moving from the background
to the political foreground*

**Jackson won 46%
of the Asian vote
in the California
primary.**



SONNY KIM

By Eddie Wong

In the 1988 election year, more Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders got involved in local, state and national politics than ever before. Many Asian/Pacific Americans ran for political office and many more took part in voter registration, active political campaigning and voter mobilization.

Asians also had a much higher profile in the presidential race. Reps. Norman Mineta and Robert Matsui were two of the national co-chairs and Dr. An Wang was a major fund-raiser for the Dukakis campaign. In California, individuals such as Maeley Tom, Ron Wakabayashi, Ed Lee, Steve Arevalo, Alicia Wang, Deborah Moy and others were on Dukakis' campaign staff. Many Asians were also on Jesse Jackson's national staff or in top state campaign posts. The Dukakis, Jackson and other campaigns had, without a doubt, more Asians in staff positions and organizing in their communities than in any other election.

In this article, Eddie Wong, Jackson's National Field Director and the first Asian American to hold such a post in a presidential campaign, offers thoughts on the Jackson campaign and Asian/Pacific Americans.

In 1988, Jesse Jackson made history as he astounded pollsters and pundits by finishing second in the Democratic presidential primaries, defeating U.S. Senators and Congressmen funded and favored by the establishment.

Jackson's campaign built bridges



LARAIN WING

"It's time for more Asian American legislators. You don't need a leader, you need empowerment!" Jackson said. Above, Korean fund-raiser in New York.



GLEN KITAYAMA

Asian Americans for Jesse Jackson committees formed in nine cities, from Honolulu to Boston and Seattle. Above, Los Angeles.

across race and class, bringing together uncommon allies — farmers, students, African Americans, American Indians, Latinos, Asian/Pacific Americans, women, gays and lesbians, environmentalists, labor activists and other locked-out elements of society — into a common effort around a message of economic and social justice. He offered a message of hope and a vision of a more just society based on equality.

Jackson did not win the nomination, but he did set the agenda for the debate, making drugs the number one issue, putting the issue of reinvestment and job creation on the table and advocating a foreign policy based on respecting international law and self-determination of nations. His were among the freshest and boldest ideas of the campaign year.

Asian support for Jackson

I felt proud that so many Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders responded to Jackson's message. In the primary, Jackson got 46% of the Asian/Pacific vote in California. In Hawai'i, Asian/Pacific supporters gave Jackson 49% of the vote in the 1st Congressional District (Honolulu), just eight votes shy of first place. Over 25 Asian/Pacific Americans were elected or appointed as Jackson delegates to the Democratic National Convention from California, New York, Washington, Hawai'i and Oregon.

Jackson also came to Asian communities several times, drawing enthusiastic crowds. He got a significantly wider spectrum of endorsers, including many Asian elected officials, and a larger vote in Asian/Pacific communities than he did in 1984.

Much of Jackson's support among Asian/Pacific people stemmed from the fact that he was one of the first major candidates to take Asian/Pacific issues seriously. In October 1987, Jackson addressed the National Democratic Council of Asian/Pacific Americans convention in Los Angeles and received several standing ovations.

Jackson spoke out against Asian bashing amid growing U.S. economic nationalism, supported reparations for Japanese Americans interned in 1942, advocated family reunification and immigration rights, spoke in fa-



LAPRAINE WING



FRANCISCO GARCIA

Jackson was one of the first national political figures to take Asian/Pacific issues seriously and actively campaign in Asian/Pacific communities.

vor of bilingual education and against English-only laws, and called for appointments of Asian/Pacific Americans to every level of government.

Jackson struck a nerve in the crowd as he zeroed in on the question of Asian empowerment and representation. "I didn't just show up today for the first time," he said. "We've stood together many times before . . . I've learned from you and expect to learn much more. It's time for more Asian American Congresspeople and Senators and legislators. You don't need a leader, you need empowerment. You can lead yourself!"

Later, Jackson put his words into action as he campaigned for Delaware Lt. Gov. S.B. Woo, who made history by becoming the first Asian to win the Democratic Party nomination for a U.S. Senate seat outside Hawai'i. Woo fell short in November, but his candidacy, in a state with a population less than 1% Asian, is sure to herald many more Asian American candidacies on all levels.

Training for future efforts

As the campaign got underway, Asian Americans for Jesse Jackson (AAJJ) committees formed in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego, San Jose, Boston, New York, Seattle and Hawai'i. New York AAJJ organized fund-raising events in the Korean and Chinese commu-

nities, which netted \$70,000. A San Francisco Chinatown event cleared \$40,000. Equally important were the hundreds of volunteers recruited by AAJJ to run precinct operations and get out the message and the vote.

Within his campaign, Jackson made good on his commitment to Asian/Pacific representation at all levels, including top policy and decision-making posts. May Louie became Northeast Regional Coordinator and later Executive Assistant to Jackson. Mike Murase was California Campaign Director, Mabel Teng a California Co-Chair, and Tracy Takano the Hawai'i Campaign Coordinator, to name just a few.

Due to the experience they gained and what they accomplished in the Jackson campaign, these individuals have become recognized players in their respective political scenes. For example, Mabel Teng became a California Co-Chair of the Dukakis campaign and other Jackson supporters also took up posts in the Dukakis

***Jackson had
Asians at the
highest levels of
his campaign
structure.***

campaign or in the Democratic Party as Asian Democrats worked toward common goals after the primaries.

Hundreds of others joined the Jackson campaign serving as press spokespersons, field organizers, advance and scheduling aides. They picked up invaluable experience and training in putting together campaigns, registering voters, mobilizing support networks, and organizing political operations and fund-raisers, which will serve them well in future political efforts.

I was Jackson's National Field Director, responsible for overseeing state campaign organizations and the national get-out-the-vote effort, and involved in developing the campaign's overall strategy.

Keeping hope alive

But Jackson, of course, reached out to all Americans, and Asian/Pacific Americans can learn much from his overall achievements, won against all odds.

Despite having only a fraction of the money other candidates had, the campaign overcame huge obstacles, such as lack of support from the party establishment and racist media coverage which constantly discounted

him as "unwinnable."

What the campaign lacked in resources was compensated in large measure by two things: Jackson's message of hope and his vast national network of supporters. Jackson has the ability to reach into the depths of his experience as a Black American and draw out a universal message.

He understands that a new progressive electoral majority can be built, because diverse people face common problems and will turn to each other for solutions if they are brought together. Jackson is able to get to the essence of complex issues and convey them in a down-to-earth way. All across the country as I talked with voters from farmers to urban professionals the refrain was the same: "Jesse makes sense."

Standing with the locked-out

I'll never forget a freezing February 8 in Sioux City, Iowa. It was the day of the Iowa caucus and Jackson had flown in from New Hampshire. After four hours of sleep, Jackson began his day at 6:30 am with a briefing. After a speech to senior citizens at the Native American Center and a radio talk show, Jackson sped off to an icy field behind the feed and supply shop on the edge of town.

The sun was shining, but it was only 30 degrees and cold seeped up from the frozen earth. But 250 striking meat packers and their families, virtually all white, stood there wearing Jackson '88 buttons, and listened as Jackson denounced economic violence and called for changes to protect the rights of trade unions.

As he praised them for their valiant, seven-month strike, tears came to the eyes of many workers. Jackson was not just the only candidate who agreed to address them, they could see that Jackson understood the pain of poverty and disdain, and the sting of adversity. Jackson gave the workers a vision of hope, a sense that they were not alone in their fight.

After the speech, workers came up to thank him as a friend and brother. Jackson didn't win Iowa that night, but he won the friendship of thousands of Iowans. In a field of seven



Delaware Lt. Gov. S. B. Woo.



Mabel Teng of San Francisco.

LEON SUN



GARY KOZONO

Many Asian Jackson supporters actively supported the Dukakis ticket after the primaries. Above, an Asians for Dukakis rally in San Francisco.

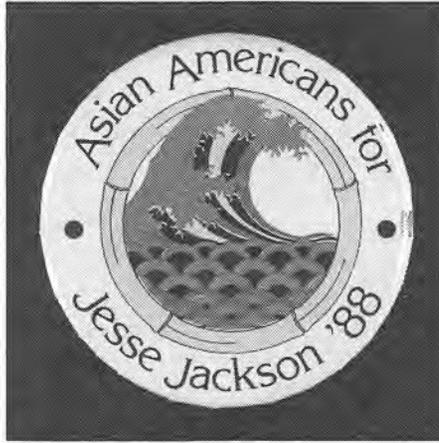
**Asian/Pacific
Americans are
underrepresented
at all levels of
government.**

candidates, he took 11% of the vote in a state which is only 2% Black.

Because of his 25 years in the Civil Rights Movement, Jackson could count on a built-in network based in every African American community in the country, to anchor his effort. There were campaign contributions from Black businesses and professionals, political networks offered by Black elected officials, volunteer recruitment and fund raising from the Black churches and a variety of community and student organizations.

The power of this base was demonstrated dramatically on Super Tuesday. The Jackson campaign could afford to buy only \$100,000 in ads in the South before that 20-state contest, but he still won Virginia, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. He placed second in Texas, Washington, Hawai'i, Tennessee, North Carolina, Maryland, Missouri, Florida and Kentucky.

With his base as a foundation, Jackson reached out to broaden his support. The seven million votes he received represented Jackson's success in winning support from farmers, workers, students and others of all nationalities. By the end of the primaries, Jackson was getting 25% of the white vote and 49% of the 25- to 45 age group vote.



Asian/Pacific candidacies will stimulate voter registration and action.

Learning from the campaign

For Asian/Pacific Americans to succeed, we must also follow the path of coalition building. Asian/Pacific

Americans, while the fastest growing population in the U.S., are not numerous enough to win on our own. The question is who shall we ally with. Jesse Jackson represents the political force that is most receptive to input and inclusion of Asian/Pacific Americans alongside other previously disenfranchised groups.

In California, where people of color will become the majority by the year 2000, Asian/Pacific people must build stronger coalitions with African Americans, Latinos and progressive whites around common needs such as empowerment, housing, jobs, health care and education. Issues such as affirmative action, racial violence and education have been the basis for past coalitions and need to be expanded.

On another level, Jackson's campaign imparts a fundamental lesson: you cannot win if you do not run. Be bold. Stand up for your ideas and make sure what you say has meaning and depth. As Jackson says, even if you run and lose, you still become part of the political equation. Asian/Pacific candidacies will stimulate voter registration and political action, and the resulting networks of voters and supporters become factors in the political mix.

It is impossible to predict the future of Jackson or Asian/Pacific politics, but one thing is clear, U.S. politics will never be the same after 1988. Jackson's supporters will continue to be a progressive force on the local, state and national levels as they step up their participation in various campaigns, in the Democratic Party and run for office. Together with other political activists, they will help to overcome the barriers that have resulted in gross underrepresentation of Asian/Pacific Americans at all levels of government.

In 1988, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders moved from the background of politics into the foreground, out of the shadows as silent financial contributors to positions as policymakers and leaders.

It's a welcome change and it's only the beginning. □

Eddie Wong is a former editor of East Wind Magazine.



Hundreds of Asian/Pacific Americans received invaluable political training in registering, educating and mobilizing voters, and these experiences will help them continue to be a force in the political scene.

BEN CHAN



A new citizen –
CPA member
Mr. Yick Yan.

Celebrating 15 Years of Progress & Service

The emergence of the Asian/Pacific Movement in the late 1960s sparked the development of grassroots Asian community organizations around the country.

Unique in its ability to unite immigrants and American-born, the Chinese Progressive Association of San Francisco has played an important role in key struggles the Chinese and Asian/Pacific communities have faced in the 1970s and 1980s. CPA celebrated its 15th anniversary in 1988.

By Mabel Teng

There is a Chinese saying, "It takes ten years to grow a tree, a hundred years to nurture a person" (十年樹木，百年樹人). Fifteen years of growth for a community organization is a great milestone. We have grown in strength and numbers despite Reagan's cutbacks and infringements on civil rights.

Early history: Bold approach in a changing world

The Chinese Progressive Association (CPA) is part of the Asian movement, born of the civil rights struggles of the '60s and '70s. We formed in response to the many issues and concerns in our community. We worked with Asian American lawyers to establish the first free bilingual legal clinic in Chinatown. We helped the Loh Wah Que (longtime immigrants) qualify for legal status and oppose unfair deportation under the so-called Chinese Confession law.

CPA's first office was in the basement of the historic International Hotel (I-Hotel). The struggle to save the I-Hotel was a landmark battle for community control on land use. We helped to develop a broad strategy that united Pilipino and Chinese tenants as well as built coalitions with many citywide housing groups. This 10-year battle brought forth many new Asian American activists who are still

active in the movements today.

In the early '70s, the People's Republic of China (PRC) inspired the world as a leading third world country struggling for self-determination. To us, support for China meant self-respect and pride. CPA worked with pro-China organizations in Chinatown and the U.S.-China People's Friendship Association in celebrating October 1, China's national day, and film showings to promote education and friendship. When the two countries normalized diplomatic relations on January 1, 1979, thousands rejoiced in Portsmouth Square.

CPA has always supported the labor movement and the right of Chinese workers to unionize. Garment workers' protests at Jung Sai, Naline, and Sierra Designs highlighted the key issues Chinese and other immigrants face: low pay, racial discrimination, plant closures, and lack of union protection. Workers at Nam Yuen and the Mandarin restaurants waged similar battles in the early '70s. Our members are active unionists who have walked literally hundreds of picket lines in support of Local 2, the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union. We also work with the Asian American Federation of Union Members (AAFUM) in building community support for labor issues.

Reaganism: A race between conservatism and activism

The Reagan administration ushered in some of the most conservative social and economic policies. Civil rights have been challenged. The huge military budget has meant severe funding cuts in public education and social services. Organized labor has been under attack and workers' rights to organize have suffered setbacks. The last eight years have brought tremendous hardship to the grassroots people, who have responded with growing resistance.

One of the first issues we took up was the struggle to retain the 5th Preference. The Simpson-Mazzoli immigration bill threatened to eliminate the immigration of brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens by cutting back on the 5th Preference category, which is most heavily used by Chinese, Pilipinos, and Mexicans. Working with the Chinese American Citizens Alliance, the Chinese Newcomers Service, Cameron House, and immigration lawyers in the Committee to Retain the 5th Preference, we pointed

out the discriminatory nature of the bill. The Committee collected over 15,000 signatures, organized educational workshops and lobbied members of Congress against this provision. These broad-based efforts eventually led to the defeat of the proposal.

With continuing economic problems, Asians and other minorities have once again been made the scapegoats. Along with Blacks, Latinos, and other people of color, Asians are victims of racist abuse and physical violence. The murder of Vincent Chin in 1982 was the most glaring example of this injustice. Vincent was a Chinese American beaten to death by two unemployed autoworkers accusing "Japs" of "stealing jobs from Americans." The two murderers were fined \$3,000 and did not spend one day in jail. Asians across the nation responded in outrage. CPA worked with Asian Americans for Justice to organize protest marches and rallies. We helped sponsor a memorial for Vincent and a West Coast tour for Mrs. Lily Chin, Vincent's mother.

Although justice was not fully achieved and the killers are still free, the struggle for justice for Vincent Chin has inspired renewed commitment against racial prejudice of all forms. CPA is part of this current effort with the Chinese for Affirmative Action, Japanese American Citizens League, Asian Neighborhood Design, and the Asian Law Caucus.

As an outgrowth of the movement against the conservative tide, Asian Americans have become more active in electoral politics. 1984 proved to be a turning point with the historic Jesse Jackson for President campaign. The tremendous response to Rev. Jackson's Chinatown rally reflected the Chinese community's desire for progress and democracy.

In 1986, our members were part of the statewide effort to oppose Proposition 63, the "English Only"



CPA united the Chinese and Pilipino tenants of the International Hotel with small shop owners and citywide housing groups, in a ten year battle for community control.



COURTESY OF CPA

In addition to voter registration campaigns, CPA also holds forums on election issues to encourage people to vote.

initiative. CPA felt that this proposition, intended to make English the official language of California, would create more discrimination against people whose native language is not English, and lead to more attacks on bilingualism. Our members worked with the American Civil Liberties Union and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund in Californians United Against Prop. 63.

Another front in the struggle against Reaganism has been the right to education. We worked with parents, students, educators, school counselors and other community organizations to voice our concerns and demand our right to quality education. In April 1987, we organized one of the largest contingents in the March on Sacramento for Education. The rally, 7,000 strong, was initiated by three campus networks — the Asian/Pacific Islander Student Union (APSU), the African/Black Student Statewide



DEBORAH LOWE

Above, CPA member (the late) Harry Chan with Jesse Jackson, San Francisco Chinatown, 1984.



JULIAN LOW

The political participation of immigrants will help empower the entire community.

Alliance (A/BSSA), and Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan (MEChA).

Changing demographics and a new era

Starting in 1987, progressive people set new milestones in defeating conservatism. Congress turned back Reagan's nomination of Robert Bork for Supreme Court justice. In 1988, Californians rejected Deukmejian's appointment of Dan Lungren as the state treasurer. The people of San Francisco elected a more liberal mayor, Art Agnos. Most recently, Jesse Jackson won the Democratic primary in our City.

CPA is extremely proud to have been part of each of these developments. Our experience in the last decade tells us the Asian movement will grow when we unite with Blacks, Latinos, and other sectors of society who are fighting for progressive changes.

Asians and Pacific Islanders now make up close to

forty percent of San Francisco. This growth is primarily due to new immigrants from China, Southeast Asia, Korea, and the Philippines. Our English as a Second Language (ESL) program and citizenship classes have already helped thousands of people pass naturalization examinations, obtain better jobs, and participate more fully in society. As more immigrants become naturalized, they will be more conscious in demanding full partnership in shaping the political future of our city.

With this understanding, CPA has emphasized working with immigrants. Their political participation will lead to the empowerment of the entire community and progress for our city. Working with the San Francisco Rainbow Coalition and the Chinese American Voter Education Committee, we have launched an aggressive campaign to register new voters. We also hold educational workshops on election issues to encourage people to vote.

We strive to build CPA in an all-rounded way. We believe cultural and social activities are an important part of fighting for self-respect. The community enjoys our annual picnic and fruit-picking trips. Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners are popular events for people to meet new friends and to understand the society around them.

We also see the importance of bridging the gap between immigrants and American-born, young and old. We work with Asian students from SF State University, University of California (UC) Berkeley, Stanford, San Jose State, and as far as UC Santa Cruz. We provide Chinatown tours to help students see the real conditions of Chinatown and find their cultural heritage. We run an internship program for those who want to work as volunteers in the community.

We have done a lot and are proud of our accomplishments. We are not just a political organization, not just a service organization, nor just a social club. We are all of the above. We are a true grassroots organization built by and for the people.

On our 15th anniversary, we renew our commitment to move forward boldly and work even harder in a time of economic hardship. We rededicate ourselves to serve the people and to expand our ties and friendship with all liberal and progressive people in the City. □

Mabel Teng is currently the co-chair of San Francisco's CPA. She was a California co-chair for the Jesse Jackson '88 presidential campaign and is active in the Rainbow Coalition. She has been an ESL teacher in San Francisco for ten years.



Mrs. Lily Chin tells CPA co-chair Mabel Teng about the racist murder of her son, Vincent, by 2 unemployed Detroit auto-workers in 1982.



CPA carries on a variety of social, service and political activities.

The UConn Incident: Responding to Racism

*Organizing for
Justice, Respect
and Basic
Student Rights*



JENNIFER BROUHARD

Asian students should be able to study and learn on campus without having to worry about violence, threats and intimidation from racists.

By Hei Wai Chan and Marta Ho

On December 3rd, 1987, eight Asian American students from the University of Connecticut (UConn) started out for an off-campus semi-formal dance. The evening turned into a nightmare during the 45-minute bus ride to the dance as they were spat upon and subjected to racial slurs and physical intimidation

from UConn football players. The harassment was witnessed by school authorities who stood by and did nothing. The evening (see sidebar) is painful to recall but the story must be told again and again until the university takes stronger measures to deal with it. This attack and the ensuing failure of the university administration to take action prompted UConn Asian American students to organize and seek outside help.

Silence no more!

Initial efforts by the students to get

assistance from the university and the local authorities were met with bureaucracy, insensitivity, and indifference. No one seemed willing to help. The UConn affirmative action office abdicated responsibility because "the harassment did not involve faculty and students." The campus police claimed no responsibility since it happened off-campus. Three other local police departments in the area claimed to have no jurisdiction. The campus paper was closed for the winter break, and the local newspapers showed no interest in the inci-

dent. Frank Ardaiolo, Dean of Students, was apparently more concerned with the offenders' football careers than the well-being of the victims, which outraged the students.

The administration's silence about this incident could only be interpreted as tolerance of such behavior. The victims were expected to be the "Model Minority" and not make waves. Many of the victims were led to believe that pursuing the matter would get nowhere, and that they should drop the matter. But this incident cut at their very sense of self-respect. "We were being treated worse than animals," said one student. "The university must be held *accountable* to ensure a safe learning environment for *all* students. Not only should it review its mishandling

**Together,
students learned
that justice can
be gained only
through unity
and struggle,
not silence.**

of this case, the university must publicly acknowledge that racism exists on campus and take all necessary actions to deal with it." With that, the students fought on.

Despite the delays, runarounds, and attempted cover-up by the administration, the students' persistence eventually led to the identification and prosecution of two of the attackers, Sean Doyle and Mark Landolfi. Doyle was suspended for one year. Landolfi received two years probation. Dissatisfied with the administration's "slap on the wrists" solution while ignoring the deeper problem, Asian American students sought help from the Asian American Resource Workshop in Boston. Upon its suggestions, students began outreach to other students of color on

Racial Harassment at University of Connecticut

The following is an account by the victims of the December 3, 1987, incident.

On the evening of December 3rd, 1987, at 9:30 pm, eight of us, Feona Lee, Marta Ho, Lenny Chow, Tina Chin, Heidi Hara, Daniel Shan, Ping Szeto, and Ronald Cheung, gathered outside Belden dorm waiting for a bus to take us to a semiformal. The semiformal was sponsored by Belden and Watson Hall and was to be held at the Italian American Club in Tolland, Connecticut. Eventually we got onto a bus with a large group of people. We found seats towards the back of the bus with three to four people on each bench.

We sat quietly waiting for the bus to leave when Feona suddenly felt something land on her hair. At first she thought it was some sort of leakage from the bus. It landed on her several times more and

when it hit her face she finally realized that someone had been spitting on her. It was all over her hair, jacket, and face. In her defense, she got up and demanded to know who was spitting on her. No one knew what was happening or what had happened because it was such a chaotic situation. Feona started to scream when no one responded to her. We all realized what had happened at this point. The guys in the back of the bus had been spitting on us for a few minutes, and only when it landed on Feona's face did we become aware that our backs had been covered with spit.

At this point, Daniel got up and went to Feona's side. He was trying to find out who was doing the spitting and wanted them to apologize to us. As Feona was yelling at the group, one of them spat on her again. This made Dan furious but before he had time to do anything his face was also covered with spit.

The situation got worse and the guys in the back now wanted to fight. There were two main instigators from the rear group who were doing most of the harassing. (Later we were told their names, Mark Landolfi and Sean Doyle.)

People around us tried to calm both groups and we did finally calm down. The group in the back consisted of very large football players who were just dying to get us to fight them. They knew that we had no chance if an actual physical fight developed, so they kept throwing insults at us to make us angry. Mark Landolfi called Dan an "oriental faggot" with numerous other bad names and asked him to fight outside. The people on the bus wanted to get going and the bus driver would not move unless everyone was seated. There was really nothing we could do since we did not want to fight, so we put up with the degradation.

By the time the bus began to

campus, Yale's Asian Student Association, and the East Coast Asian Student Union (ECASU), an Asian student network of 40 campuses throughout the East Coast. Asian students were outraged. Many students from Brown, Harvard, Hunter, MIT, Wellesley, and others identified with the UConn students' frustration. Plans were made to send the UConn administration the message that Asian American students will not tolerate such treatment. At an ECASU meeting at UConn on March 26, 1988, Asian American students from 16 campuses joined 50 UConn students in a highly charged meeting with Dean Ardaiole and demonstrated overwhelming support for UConn students' demands for an Asian American Activities Center,

***The UConn
administration
learned that
Asian American
students are not
to be taken
lightly.***

the appointment of an Asian American Dean of Student Affairs, and courses on Asian American history and experiences. "It created momentum here . . .," said Maria Ho, president of the newly formed Asian American Association.

Organize and build broad support

The March 26th ECASU meeting marked a major turning point in the struggle. Students learned that *together* they could make a difference. Dean Ardaiole, who had been avoiding the student leaders, in an about face contacted Maria to get assurance that the gathering would not result in a campus takeover similar to those at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and Hampshire College over racial incidents there. The once



COURTESY OF UCONN AAA

Marta Ho (far left) and Tina Chen (third from left) were two of the Asian American students involved in the incident.

racist comments. They called us "oriental faggots" and sang "we all live in the yellow submarine" the whole way. The situation was hopeless. There was no authority in charge or anyone willing to help us put an end to the abuse. Was there anything we could do? They outnumbered us and would have also overpowered us in physical strength.

We thought to ourselves that since there was nothing we could do about those jerks and their subhuman behavior, we would not give them the satisfaction to ruin our entire evening. Thus, when we arrived in Tolland we went our separate ways. We naively thought that it was the end of the harassment and they would leave us alone. As one of the girls on the bus commented to us, "Relax, they are just drunk, trying to have some fun." We were hoping that it was the end of their "fun," but how can anyone possibly justify racial harassment as fun?

We walked away from them. We enjoyed about fifteen minutes of fun and relaxation before one of them started to come towards our side of the dance floor. We knew him as one of the main troublemakers on the bus and also one

drive off toward Tolland, we had been on the bus for more than half an hour. We thought that maybe they would stop harassing us since we had already asked them to stop, but the spitting only got worse. We could do nothing to stop them and no one really cared about our

problem. Our coats and hair were covered with their disgusting slime. Some guys did eventually get up to stand between us and the spitters to block them. Even then, spit still managed to hit us.

Throughout the bus ride they continued to spit on us and make

disinterested *Hartford Courant* sent a reporter to cover the meeting.

For hours, students blasted the administration's mishandling of this incident, the lack of an adequate mechanism to properly handle harassment complaints, and the lack of support services and programs to educate the UConn community about campus racism. When it became clear that Dean Ardiolo had little authority to make firm commitments, the students requested a written proposal with a timeline from the administration outlining its plan to address the students' concerns and demands.

The success of the meeting was due primarily to its broad character. The meeting allowed other students to speak out and give examples of

***Now I know how
to deal with
racial harassment
if it ever happens
again.***

other acts of racist violence, affirming that the December 3rd incident was not isolated but part of the conservative trend in society. The gathering of Asian American students from 16 campuses sent a powerful statement to the UConn administration and others that Asian American students are not to be taken lightly!

The students left the meeting in high spirits and recharged. A sense of camaraderie was forged among the UConn students and Asian American students from other campuses. The UConn students were inspired by the showing which reaffirmed their stand. ECASU in turn drew inspiration from UConn students' determination and spirit, learning how the network can be effectively utilized for collective action. Together,



COURTESY OF SF-CFA



COURTESY OF BOSTON-CFA

The 1980's — a decade of rising anti-Asian violence. (Top) Vincent Chin clubbed to death in Detroit, 1982; (Above) Vandy Phong murdered in Lowell, Mass., 1987.

of the main spitters. He came from the other side of the dance hall with two women. They began to deliberately dance into us and elbow us. It happened too many times for it to be an accident. When we asked him what his problem was, he made animal-like noises and horrible faces at us. He screamed like a mad man for more than a minute. As we turned to move away from him, he took his pants off, exposing his private parts to us to insult us even more.

We wanted to leave at this point since nothing was done to control or to restrain this lunatic. We asked an R.A. whether we could leave and he said no because they (the R.A.s) are responsible for our safety off campus. We were shocked at his answer; our safety was much more in question inside the dance hall than outside, yet nothing was done to protect us inside. The R.A.s could only tell us to stay away from the troublemakers, but we did stay away. We felt helpless and worried.

Another fifteen minutes passed from our initial request to leave when Sean Doyle and Ronald Cheung got into another argument. They were arguing when Sean spat beer on Ron's face. He did this to

arouse Ron's anger to make him fight. He wanted Ron to hit him first. Dan walked up to them to prevent a fight when Sean also spat on him and called him more names. This happened in front of a group of students including three R.A.s. Again we were told to calm down and stay away from them. This was the last straw. How long did they expect us to tolerate this kind of behavior? They did not see the gravity of the situation. They did not realize that our human and civil rights were being violated by those who incessantly kept degrading us with mental and physical abuse. They promised to send the troublemakers away on the first bus, yet it was not done. We were left to fend for ourselves until we called the police. When the police came, they got caught up with another case and so we received no help from them either. Finally, Lenny noticed a bus driving in and we quickly got onto it, and that was the end of an unforgettable and unbelievable evening. Our clothes are still stained with tobacco spit, but that can be removed. Our emotional scars are much deeper and harder to remove. □

students learned that justice can be achieved only through unity and struggle, not silence.

In the months that followed, students, the community, and the media eagerly monitored the progress of UConn. Letters of support poured in. AAA's first Asian Awareness Week was successful in raising awareness about Asian American issues. About six students from UConn attended the annual ECASU conference at Cornell where over 600 students from 40 campuses voted unanimously to support UConn and form a task force on racial violence. As graduation approached, the idea to stage a protest during commencement prompted UConn President John T. Casteen to issue a belated public denouncement

of campus racism and caused several trustees, administrators, and faculty to wear the pin "Please Reduce Racism at UConn."

Results, not promises

While President Casteen's public

*Asian students
are feeling
empowered.*

statement openly "supported" the student and faculty efforts, his administration does not share the same sense of urgency and commitment. The proposed year-long systematic self-evaluation offered no meaningful input from students and community leaders. Students and concerned faculty were frustrated, meeting after meeting, by university bureaucracy on all levels.

To dramatize his dissatisfaction with the lack of progress, UConn Professor Paul Bock staged an eight-day hunger strike in August. The students dug in to build and strengthen their AAA, the power base from which their struggle can be sustained, with new leadership and active member participation. The struggle at UConn for justice, respect, and basic student rights represents the very fighting spirit of the Asian Student Movement. The call for this year is empowerment. Record numbers of Asian American students throughout the East Coast are expected to converge at Hunter College on March 24-25, 1989, for the 11th ECASU Conference, entitled *Empowerment Through Unity*.

The UConn administration's promises to implement changes are still unfulfilled. Mark Landolfi continues to play football. Students and faculty gathered this December 3rd, the first anniversary of the incident, in renewed united efforts to make the UConn administration accountable and responsive to the needs and concerns of students and the Asian community. The students are feeling empowered. As Tina Chen, one of the victims who is now active on this issue, remarked, "I have become aware of my own identity. I was born here, but I was harassed because I am Asian. At first, I was in shock and very angry. Now we've formed the Asian American Association. And I know how to deal with racial harassment if it ever happens again to me or anyone else." □

Hei Wai Chan is on the ECASU Executive Committee and a student at MIT. **Marta Ho** is a student from UConn, involved in the December 3rd incident and active in the Asian American Association.



Demonstrator at a march to protest violence against Asians in Boston, January, 1987.



COURTESY OF KARL AKIYA

The Japanese American contingent at the May Day demonstration in New York, 1948.

An oral history

KARL AKIYA

My 50 Years Working for Democracy

Karl Akiya of New York is one of a number of Japanese Americans long active in progressive movements, including the campaign for redress and reparations. The account of his activities illustrates the fact that the redress and reparations effort has been part of a long history of struggle by Japanese Americans for democracy and equality. His story also sheds light on the experience of the Kibei, those Japanese Americans who were born in the U.S. and returned here after growing up in Japan.

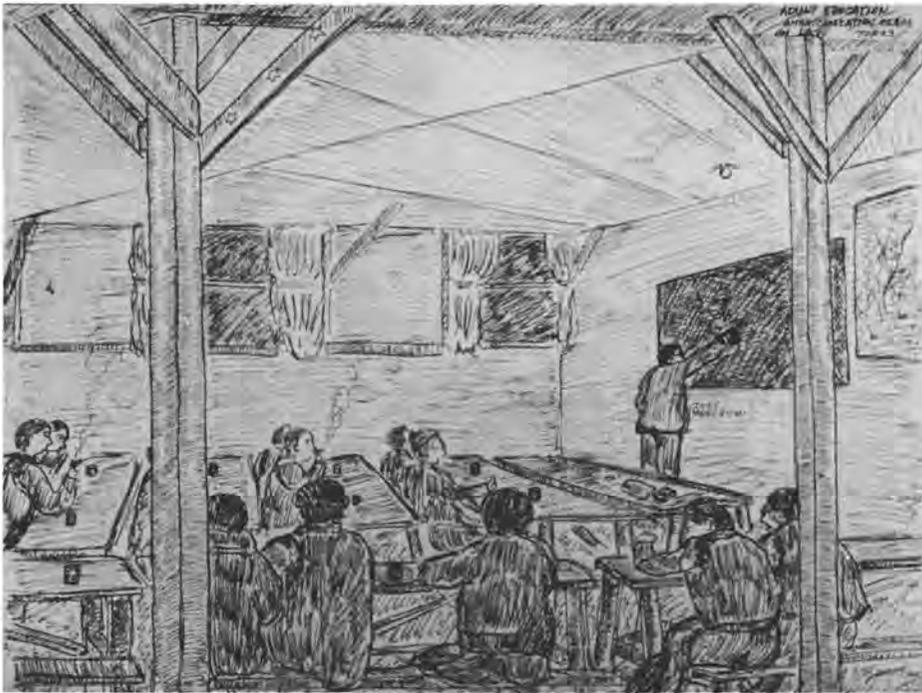
I am Kibei. I was born in U.S. and lived in Japan for 16 years before the war, and returned to America, so I had dual citizenship. During the time I was growing up, Japan was going through democratization, but the

By Karl Akiya as told to
Leslee Inaba-Wong

*We said,
"Remove all
racial barriers
to naturaliza-
tion" affecting
all Asian
Americans.*

militaristic power (was) becoming stronger and stronger. Many of my friends and I myself were arrested for participating in anti-militaristic demonstrations.

I came back to visit my family in 1928. At that time, anywhere along West Coast, Japanese could not get jobs in factories, the unions — particularly the A.F.L. — were so discriminatory, so I worked in small store and as farmworker in Watsonville (Calif.). I worked together with Filipino and Mexican and some Chinese farmworkers, and at that time, no union existed, so we had to fight against cheap wages, hard conditions. I saw migrant workers from Dust Bowl, and saw those miserable conditions with my own eyes. I found out what kind of country America was like. If you tried to



Citizenship class in camp — from sketch by Karl Akiya.

organize the vigilante thugs hired by the bosses, together with the police, suppressed it so viciously. My own friend was tarred and feathered. Such a thing that the Filipino writer Carlos Bulosan writes about all true.

(After Japan invaded Manchuria) I told some people that anti-Japanese forces might utilize the crisis for ousting the Japanese. At that time people who were talking about such things were not so many, whenever we talk about such thing, they call us subversive, anti-Japanese and anti-American, and "red" and we had hard time. But gradually some began to understand what we are saying, but thought only Issei (Japanese immigrants) would be victim because of their status. At that time all Asian immigrants not allowed to become American citizens.

After I came back (to the U.S.) about over 10,000 Kibei came back. The Kibei didn't know what to do, for a long time separated from their families, the lack of English. They were completely isolated. So some idea came to mind, we have to organize them into JACL by organizing Kibei section. But some of the leadership JACL conservative so they resist my idea. So I proposed, let's have a Kibei convention in northern Cali-

We formed a human chain around Paul Robeson to protect him, so he was able to sing.



Karl Akiya as furniture maker after the war.

ifornia. We had quite a big convention (in 1939). We agreed to some fundamental democratic things, and they elected me chairman.

Before evacuation everybody thought only Issei would be target, so when evacuation came, it was big surprise that those Nisei (second generation Japanese Americans) and Kibei who were American citizens will have to be evacuated, too. I thought it very important to go with community to camp and continue to build democratic movement, even though it sound kind of funny, that kind of idea.

At that time camp authorities discouraged speaking and writing of any Japanese, so the Issei and Kibei had no activities. So some of us had idea to have adult education citizenship classes held in Japanese. Finally they gave OK. We had session on American history and history of Utah, American law. We had to translate everything into English first for approval.

I thought it important to fight fascism, so I signed up for 442nd (an army unit), but because of my language skills, they sent me to University of Michigan MIS (Military Intelligence Service) school to teach Japanese to American soldiers.

(After the war when he moved to New York) there were quite a few progressive minded Japanese Americans and they formed Japanese American Organization for Democracy. So in 1948 we all participated in Japanese American contingent for May Day demonstration. At that time the May Day demonstrations were quite big, about 7,000 or 8,000 people march down 7th Avenue.

Since quite many 442 veterans coming back to rejoin their families, we made the point, "Why can't purple heart parents get citizenship?" and "Remove all racial barriers for naturalization," because it was affecting all Asian American people.

We carried banner: "For a free Asia; No military aid to Japan," and we were also getting information about the Hiroshima/Nagasaki bombings, and I felt so strongly this is such a fundamental peace issue, so I work, even to current times, on this question.

(In the late 1940s) Paul Robeson had concert in Peekskill (New York) that was attacked and disrupted by some racists. So Robeson proclaimed we should fight against that kind of thing and planned a second concert. We formed a human chain around the whole grounds to protect him, so he was able to sing quite beautifully. But on the way out, the racists attacked all the buses and they overturned one car. Glass was flying all over. It was miracle no one was killed, but some quite seriously hurt. I got some cuts.

During McCarthy period there was another kind of danger when Un-American Activities Committee first said they were investigating subversive ideas, then they started attacking the Communist Party, then all the civil rights groups, and finally attacking Eisenhower. I myself was threatened many times when the FBI came to my house and asked me so many questions in front of my kids. Some Japanese active people got deported, in such way McCarthyism was connected to immigration agency.

During this time, I was riding on bus and reading a liberal newspaper. Not a radical or communist or that sort of thing, just liberal newspaper, and this man says, "Why you reading this communist propaganda!" and grabs the newspaper out of my hands and threatened me like that.

I am so against red-baiting. People say red-baiting just against the communist but that just excuse they use. Red-baiting is fundamentally anti-democratic. We have to fight red-baiting because everyone becomes victims.

(Around 1980) I came to work in Concerned Japanese Americans and in that was joined the redress/reparations movement. When Commission came to New York City, I testified along lines of Kibei, to clarify them because they were always the most accused and suspected.

I see the redress/reparations movement for Japanese Americans as a fundamental question, how the Japanese Americans can regain justice and democracy. When the redress/reparations movement first started, I

am not so sure about the money business, but gradually I understood that kind of symbol of the civil rights struggle.

I have worked for civil rights for many years and I was honored with Martin Luther King Award. I was invited to speak in Japan about Dr. Martin Luther King and the Afro-American movement, and they were so interested to hear about the long struggle of Afro-American people for emancipation.

I am getting older so it is not so easy for me to participate so freely, but I try and do whatever I can. I talk with other Kibei, not so many now, and I tell them the redress/reparations is such a political victory for civil rights, but it is not over. We must continue to join with the Sansei (third generation Japanese Americans) who worked so hard for this, and with the Nisei, and Issei still alive. It was so important for old timer of civil rights movement like myself can join with the new generations, the Sansei and Yonsei (fourth generation Japanese Americans) to get such an important victory. □



A meeting in the camp at Topaz, Utah.



**Japanese American
Citizens League**
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS 176
REGIONAL OFFICES



**National Council
for Japanese American**

Dear Friends,
...asin

Sponsors, Redress Legal

- Kiyohara and Edith Aki
- Blanche Kimoto Baker
- Rev. Fred Berchtold
- Kay Boyle
- Rita Takahashi Campbell
- Father Clement
- Father Martha Campbell
- Rev. Martin D.
- Don Date
- Rev. Martin D.
- Jesse R. DeWitt
- Othello R. ...
- Joan Frost
- Emi K. Fujita
- Jack Herzog
- Yoshie H.
- Sohei H.
- Tak ...
- Willa ...
- Rev. ...

99TH CONG
1ST SES

To imp

Mr. W

Reparations: OUR

By Bert Nakano



Over 120,000 Japanese Americans, two-thirds of them U.S. citizens, were rounded up in 1942 and sent to remote, barren concentration camps.

*B*elow is the text of the keynote address delivered before close to 1,000 people in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, on Aug. 27, 1988, at the redress celebration organized by the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations (NCRR).

Thank you. This is very exciting, and it is a great day of celebration.

As I recall, when the camps closed, there weren't any parties. There was certainly no community celebration. Many of you here today, and your parents and grandparents, had no idea what the future held. Their businesses had been ruined, some had no homes to go back to, no employment, their property stolen, even their family burial plots vandalized. And signs everywhere saying: No Japs. So there was no celebration when the war ended and we returned home.

Well my friends, today we celebrate. We can finally celebrate, because we've made history!

On August 10, 1942 — eight months after Pearl Harbor — all of the Japanese Americans on the West Coast had been rounded up. They were either in Assembly Centers or the concentration camps. On August 10, 1988, we achieved what we have been fighting for for decades. The camps were our nightmare. August 10th marks the beginning of our dream — a dream many of us

Pilgrimages to former camp sites helped set the stage for the reparations movement. Right, a poster from 1979 Tule Lake Pilgrimage.



HISTORIC VICTORY

thought would never come true.

HR 442 provides individual reparations to each Japanese American survivor of forced relocation and imprisonment. But it does more. Our victory strikes a direct blow against racism and against governmental disregard of the constitutional rights of all people. We recognize that reparations cannot bring back the homes,

the property and the lost years. In that respect, the redress payments can only be a token gesture.

And with sadness and bitterness, we recognize that more than half of those who were imprisoned had died before the law was enacted. They never received redress and never saw the day when the president and Congress finally offered to them and you

and me, an apology on behalf of the entire nation. But passage of the payment of reparations will be a deterrent and reminder to those who would commit a similar injustice against other targets of racism and national hysteria, whether they are Arab Americans, Iranians, or new immigrants from Asia or Latin America.

As a monument to equal justice,



COURTESY OF UNITY NEWSPAPER

Old and young, women and men, the Japanese American community united and organized for over a decade to win reparations.

winning redress is a tremendous achievement. Even more significant to those of us in NCCR, is how this victory was won.

The National Coalition for Redress/Reparations arose from the community. It has no paid staff. It has no lobbyists. It doesn't contribute to political campaigns. We are not a powerful special interest group. When we first set up our little folding tables with petitions and leaflets on the streets of Little Tokyo, San Francisco, San Jose, San Diego, Sacramento and New York, almost everyone we met said we were right. But almost no one believed we could win. How did it happen?

Ours was a grassroots movement. Our strength comes from the community.

NCCR's demands came out of the overwhelming sentiments of the community for individual restitution to the victims of the concentration camps. NCCR also believed very strongly that the necessary components to achieving victory were: 1) to involve the entire community behind the struggle and 2) to insist upon and strive for UNITY in the community. NCCR exists because of the courage and conscience of people like yourselves. We have inherited a history of struggle for justice.

We salute today the Japanese Americans who served in the military with courage and distinction at Anzio and Cassino and the Philippines. We salute the conscience of those who resisted the draft and went to prison and fought injustice in the camps and said No No as a statement of principle. We salute the people who returned to build our communities, and those who, after decades of pain, finally shared their anguish and anger at the Commission hearings, which led to the redress bill. We thank all those who have contributed to the redress movement over the years, attending the Day of Remembrance celebrations, signing petitions, donating money, sending letters and con-



COURTESY OF UNITY NEWSPAPER

Grassroots Japanese Americans were the backbone of the reparations movement. Above, Charles Hamasaki testifying at Los Angeles hearings in 1981.

***With sadness and
bitterness, we
recognize that
more than half of
those who were
imprisoned died
before the law
was enacted.***

tributing to our lobbying campaign last year. We especially honor those who challenged the relocation and detention in court, even up to the Supreme Court of the United States. One modest gentleman who did it

for all of us, is here with us today. In the history of Japanese America, he is a true hero. Please greet Fred Korematsu.

We in NCCR always believed that the courage of a united community would bring us victory. And that is how it happened.

Of course, we are deeply indebted to the many members of Congress who worked to make this victory possible. We are especially grateful to Congressmen Norman Mineta and Robert Matsui and Mervyn Dymally, and to other key members of the House: Jim Wright, Tom Foley, Peter Rodino, Barney Frank and Pat Saiki. In the Senate, special praise must go to Spark Matsunaga, as well as Robert Byrd, Ted Stevens, John Glenn and Daniel Inouye.

This campaign has taught us much. It has awakened for all Asian/Pacific Americans our tremendous potential political power. Our numbers are growing and we will never again tol-

erate anyone violating our rights. But we know this power cannot be used selfishly. Having suffered deeply from injustice, we must take the higher ground and speak out forcefully against injustices inflicted upon others.

We opposed the nomination of Dan Lungren as Treasurer of California, and he was defeated. We publicly deplored statements of Japanese government officials that reflected racism toward Black people. We, as many groups who value our civil rights, opposed the nomination to the Supreme Court of Robert Bork. We protested and rallied against the ouster of Native Americans from Big Mountain.

Some believed that these outspoken stands would hurt our chances of winning redress. We disagreed. We were true to our highest principles. We took the path of conscience. And we formed alliances with other communities in the demand for justice. This made the Reagan administration take notice. Reagan's signature was no gift. His Justice Department had been fighting the bill since the beginning. But the political unity of the community, the historical record established by our own testimony, our alliances with other communities and the crucial work of our friends in Congress made it politically impossible for him to veto the bill.

And that is why, now, we can celebrate.

But after tonight's festivities, when the chairs are folded up, there will be more to be done. Even after victory, we cannot afford to slow down. Those of our older generation are slowly passing away.

First, the appropriation of funds. Each year, Congress must pass an appropriations measure to make the payments. We are pushing for the maximum appropriations — \$500 million — in each of the first two years, and the rest of the funds in the third year.

Second, we need to monitor the payment program to be sure it is implemented QUICKLY and FAIRLY.

Third, we need to ensure that community-minded people are appointed to the Board of Directors of the \$50 million education trust fund, so that the intent of the legislation is carried out.

This will mean more work. We need your continuing support. We in NCCR call on you to stay involved. Without support, organization and, yes, your monetary contribution, we could never have achieved what we have. It must continue.

We have won a tremendous victory for justice. But we know that in the struggle for justice, there are many more battles to be fought. We know that the struggle against anti-Asian racism, for respect, and for full empowerment, continues.

But we can forge ahead, full of hope and confidence. We are strengthened by the lessons we have learned in the campaign for redress/reparations. We can hold our heads high, knowing that we stood up for what's right. When we, as a community stand up together, united and determined, we can win. As Jesse Jackson said, when those on the bottom stand up, all of society

will move. We have moved America.

And as we continue to stand together and struggle together for justice and democracy we can all look forward to a brighter future for all people.

WE HAVE WON REPARATIONS
— WE CAN WIN THAT FUTURE! □

Bert Nakano of Gardena, California, is NCCR National Spokesperson.

*We must still
organize to ensure
Congress provides
funds to carry out
the reparations
payments.*



Asian American students played a vital role in the movement, infusing it with energy and a forthrightness about demanding their rights.

COURTESY OF UNITY NEWSPAPER

The View From Congress

*Interviews with Congressmen
Norman Mineta and Robert Matsui
on the redress
victory and beyond*

Reps. Norman Mineta of San Jose and Robert Matsui of Sacramento were two of the key Congressional architects of the redress bill. In 1974, Mineta became the first Asian American elected to Congress outside of Hawai'i. Matsui was first elected to Congress in 1978. Both of them were interviewed in December 1988.

Mineta

Interviewed by Susan Hayase

EW: Tell me about the vote in the House of Representatives.

Mineta: The night before the debate I remember calling Carol Stroebel (his legislative aide) and recounting the afternoon meeting with the Speaker (Jim Wright). He said, the call is yours, do we go tomorrow or not? And I thought, well, we don't have the votes to really pass it. I think on the Demo side we had something like 183 votes for sure, and we didn't know how many Republican votes we'd be picking up. I thought if we let this thing go 'til next week, it gives the opposition more time. So I said, No, we're going to go. That night about 1 am I called Carol and said, I don't know if I made the right decision. She had to pump me up a little at that point. And so we did it the next day. It was an emotional experience and it was very difficult giving my statement recalling my dad's experience on the



COURTESY OF N. MINETA

Rep. Norman Mineta.

train as we were leaving San Jose (in 1942). But after the vote was taken it was just exhilarating.

EW: What was the role of grassroots efforts and groups such as JACL, NCR, veterans, etc. in the redress victory?

Mineta: What went on to get HR 442 passed was really this broad coalition of groups, whether it was Nisei VFW posts, or NCR, or JACL (Japanese American Citizens League), or NCJAR (National Council for Japanese American Redress), specific groups like Nihonmachi Outreach Committee here in San Jose, or



COURTESY OF R. MATSUI

Rep. Robert Matsui.

groups in Seattle, Chicago, New York, wherever. At the Congressional level, we were open to all groups and welcomed everybody's support.

The work of NCR, for instance, in July '87, coming to lobby — I thought it was very effective. All 120 or so who came fanned out across the Capitol. It came at a good time, before the voting in September, so it was very good to have everybody in Washington, D.C., for that.

People like Arthur Morimitsu of Chicago, who's active in the veterans groups. He got the American Legion and the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) to put into their convention

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JOHN OTA

A group of over 120 grassroots redress supporters went to Washington in July 1987 to lobby Congress.

Matsui

Interviewed by *Diane Tomoda*

EW: What did you think when the idea of a redress bill first came up?

Matsui: The first time it officially came up was back in 1978 at the Salt Lake City JACL Convention. There was some talk about it prior to that, but it wasn't really what you'd call substantive. At that stage there was still a question of whether or not we really wanted to bring this issue out into the light in America. I think deep down inside, we always had this fear that by bringing up the internment, we would bring up the specter of disloyalty. And many of those feelings and memories were just too painful for us to deal with. There was always that fear that this issue could play against us. I believe that that attitude prevailed until the first hearings were held.

A lot of Sansei were upset by this

whole notion (of the Commission). They thought we were passing the buck by saying we'll study it, in other words, we'll bury it. But I think it was very critical to what ultimately happened. Once the Commission came out with its recommendations in 1984, we had to prepare conforming legislation and that is where I think the effort really began. At that time, I think almost all of us said that passage of the bill was really remote. Everyone was talking about how we were going to cut the deficit, not expand programs.

EW: What elements came together to get the bill passed?

Matsui: The heavyweight work didn't begin until I think it was '86 and '87. That's when the mass letter writing campaign began. Grayce Uye-hara came in at the right time. Prior to her there was not the kind of effort that was needed. (Lobbying Congress in July 1987) was very helpful. It was a very important phase of the

whole effort. At the same time we had the fortune of getting Grant Ujifusa, who was very close to (conservative Republicans) Jack Kemp, Dick Cheney and Alan Simpson, whom he met with. We didn't have problems with the Democrats, it was Republicans and conservatives. And of course

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**We need to
get involved in
other political
campaigns, go
beyond redress.**

Mineta . . .

from page 30

platforms statements on the injustice of the evacuation. Things like that were very helpful.

The letter writing efforts without a doubt had a big impact. I thought the letter writing efforts to President Reagan were very effective. A petition came in from Bruyeres, France, with about 10,000 signatures, because they were liberated by the 442nd R.C.T. (an all-Japanese American unit in the U.S. Army in World War II). I sent the petition to the White House. Frankly, when I got that thing, I started crying, it was so moving.

EW: What's the outlook for the bills to fund the redress payments?

Mineta: I've already started a conversation with members of the Appropriations Committee on putting in maybe an initial \$100 or \$200 million, if we can get that much, in the Spring 1989 (federal budget) supplemental, to at least start paying the Issei, who are really old. I spoke in Seattle and met a woman who is 104 years old. I want to make sure she gets her money as soon as possible. So even if it's \$50 million, I'd like to get some money into the Spring supplemental appropriations bill to get payments started in 1989.

EW: What future issues do you see Asian Americans making gains on?

Mineta: Well, bills on hate crimes, increasing violence against Asians. The issue of admissions to universities. Generally speaking, issues relating to education, job opportunities, affirmative action. I think we have to work more broadly with Chinese American groups, Korean American, Vietnamese, Laotian, Filipino American groups. I just got a memo from my staff on the reintroduction of the bill that relates to Filipinos who were recruited by the U.S. Navy and even after they served, they are not eligi-

ble for U.S. citizenship. I authored this bill and we had about 175 cosponsors. I'm in the process right now of contacting those 175 because I'm going to reintroduce it. The Chairman of the Immigration Subcommittee, Ron Mazzoli, has indicated early hearings on the bill, and that's what I'm preparing for right now.

EW: Do you think the redress victory helped empower Asian Americans?

Mineta: I think this shows that you don't have to be a large voting bloc to be able to show what you can do. It showed that by working together in concert with other groups, you can get these things done. I think

Matsui . . .

from page 31

Norm (Mineta) and I were buttonholing individual members and asking them to sponsor the bill. Spark (Matsunaga) on the Senate side was moving ahead in 1987 with his effort.

EW: Where do we go from here?

Matsui: If the Japanese American community does not parlay this new political strength and awareness, take part in other political activities, such as getting involved in political campaigns — and even thinking of running for political office themselves — or lobbying their legislature or Congress — if they don't take that next step, build upon this, this whole effort would not have the significance I think it should have. In order to have a continued impact, we will have to use this knowledge and experience and go beyond this. I am really concerned that we may see this as our only issue and not get involved in other things as well. We can't just sit back now and say it's over.

I think the Lungren issue is a good example. Did you see the *Pacific Citizen* editorial in which they apolo-

gized for Lungren? That was outrageous. Here we had help from other groups and all of a sudden we closed our eyes when we got a right-wing conservative like Dan Lungren who almost became a statewide officeholder in our state. Whoever wrote the editorial — I don't know who it was — obviously doesn't understand the whole concept of redress and the meaning behind it.

Susan Hayase is a member of *Nihonmachi Outreach Committee (NOC)* in San Jose, California.

I want to make sure the Issei, who are really old, get their money as soon as possible.

EW: What about the appropriations for the reparations payments?

Matsui: We want to get the appropriations as quickly as possible. That is where Senator Inouye will be very critical because he is very high on the Appropriations Committee on the Senate side, and his involvement will be essential to this effort. It remains to be seen how much the first year appropriations will be. We are going to have a tough year with a new President, but we'll seek the maximum and see where we are on this. □

Diane Tomoda of Sacramento, California, is a member of NCR.

REDRESS/ REPARATIONS:

Fred Korematsu: I knew it was wrong. I was an American and this is my country. **Diane Tomoda:** It's like we felt we had to write a new chapter in our history. **Sox Kitashima:** I was ready to continue till we won. I would have never given this up. **Frank Emi:** All the minorities need to work together against injustices caused by blatant racism. **Rudy Tokiwa:** Thinking of the guys that died gave me the strength to finish what I started. **Alan Nishio:** Many felt that there was no group that really spoke for them. That's where the NCRP came in. **Sue Tokushige:** The government could never make up for what was lost. **George Yoshioka:** Sometime in your life only you can do what has to be done. **Kathy Nishimoto-Masaoka:** We are not different from other groups that are fighting racism. **Bill Kochiyama:** We were expendable, especially in the campaign to save the Lost Battalion. **Leslee Inaba-Wong:** We now have the responsibility to build on this victory to strengthen democracy for all.

THE GRASS ROOTS

Fred Korematsu

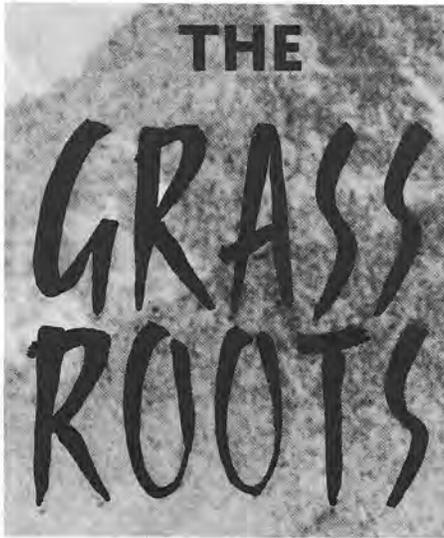
San Leandro, Calif.

Fred Korematsu is famous as one of four individuals who challenged the constitutionality of the internment all the way to the Supreme Court. Why did he do it? "I knew it was wrong," he says. "I was an American and this is my country. They were looking at us as enemies, as spies, as foreigners. I thought it was racial." Fred volunteered for the army, but they refused him, classifying him 4-C, an enemy alien although he was born in Oakland. After refusing to be evacuated, Fred was arrested and later interned at Topaz, Utah.

Today, at 69, he takes out time from his work as a draftsman to speak or receive awards all around the country. He is widely admired now, but in 1942, his stand was a lonely one. Other Japanese Americans "figured I was a troublemaker. They tried to avoid me as much as possible. At that time there was more fear and distrust."

As the reparations movement was getting off the ground, Fred decided to press an unusual challenge of his wartime conviction. In 1983, he won his case when a federal court agreed with Fred's lawyers that the government had deliberately covered up evidence showing that Japanese Americans did not pose a security threat. Fred says that his case "proved that what the military and government did was wrong and unnecessary." Fred's victory foreshadowed the passage of the bill five years later. "The court case and the redress movement worked together," he says.

After his case was won, he and his wife Kathryn got involved in the reparations campaign. "We wanted to do whatever we could to help out," explains Fred. He has spoken at Day of Remembrance programs and in July 1987, he and Kathryn lobbied Congress as part of the grassroots lobbying delegation organized by the NCCR.



The foundation of the redress victory was a grassroots movement made up mainly of former internees and daughters and sons of those who were interned. Their determined efforts to rectify the enormous injustice of the mass incarceration overcame tremendous obstacles. Out of the thousands who made up the movement, each with a unique story, we offer a look at 11 individuals.

The following profiles were written by Robert Suyeda and Jenny Tsai of San Jose, Calif.; G. Akito Maehara of Los Angeles; Leslee Inaba-Wong of New York; and John Ota of Oakland, Calif.



Fred Korematsu, left, and Ted Kojima, lobbying aide to Rep. Ed Boland in July 1987.

JOHN OTA

Could the camps happen again? Fred thinks the bill will help prevent it, but points out, "You never can tell. There's still racial problems in this country. That's why we should always be alert about this."

Rudy Tokiwa

Sunnyvale, California

"How many times do you see a group of people put into a concentration camp, then asked to volunteer to fight for America?" asks Rudy Tokiwa. He should know, because he was incarcerated in Poston camp in Arizona when he volunteered for the Army and wound up in the segregated, all-Japanese American 442nd Regimental Combat Team/100th Battalion. He was only 16 at the time, although he told them he was 18.

The fierce fighting in Europe left him with a permanent injury, but he was one of the lucky ones: many never returned at all. Japanese American soldiers were often deployed in the most dangerous missions and they sustained casualties at over five times the overall U.S. rate.

He got involved in the reparations movement because "I couldn't let the guys who made the supreme sacrifice down." Rudy has toured the country, showing the film, "Yankee Samurai," which tells the story of the 442nd/100th. In 1987 he was one of several 442nd vets who went to Washington, D.C., as part of the NCCR grassroots lobbying delegation. His stories deeply moved both members of Congress and other lobbyists.

"I was never one to speak in front of people," says Rudy. "But thinking of the guys who died gave me strength to finish what I had started out to do."

Now that the bill is signed, Rudy says, "The job is not done." He wants to see Congress allocate the maximum appropriations for reparations "so all the older people would be paid. A lot have not made it."



Rudy Tokiwa leading a group of captured German soldiers in World War II.

And while monuments to the 442nd/100th have been erected in Europe, there are none in the U.S. Rudy would like to see that change. "So much more needs to be taught, to fight prejudice," says Rudy.

Tsuyako "Sox" Kitashima

San Francisco, California

Tsuyako "Sox" Kitashima is an example of the kind of Nisei fighting spirit and determination that propelled the reparations movement. A retired Veterans Administration employee and member of the San Francisco NCCR Coordinating Committee, she has worked tirelessly for redress.

Why has this issue been so important to her? "I wanted the same equality, justice and liberty as others," she says. "We didn't do anything wrong and yet they trampled over us." To her the compensation is symbolic and cannot adequately make up for the degradation as well as the property losses people endured. "To stick out my tin plate and have them slop overcooked Swiss chard and other



Rudy Tokiwa today.

PERRY CHOW

**Thinking of the
guys who died
gave me the
strength to finish
what I started.**



ISAO TANAKA

Tsuyako "Sox" Kitashima giving keynote address at 1988 Day of Remembrance program in San Francisco.



JOHN OITA

Diane Tomoda presenting an award to Rep. Robert Matsui in Washington, D.C.

It's like we felt we had to write a new chapter in our history.

stuff on there — even though I get the money, it won't erase this from my mind," she explains. She also recalls that when she and her husband came to San Francisco from camp in Utah, they had to sleep in the Buddhist Church gymnasium, separated from other couples by army blanket partitions. She recalls that both men and women had to work as domestics just to survive after having lost everything.

Sox had a positive attitude from the start. "I always felt we could win if we persevered and stuck together as a community. I knew that everything that was used against us was proven wrong. If the bill didn't pass, I was ready to continue on until we won. I would have never given this up."

But she understands why some others were more hesitant. "Some of them felt if they got involved, something might happen to them again, like the internment. They said, 'I don't want to go to jail again.' They felt they might be put on some kind of list. But there was no fear in me at all."

Sox's apartment is the local NCRR office and she personally collected and mailed out thousands of letters. She believes that "those thousands and thousands of letters had to mean something to them. If we didn't do this letter writing, we wouldn't be nowhere. We'd still be introducing bills."

She appreciates support from other nationalities, noting "Support is something you just can't buy. It has to come from the heart." She believes that in return, "we should extend our support to other oppressed people."

Diane Tomoda
Sacramento, California

Diane Tomoda of Sacramento was a college student when she first got involved with the issue of the internment. She first learned about the camps in detail in Asian American Studies classes. "If it hadn't been for those classes and my own reading, I wouldn't have known much about the camps because it wasn't taught,"

she says. "The redress movement was really an extension of learning our history."

In the 1970s, she worked on pilgrimages to Tule Lake camp. The pilgrimages, Day of Remembrance commemoration programs and other educational events preceded and helped lay the basis for the reparations movement.

She was part of a motion of many students who got involved in the reparations movement. "There was a lot of anger and a lot of militancy," she says. "It's like we felt we had to write a new chapter in our history. We felt we had a role to play in correcting this injustice."

Working together, "The Nisei and Sansei learned from each other," she says. "We combined our strengths. The Sansei provided a spirit and push and wanted to fight back against what happened to our parents. But the Nisei and Issei provided the most inspiring example of standing up and speaking out. At the hearings they came out in a very public way, baring their souls, very strongly and very boldly demanding restitution."

Diane feels the camps also indirectly affected the Sansei. From their parents, many Sansei inherited mixed feelings about their identity, about "not wanting to be Japanese American. People thought they were put in the camps for being too Japanese. In my family we were told we wouldn't need to use Japanese language." When she learned that the Japanese community in Florin, where her mother lived, was "literally divided into four parts and dispersed," she began to see why Japanese Americans today are still so dispersed.

Although overjoyed by the recent victory, she is also sad that so many, like her grandparents who were in the camps, are not alive to hear the apology or benefit from the compensation.

Bill Kochiyama
New York, New York

Bill Kochiyama grew up in New York, but was interned while he was

in California seeking a college education. He was sent first to an assembly center at Tanforan race track south of San Francisco, where there were "two long lines of troops with rifles and fixed bayonets pointed at the evacuees." In the 1982 New York hearing, Bill described his reaction at the time: "Overwhelmed with bitterness and blind with rage, I screamed every obscenity I knew at the armed guards — daring them to shoot me."

After Pearl Harbor, Bill had tried to enlist in the Army, Navy and Marines, but they turned him down as a "Jap." Later, he volunteered for the 442nd R.C.T. from the camp at Topaz, Utah. Looking back on the 442nd, he says it is his opinion that "we were expendable, especially in the campaign to save the Lost Battalion." At the time of that fierce battle, his unit, Company K, was down to 23, from full strength of 200 men. Many more GIs of the 442nd were killed or wounded in the fighting than were rescued in the "Lost Battalion," a unit from Texas that had been surrounded by German soldiers.

As he has learned things about the camps that he didn't know at the time, he has come to respect those in the camps who refused to go into the army until the government restored their rights. "Those guys (the draft resisters) really deserve medals," he says. During the July 1987 lobbying trip to Washington, D.C., Bill was glad to meet and talk with Frank Emi, a leader of the draft resisters during the camps.

A member of Concerned Japanese Americans in New York City, one of the organizations that is part of NCRR, Bill hopes that the redress victory means that the mass incarceration will "never happen again to another group, whether racial, political or religious."

Frank Emi

Los Angeles, California

Born in 1916 in Los Angeles, Frank Emi is living proof that Japanese

American resistance to the mass incarceration began in and before the camps. The reparations movement, in which he has played an active part, inherited the legacy of the courageous resisters, like Frank.

In 1942, he was forced to sell everything he had, including a produce market, for \$1,500. He and his family were sent to Heart Mountain camp in Wyoming.

A year later, the government required those in the camps to complete loyalty questionnaires and subjected them once again to the military draft. After Pearl Harbor, many Japanese Americans who tried to volunteer for the army had been refused as "enemy aliens" even if they were U.S. citizens by birth. Frank, Kiyoshi Okamoto and several others formed the Heart Mountain Fair Play Committee to formally protest the violation of their Constitutional rights. The Committee advocated non-cooperation with the draft until those rights were restored.

For these activities, Frank was jailed for 18 months.

An NCRR member since 1984,



Frank Emi at his home in Los Angeles.

***All the minorities
need to work
together against
injustices caused
by blatant racism.***



Bill Kochiyama testifying at CWRIC hearing in New York, 1982.



G. AKITO MAEHARA

Kathy Nishimoto-Masaoka of Los Angeles.

We are not different from other groups that are fighting racism.

Frank says, "I feel that the most significant factor in the passage of the redress bill was the large amount of grassroots support this issue received. If the grassroots movement did not defeat Lungren's nomination as treasurer in California, I doubt whether Reagan would have signed the bill."

He adds, "I feel that all minorities need to work together against all these kinds of injustices caused by blatant racism. We must all get together to eliminate these things from our society."

Kathy Nishimoto-Masaoka

Los Angeles, California

Kathy Nishimoto-Masaoka, Co-Chair of the Los Angeles chapter of the NCRP, is a Sansei who grew up in the East Los Angeles community of Boyle Heights. Her mother was incarcerated in Gila River camp in Arizona. Her father was drafted in 1942 and his family was sent to Manzanar camp in California.

In the late 1970s, she got involved in the reparations issue through her work in the East Los Angeles Outreach Committee and the Little Tokyo People's Rights Organization, which were among the community groups that came together to form the NCRP in 1980.

Kathy sees reparations as a question of dignity for Japanese Americans. She believes the camps affected both those interned and their children who, like herself, were born afterwards. The camps, she says, "affected our development and the way we feel about ourselves in relationship to the stigma our community has had to carry on its shoulders since World War II."

She also sees the reparations campaign as significant in that "we were standing up and fighting for justice alongside other nationalities."

"This country," she adds, "was founded on racism beginning with the Native Americans, the bringing of Blacks here for slavery, the conquering of Chicanos as well as

Asians. The Civil Rights Movement sparked an atmosphere where it was OK to fight back to defend our rights. We are not really different from these other groups who are fighting against racism. All our struggles are against the same racist forces which put us in concentration camps and also committed injustices towards them."

Sue Tokushige

San Jose, California

At Poston camp in Arizona, Sue Tokushige and her new born baby could not find proper medical care. The baby couldn't be breast fed and couldn't eat mess hall food; she needed an SMA formula, but the government wouldn't provide it. Until friends sent in some formula, the baby was not properly nourished. At 18 months, it only weighed 13 pounds.

"I promised myself when I watched my baby starve, that I would speak out on this issue, no matter what the cost," says Sue. Besides the baby, Sue explains, "My father fought for the USA in World War I," she says, emphasizing the "one." He was "an American citizen, loyal to no other country." The government "could never make up for what was lost. They took years of your life and property. When we came out, we had nothing."

Since 1978, Sue has been a member of Nihonmachi Outreach Committee (NOC) in San Jose, which is part of the NCRP. She is also a member of the JACL. Working for reparations, Sue says, "has given me the ability to speak out. I used to mind to speak out. I don't now. When I was first given the opportunity to speak in front of a classroom about the concentration camps, I couldn't. Too much hurt to talk of it. But the things I remember that happened have given me the strength."

It wasn't easy to speak out at first. "You're told you have to be careful of what you say. You're going to be taken in. You're speaking out against

the government." But, she adds, "You might as well speak out. The people around you don't know what position we were put in."

Sue went to lobby Congress in 1987. After a long discussion with one member of Congress, he told her, "More people should hear this story of the concentration camps. You will get my vote." Remembering the lobbying, Sue says, "It was really important for the ones incarcerated in the concentration camps to speak out. It really had an impact on Congressmen."

Sue plans to "work just as hard" to see that the former internees get paid as quickly as possible. "How many Issei are gone? How many Nisei are gone?" she asks.

Leslee Inaba-Wong

New York, New York

Leslee Inaba-Wong was born in Amache camp in Colorado, but she says "I did not really comprehend the impact that the camps had on my parents' and grandparents' lives until 1981-82, when I worked with Nisei and Kibei to help organize and prepare for the CWRIC hearings" in New York City, where she is a member of Concerned Japanese Americans, which is part of NCRRA. In preparing for the hearings, Leslee came "to appreciate the qualities of endurance and strength so common to the Issei, Kibei and Nisei."

While many Nisei say that the redress victory is the result of the work of Sansei, Leslee believes it was the result of combined effort of all generations. If Sansei like herself made some special contributions to the effort, Leslee believes it was only because they had educational and other "advantages many Nisei did not have," because of the camps.

Leslee believes that winning reparations showed the growing political sophistication of Asian Americans. She says, "We learned to concentrate our talents and energies, acting as a united force by placing our differences within a broader context of



Sue Tokushige of San Jose.

working toward a common goal. We learned to be all-inclusive, joining our efforts with everyone who was willing to work and contribute to the common good."

She adds that the reparations movement succeeded because it involved "first and foremost, an active campaign that engaged and mobilized the community at the grassroots level. Secondly, strong leadership at the Congressional, state and local levels, and finally, a large number of friends and allies."

A progressive activist involved in many issues, Leslee believes that after the victory, "we now have the responsibility to build on this victory to strengthen democracy for all."

George Yoshioka

San Jose, California

"Angry for 46 years and just beginning to cool down," is how George Yoshioka describes himself. George was 28, the eldest son in a family of nine, when he was sent to Amache camp in Colorado. He had been a produce clerk, but after the camps, he became an auto mechanic and eventually opened his own shop.

George joined the reparations



Leslee Inaba-Wong of New York.

***The government
could never
make up for what
was lost.***



PERRY CHOW

George Yoshioka of San Jose.



COURTESY OF UNITY NEWSPAPER

Alan Nishio testifying at CWRIC hearing in Los Angeles, 1981.

movement four years ago. He is a member of Nihonmachi Outreach Committee (NOC) in San Jose, and the JACL. He first contributed money, helped in the letter writing campaign, attended meetings and later was a speaker at the local Day of Remembrance program. With quiet determination, George saw the reparations movement as similar to the camps. The work was long and hard, through trying and discouraging circumstances.

But from the beginning, George believed the bill would pass. "If the Constitution meant anything, it guarantees the civil rights of every citizen and that meant including redress and reparations," he says.

Working for reparations has given George strength and focus. "I feel I can defend myself now. When you have all the facts and you're convinced you're right, you're not going to be afraid. It is when you're undecided on what to do that causes fear."

"Martin Luther King knew the dangers but that didn't stop him. Everyone of us has this ability. You do what you have to do. Sometime in your life only you can do what has to be done. Even if you're going to be killed. Because you're not acting for yourself, it's for the following generations," he adds.

Alan Nishio

Gardena, California

Alan Nishio was born in a U.S. concentration camp at Manzanar, California, but he didn't really learn in detail about the camps until college. "Then things began to make sense," he says. Things like his "father's frustration at not being able to rebuild his life." His father had owned a grocery store before the war, but afterwards became a gardener. His mother worked in a pen factory.

"When the issue of redress/reparations was taken up over a decade ago, it was seen then as largely a symbolic issue taken up by idealistic Sansei activists," says Alan. "But now it has become reality due to the will-

ingness of countless individuals to come forward and tell their story, stand up for their rights and demand justice."

A longtime political activist and former president of the Little Tokyo People's Rights Organization, Alan helped form NCRR. "We believed that many people at the grassroots level really wanted to play an active role in the campaign, but felt there was no group that really spoke for them. That's where the NCRR came in," he says. Today he is NCRR Southern California Co-Chair. He is also Assistant Vice President for Student Services at California State University, Long Beach.

Alan also believes the reparations victory is "symbolic of the growing empowerment of Asian/Pacific Islanders." But he points out, "we still need to broaden the understanding of what it means to be part of the Asian/Pacific Islander community. There were some narrow views among Japanese Americans that redress was only a Japanese American issue or just a general 'American' issue. Japanese Americans need to return the support they received from other Asian/Pacific Islander groups, and work with the immigrant communities in particular." □

***Sometime in your
life only you can
do what has to be
done.***

The Achievement of Redress

A former JACL president reflects on the decade-long effort

By Clifford Uyeda

The redress effort of the Japanese Americans was an unprecedented triumph. Its active national campaign goal was accomplished in less than 10 years.

Redress for Japanese Americans had been considered even during the detention years. The discussions increased in the 1970s. The effective nationally organized effort, however, was not initiated until the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) National Convention launched a nationwide campaign in the summer of 1978 with the demand for \$25,000

per individual plus a trust fund.

No single individual or an organization, including JACL, can take all the credit. The passage of the redress bill by both houses of Congress (H.R. 442, S. 1009) was the result of dedicated efforts by all citizens who believed that a meaningful restitution was necessary. The importance of the early efforts by the Seattle group to keep this subject in the forefront of Japanese American consciousness cannot be ignored.

JACL realized early, 1977-1978, that the major obstacle it faced was the widely held Nisei fear of public backlash. This fear was circumvented with expressions like: "Cheapening freedom by putting a price tag on it." "Diminishing the grace and realism with which our Issei parents

made the best of the impossible situation." "Depreciating the patriotism and the courage with which Nisei fought for America." "Dissipates the good will built by Nisei among our fellow Americans."

Not an insignificant number of Nisei told us that we would be seen as standing outside the halls of Congress with "palms outstretched for a handout." Some agreed with then Sen. S. I. Hayakawa that this behavior was "beneath our dignity." Clearly the education of the Nisei was the first order of business.

These were the public utterances of many well-heeled Nisei. However, answers to over 4,000 questionnaire forms in the late 1970s revealed that 94 percent of the respondents favored seeking redress. Eighty per-



ALAN NISHIO

JACL National President Cressey Nakagawa (far right), NCRR's Bert Nakano (far left) with Bob Bratt, head of the federal Office of Redress Administration and another ORA officer, after a JACL-NCRR program, Dec. 1988.

cent of the respondents were Nisei, and ten percent each were Issei and Sansei. Ninety-two percent had experienced wartime incarceration.

The proposal adopted by the JACL National Council in 1978 called for monetary restitution to everyone actually detained or interned in camps or who were compelled to move from the "exclusion" areas. Payments would go to survivors and heirs of deceased detainees. Persons of Japanese ancestry who were brought over from Central and South America by the U.S. government and interned were included.

The proposal stated that the processing and payment of individual claims will be the responsibility of the U.S. government. A trust fund for the benefit of Japanese American community projects, it stated, should be administered by members of a presidential commission, the majority of which would be Japanese Americans.

The great controversy in the redress campaign came in 1979 when a commission route was chosen — adding another step in the process of seeking redress. The added process was felt necessary in order to educate the American public, the constituents of congressional members who must pass the necessary bill. Some opening of old wounds became necessary. The jurors were the American public who had to hear from the victims.

There were opponents of the commission route who said they preferred an all-out effort for immediate redress, that if they failed their conscience would be clear. They would know they had gone down with the ship ablaze. JACL felt that this was not good enough. The entire group could not be sacrificed for the satisfaction of few individual feelings. The redress committee felt duty bound to obtain a meaningful restitution.

The supporters of the commission route felt that a full examination of the Japanese American incarceration experience could not fail to produce an objective recommendation in our



JOHN OTA

(left) Aiko Yoshinaga-Herzig of the National Council for Japanese American Redress (NCJAR). (Below) Grayce Uyehara of the JACL's Legislative Education Committee (LEC).



JOHN OTA

favor. This could become a powerful reason for national support of the redress bill in Congress.

Once the commission began its public hearings, the vigorous grassroots campaign under the capable Sansei leadership of the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations (NCRR) was a crucial factor in the success.

The attempt by the National Council for Japanese American Redress (NCJAR) to seek redress in the courts based on the merits of the case, rather than appealing to public sentiment, was logical. In the preparation of the court case, many new research materials were uncovered which strengthened the case for redress.

In the redress bill passed by Congress, there is an unfortunate change in the eligibility which does not redress many who suffered the most from the wartime incarceration experience. Under the precedent established by the redress bill, however, the U.S. government will think twice before ever again imprisoning a class of people based solely on ancestry and without due process.

The role played by the Nikkei (Japanese American) members of Congress was a major one. Without their courage of conviction and untiring efforts, the redress bill could not have succeeded.

The most significant realization for Japanese Americans is that the passage of the redress bill through Congress owes its success to many individuals and organizations. Most of all, the redress campaign's success is due to the willingness of the American people to conclude this case with a reasonably meaningful restitution. □

Clifford Uyeda was JACL National President from 1978-1980 and JACL National Redress Chair from 1977-1978. He is currently president of the National Japanese American Historical Society. This article is reprinted from the JACL's Pacific Citizen.

TIME OF REMEMBRANCE

Images from New York and Washington, D.C.

b y C o r k y L e e

Whenever a significant event takes place in New York's Asian American communities, whether a Korean play, a Chinatown event for Jesse Jackson, or a recent protest of the frame-up of a Pilipino man on child molestation charges, photographer Corky Lee gets the call.

It is no surprise then that over the years Corky chronicled much of the redress movement in New York and related events elsewhere on the East Coast. He was there to capture the New York redress hearings in 1982, Day of Remembrance programs, and 1987 ceremonies marking the opening of an exhibit on Japanese Americans at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. We are pleased to present some

of Corky's images in the following spread. Readers will also notice other photos by Corky throughout this and other issues.

Born and raised in New York, Corky became active in Chinatown and the Asian American communities in 1966 and he has been a mainstay ever since. He was recently described as the "unofficial, undisputed photographer laureate" of Asian America. Capturing the beauty, dignity and strength of Asians struggling for equality in America, his photos have been in demand in an increasing number of exhibits, periodicals and books.

Those interested in organizing exhibits of Corky's photography can contact him at: 415 East 13th St., New York, N.Y. 10014. □



A Smithsonian Institute exhibit on Japanese Americans and the U.S. Constitution opened a few weeks before the House of Representatives passed the redress bill on September 17, 1987. Many Japanese American veterans of World War II lobbied members of Congress to vote for the bill while they were in Washington for the exhibit.



Rose Fujisaki of Denver and Pearl Yamagimachi of Seattle visit the grave site of their older brother, Jimmie T. Kokubu. Kokubu died while fighting in World War II as part of the all-Japanese American 442nd Regimental Combat Team.



February 1982 Day of Remembrance program in New York City, marking the 40th anniversary of the Japanese American incarceration. Posters in the background were created by Byron Goto.



At a 1983 Day of Remembrance program in New York, Karl Akiya, who was incarcerated in the camp at Topaz, Utah, displays a camp poster calling for public discussion of free speech.

米國研究講座プログラム
 白人と赤人 沖野幸一
 二月十五日(月) 香山屋敷法律事務所
 二月十六日(火) 日本國体に就て 池田豊耕
 友那革命の前後 峯彦熊
 白人と赤人 沖野幸一
 香山屋敷法律事務所
 二月十八日(水) 近代日本帝國の興起 池田豊耕
 孫逸仙と三民主義 峯彦熊
 時事問題解説座談會
 二月十七日(水) 午後七時半
 食堂第十二号於て
 成人教育部

Redress and Asian/Pacific Unity

By Meg Malpaya Thornton

I remember my anger when I first learned of the Japanese American incarceration. I thought that if they can incarcerate Japanese Americans who were U.S. citizens, then they could incarcerate Pilipino Americans like myself and other minority peoples as well. I know from my experience and from Asian/Pacific American history that the concentration camps were just one of many examples of the racism and injustice that we have faced ever since setting foot in this country.

So my spirits soared when the redress and reparations bill was signed into law. I feel that this victory is important for all the Asian/Pacific communities and other minority peoples because it affirms our rights as Americans. It is especially important in this current period when attacks are being made on affirmative action and ethnic studies, and anti-Asian violence has increased.

However, there are also views in the Asian/Pacific community that the redress and reparations campaign victory is only a Japanese American issue. I've heard people say, "Well, they've won their issue. That's nice. Now we have to work on our issue." Also, some Japanese Americans look down on other Asian/Pacific peoples and do not see the importance of building mutual support with them.

The concept of an Asian/Pacific American community and movement is one that must be struggled



COURTESY OF MEG MALPAYA THORNTON

Meg Thornton, standing, third from left, with youth from SIPA, Inc.

for and built. The Asian/Pacific community is diverse and each ethnic group has its own particular issues, history and culture. Some groups have deep-seated resentments against other Asian/Pacific peoples due to historical differences from their native countries' wars and stereotypes. These resentments sometimes surface in Asian/Pacific American community politics and must be dealt with in the interest of building Asian/Pacific unity.

Currently the Asian/Pacific community is experiencing a political upsurge as newer communities begin to exercise their influence and political rights. In the past, the Chinese and Japanese communities were seen as the primary representatives of the Asian/Pacific community. Now the Pilipinos, Koreans and other groups

are coming more to the forefront and making their voices heard in the Asian/Pacific political scene. It is important that the different Asian/Pacific ethnic groups move past historical differences and unite around our common interests as Asian/Pacific Americans. We must recognize that there are many disparities within the Asian/Pacific community and make sure our movement advocates for the interests of all groups, including the Pacific Islander and Southeast Asian communities.

The people united can never be defeated! □

Meg Malpaya Thornton is director of SIPA, Search to Involve Pilipino Americans, Inc., an agency serving Pilipino youth in Los Angeles.

A Step Toward Empowerment

By Jerry C. Yu

The redress and reparations victory sets an important precedent for all Asian and Pacific Islander communities: that we are willing and able to participate in this democracy as full participants. Those who advocated the concentration camps questioned the fitness of Asians and other non-whites to be part of American society. But with this victory, Japanese Americans can assert with confidence and pride that they and other Asians can and have played a very positive role in this society.

As a Korean American, I see the passage of the law as a great victory for all Americans and particularly so for all Asians and Pacific Islanders in

the U.S. We can all learn much from the history of this movement, from the grassroots mass base, to the strong and progressive political leadership and the involvement of

all sectors of the community.

Asians and Pacific Islanders have similar histories and face many similar conditions in this country. Historically, those with a racist "yellow peril" mentality have discriminated against Asians with no regard for the diversity among the different nationalities. Racist laws, in the past, have targeted Chinese, Japanese, Pilipinos or all Asian nationalities as one group.

Though a Korean, I have been called "Jap" or "Chink" or told to "go back where you came from." In 1983, unemployed white workers murdered a Chinese American man, Vincent Chin, because they blamed Japanese imports for the loss of their jobs, even though Chin was Chinese. Asians are perceived to all be the same. And we are often treated as one group. Given this environment, it makes political sense to unite together for strength. By building a successful coalition, organizations like the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations have shown we will never again go unheard.

Because the mainstream society perceives us as one group, I believe that the redress victory will be perceived as a step toward the empowerment of the Asian/Pacific Islander community as a whole. By joining together as Asians and Pacific Islanders to uphold our rights, we can ensure that the reparations victory will be not just the end of a long campaign, but a first step toward genuine political empowerment for us all. □

*Those
with a racist
"yellow peril"
mentality have
discriminated
against Asians
with no regard for
our diversity.*



KIMBERLY HEE

Jerry Yu, sitting, and staff of the Korean Youth Center

Jerry C. Yu is an administrator of the Korean Youth Center in Los Angeles, an agency that serves immigrant and low-income youths and their families.

ALL PHOTOS FROM JAPANESE CANADIANS: A DREAM OF RICHES



Japanese Canadians were not only removed from the West Coast, they were also being dispersed throughout Canada for almost four years after the war.

From New Denver to Freedom Day

A personal reflection on the Japanese Canadian redress movement

By Terry Watada

On September 22, 1988, the Sutton Place Hotel in Toronto was jammed with people, mostly Japanese Canadians, waiting for the government's announcement about the redress settlement. The ballroom was bustling with a community of people. The Issei bowed and thanked all those younger than them. The Nisei slapped each other on the back, congratulating each other. The Sansei were jubilant; they hugged each other and laughed heartily. They were all there: the negotiators, the committed, the volunteers, the vindicated, the supporters, the skeptics and the opponents. For one brief shining moment, the community came together once again.

The hotel had provided a raised podium and behind it, attendants worked to decoratively drape the



maple leaf across the rising sun: red on red, the Canadian flag stood flaccid beside the Japanese flag. They never learn, I thought to myself. People still see us as foreigners.

*The government took all my property,
But I'll survive somehow.
And all I can offer you is a lifetime of
hardships, my love.
Maybe love's not worth much in these
troubled times,
But it's the only thing I can offer you
on the outside in the snow.*

*New Denver is washed away with
the rain.
New Denver will never know,
never know
The pain it caused.*

New Denver, T. Watada, 1972

In 1970 there were some who began to question a government who would knowingly perpetrate racist acts against its own citizens. In Vancouver and Toronto, small groups of Sansei, Canadian Born Chinese (CBC) and Shin Ijusha gathered in discussion groups to talk about issues like identity, sexism and racism. Fueled by the Asian American movement,

people like Alan Hotta, Reimi Chiba, Ron Tanaka, Garrick Chiu, Mayu Takasaki and Takeo Yamashiro began to organize Asian Canadian projects.

I was overwhelmed by the heady times. Coming to terms with those issues that were kept buried for years was very emotional and at the same time cathartic. I saw the paradox of living in a free nation and not feeling free or equal. That was the moment I began to write songs. From my parents, I learned about the "evacuation," the internment and the exile for the first time in my life. At 19 years of age, I wrote *New Denver* to give voice to my parents' feelings about being incarcerated without justification.

*Well, don't you know
we got to go for broke
every single day of our lives.
You know we can't provoke.
We got to be good folk for white eyes.
We got to go for broke.*

Go for Broke, T. Watada, 1977

In the late 1970s, talk about the injustice surrounding the war years was either suppressed or labelled as irrelevant since the events of that

time were "shikataganai" ("couldn't be helped"). However again, a few Sansei voices rose to air the issues of identity and redress.

By 1977 the second and third cross-Canada conferences took place. 1977 was also a pivotal year for me. With all the festivities and conferences, the demand for my music rose acutely. Eventually, I was encouraged enough to produce an album, the first Japanese Canadian record as it turned out. *Runaway Horses* seemed to fill a void. Soon I found that Asian Canadians of my age across the country began talking about themselves using the record as a catalyst.

*Closin' time at the Hinomaru;
It's the saddest time I've ever known.
The Mounties are coming to take
me away,
and you know, there's nothing we
can do.*

*Come and drink with me,
Taste the last drops of freedom.
Come and drink with me, my friend,
to our children.*

*Tell the ladies, tell the boys in the band,
This is the last dance tonight.*

Closin' Time, T. Watada, 1980

By 1980, Ken Adachi's *The Enemy that Never Was* and Ann Gomer Sunahara's *The Politics of Racism* inspired a few to look at the question of redress. Some Sansei and a few courageous Nisei decided an inquiry was necessary since new evidence pointed to the fact that the internment and subsequent exile (after the war, Japanese Canadians had two choices: move east of the Rockies or be deported to Japan) was not a military or security decision but a political one encouraged by racist motivations. Thus the Sodan Kai was formed to conduct public meetings about the possibility of seeking redress.

By the mid 1980s, the redress movement was in full swing. At first,



*As in the U.S., the
racist mass
incarceration of
Japanese Canadians
sparked a successful
drive for redress
and reparations.*

there was great resistance. I remember one such opposed Nisei who went out of his way in order to berate me with vulgarisms for promoting redress on a local television program. Other Nisei I talked to called it "blood money," "charity," "government handouts." None of these people would recognize the true issues of the campaign: human rights violations and racism. The National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) came into being as an answer to the misrepresentative pronouncements of the Japanese Canadian Citizens Association.

Despite the disagreements and infighting, the Japanese Canadian community became revitalized. Everyone had something to say about redress. Volunteers were needed to man the booths, mail out p.r. material, organize conferences, educate the public and attend demonstrations. And volunteers there were. The Japanese Canadians were becoming a political force.

The NAJC's top priority was to keep the issue of redress before the public eye. At festivals, booths displaying the history, the demands and personal testaments appeared. Members of the organization appeared on television talk shows, radio phone-in programs and at education conferences. Coalitions with other groups of visible minorities and concerned Canadians formed. A camp tour was organized to bring people to the very doorstep of infamy.

No other effort was as instrumental in focusing the nation's attention as Joy Kogawa's book *Obasan* and Muriel Kitagawa's *This Is My Own*. Such strong testaments touched the heart of understanding in many Canadians.

*Long ago my father said to me,
"You got to learn to love the land you
call home."
But all the shame this country's
given me
Shakes my faith in this land's
democracy.*



*And we need reparations from this
great nation.
Brothers and sisters, we are one.
Hey reparations, from this fine nation
Means we are Canadians.*

The Reparations Song, T. Watada,
1987

Perhaps the most significant action of the Japanese Canadians was the march on Ottawa in the spring of 1988 to protest the inaction of the government despite campaign promises to negotiate a just settlement over redress/reparations. Issei, Nisei and Sansei from across the nation joined hands, carried banners and placards and shouted phrases like "Redress Now!" "Justice for Japanese Canadians!" The meeting with the multicultural minister was emotional. Older Nisei admonished him with shouts of "I haven't got much

time!" Thousands of yellow postcards exhorting the government to deal with the issue were delivered to the Prime Minister's office by Japanese Canadian veterans. I felt inspired. Gone were the arguments, the bickering, the pettiness that had hampered the movement from the beginning. These Japanese Canadians were angry, and they wanted justice.

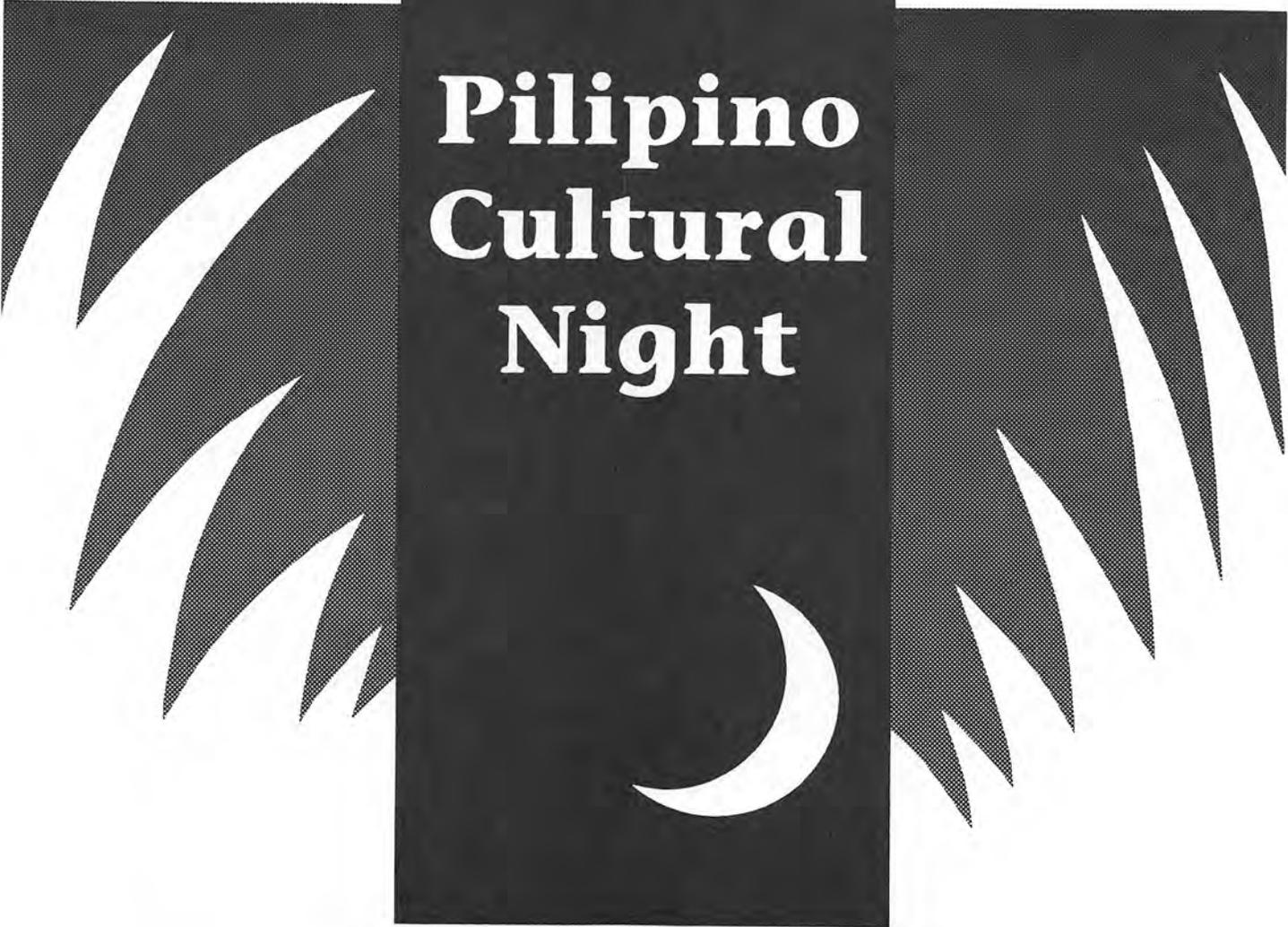
* * *

On September 22 the government of Canada came to an amenable settlement with the Japanese Canadians and announced it in the House of Commons in Ottawa and at the Sutton Place Hotel in Toronto. It was Freedom Day.

"Ladies and gentlemen, for over forty years successive Canadian governments have refused to acknowledge or to redress the shameful injustices done to Japanese Canadians during the second world war and after . . ."

As Gerry Weiner, the minister for multiculturalism spoke, I felt mixed emotions. I was elated that justice had been attained and that democracy had been served. Furthermore, I was relieved that the long fight was now over, but I was also sad because I remembered that my father was taken away from his wife and child to slave on a road gang for several months enduring loneliness, fear, worry and primitive conditions. And I remembered that my mother and brother faced the ordeal of moving to the interior by themselves. For over 40 years they kept the shame and the pain inside, never letting it out. And now both my parents had passed away before hearing the words of apology and receiving the gesture of compensation. □

Terry Watada is a writer, singer/songwriter, theatrical and record producer, and Professor of English at Seneca College, Toronto. For information on ordering his album, write to: Windchime Records, 99 Ivy Ave., Toronto, M4L 2H8.



Pilipino Cultural Night

By Ted Benito,
Meg Malpaya Thornton

"Our Pilipino Cultural Night is an affirmation of our culture," says Gigi Santos, newly elected president of the Filipino American Student Association (FASA) at Cal State Northridge. "It's also about discovery and rediscovery . . . who we are as Pilipinos, whether foreign-born or American-born, and then expressing that with our Pilipino culture. In essence, through PCN, we discover ourselves . . . our identity."



For many Pilipinos, especially high school and college students, a strong and positive sense of unity is manifested through the expression of Pilipino culture. Among the many Southern California campuses, Pilipino student groups produce a "Pilipino Cultural Night" or PCN. Folk songs, traditional dances, and special skits are presented in the effort to express the richness and diversity of Pilipino heritage.

PCN is a culmination of months of planning and rehearsing. Every step, each line, every note and each minute detail of the performance is carefully planned and practiced. It is during these raw moments that a greater spirit of unity is fostered. "Our PCN is one of the few times that we, as a family, can unite as a whole," begins Augusto Espiritu, past president of UCLA Samahang Pilipino. "As a communicative experience, PCN serves to motivate our members into working with each other and sharing in a similar goal. PCN builds trust and cooperation.

When we take the stage, it is our chance to communicate our heritage and history not only to our relatives and friends, but also, and more importantly, to the community at large."

The PCN s play a very important role in allowing the younger generation to not only express themselves culturally, but also to voice their concerns about issues affecting them today. PCN s give Pilipino students the respect to speak for themselves and allows them to provide solutions to their problems. As an expression of political issues, PCN s elevate that spirit of unity to a higher level.

UCLA Samahang Pilipino, one of the first Pilipino student organizations to present a PCN in Southern California, consistently and effectively utilizes its PCN to communicate crucial issues imperative to the Pilipino community like the expulsion of Pilipinos from the university's affirmative action program.

"There was a 41% drop in Pilipino student admission to UCLA this year," explains Rochelle Santiago, this

year's Samahang PCN coordinator. "That means that only 141 were admitted, as compared to the median 237. Add to that a 51% attrition rate and less than 70 Pilipinos will graduate at the end of a five-year program."

Arleen de Vera, coordinator of Samahang's Pilipino Affirmative Action Student Task Force adds, "A greater concern is that there is no guarantee that that number (237) will ever be regained. For all we know, the entering number of Pilipinos could possibly decrease. That means less Pilipinos coming in, less Pilipinos graduating, and less Pilipinos returning to the community."

P CN s are strong statements about Pilipino history. There is a definitive lack of ethnic studies on major Southern California campuses to adequately teach Pilipinos about their experience in the U.S. "There are only two campuses in Southern California where Pilipino-American history is taught," says Gilmore Mara,



COURTESY OF SF STATE PAGE

San Francisco State's Pilipino American Collegiate Endeavors performs the "Singkil" dance.

president of USC Troy Philippines, "and they are UCLA and Cal State Los Angeles. There is no Pilipino ethnic studies class at USC, so for our PCN last year, we decided to illustrate the manong (first wave Pilipino immigrants to the U.S.) experience in America. In that manner, our PCN was a tool for educating students about their history. It was a deep message because we wanted to convey that our generation owes its existence to the sacrifices our ancestors made."

Having been functioning at this level of cultural and political expression, Pilipinos began to see similar points of interest. It was evident that some of the struggles on one campus were consistent with other campuses. It made sense to form a more comprehensive community-based coalition. The same "family spirit" that each Pilipino student organization embodied in their own PCN was again elevated to a higher level.

"That's how SCPASA (Southern California Pilipino American Student Association) was formed," says Isaias Paja, Jr., president of the Hiyas Pilipino Club at Cal State Los Angeles. "SCPASA's membership is composed of the various Pilipino student organizations from around Southern California, from Cal State Fullerton to UC Irvine. We are constantly growing. Two more schools applied as members recently which would push the total roster to over eighteen organizations. We are growing so fast, it's incredible!"

Since its inception over eight years ago, SCPASA has become a major mechanism for galvanizing Pilipino students. "SCPASA acts as a magnet," continues Paja, "to pull together a large political, social, and cultural base. Its strength lies in the enthusiasm, participation, and support of the member groups, and that usually comes through dances, tournaments, and even our own SCPASA Pilipino Cultural Night."

Two years ago at the SCPASA PCN, a skit was presented by the Search to Involve Pilipino Americans (SIPA), a Pilipino youth agency. The skit dramatized the issue of Pilipino youth

gang activity. SIPA was formed as an organization in 1972 by youth, students, and community people to address the needs of Pilipino American youth. In 1981, a gang killing occurred which involved a Pilipino youth gang. The community reacted by demanding funding to establish a permanent agency that could work with the youth more effectively.

Since that PCN, many more campus groups have worked with SIPA, and with other community groups for the betterment of the community. The fact many students felt the

***At UCLA,
where Pilipino
admissions
dropped by 41%,
PCN is a way to
bring out this
and other
vital issues.***

strong urge to participate in a critical issue such as the growing gang problem lends credence to the empowerment PCN's can foster.

Through the networking of SCPASA and its sister organization NCPASA (Northern California Pilipino American Student Association), Pilipinos statewide have greatly developed. Within these two organizations, students have mobilized to address admission and retention services in college, demand Pilipino American studies classes throughout the UC, CSU, and community college systems, and to emphasize cultural development. Pilipinos have changed the complexion of the Asian Pacific student movement by broadening the scope of issues that must be addressed.

The Asian/Pacific Islander Student Union (APSU) has helped to cultivate this heightened organizational effort. APSU is composed of representatives from different Asian/Pacific student groups throughout West Coast colleges. Through its ten year existence, APSU has fostered a strong sense of unity among Asian/Pacific students. Annual conferences provide workshops on educational rights, the immigrant experience, the women's movement, and cultural development.

"Pilipinos are at the forefront of the Asian Pacific student movement," says Ted Benito, APSU coordinator for the Los Angeles region. "I feel the issues APSU addresses hit home to many Pilipino students. Many students can feel a greater strength and empowerment within APSU."

For Pilipinos, the need to unite again is coming rapidly. Before the California state budget is presented and while California's Master Plan on Higher Education is being written, the role that students play in terms of deciding policy is critical. "Educational policies are being made without the input of those being educated," says Benito, "so with APSU, students have the chance be heard. For Pilipinos, this is crucial. Administrations are cutting Pilipinos from affirmative action programs, and state funding for educational loans is very low. This has an impact on our community because Pilipinos who want to go to college are no longer guaranteed that right."

Still and yet, we must look to the spirit of unity fostered by the expression of culture that has anchored Pilipinos in Asian America. PCN not only expresses heritage and history, but issues and ideas. PCN ignites community support on subjects from gang violence to educational rights. SCPASA and APSU have injected Pilipinos with a keener sense of empowerment and provide arenas for social, political, and cultural exchange.

The changing demographics of California will make it the first third world state in the union by the next decade. Pilipinos must affirm their participation in all areas of society. This demands understanding, unity,



COURTESY OF USC TROY PHILIPPINES CLUB

Taxi dance hall scene from 1920's. Performance by the USC Troy Philippines Club, Gilmore Mara and Janet Cruz Herrera.

and pride, all of which are implanted in Pilipino culture. In this sense, PCN s are invaluable resources of education and leadership.

"As a means of preserving our traditional art and culture," says Meg Thornton, director of SIPA, "PCN is a true form of cultural expression. They provide innovative and creative ways of moving the Pilipino base forward and to promote a clear understanding of who we are as Pilipino Americans. PCN s should be a showcase for Pilipinos who want to develop their talent in the field of art and music. Our community needs as many artists, writers, and musicians as it demands doctors and lawyers.

"As a means of preserving our traditional culture, PCN s promote a clear understanding of who we are as Pilipino Americans."

The Pilipino community is rich in its diversity and talent and that needs to be presented in a positive way. Pilipino Cultural Night is really about us . . . as Pilipinos, as important members of American society, and as a people who are proud of their tradition."

MABUHAY!!!!!!



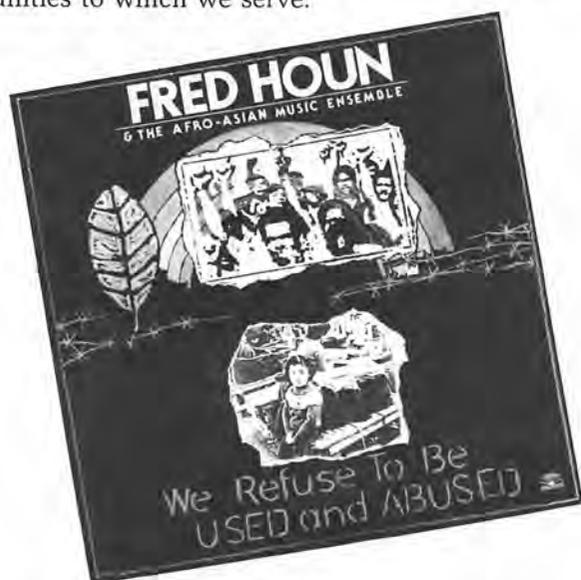
Ted Benito is past editor of UCLA's Pacific Ties. He is currently the APSU coordinator, L.A. region, and newly elected vice president of UCLA Samahang Pilipino. Meg Malpaya Thornton is director of Search to Involve Pilipino Americans, Inc., a Los Angeles-based youth agency.

ASIAN IMPROV RECORDS

ALTERNATIVE INNOVATIVE REVOLUTIONARY

By Francis Wong

A little more than one-and-one-half years ago AsianImprov Records (AIR) was formed. Jon Jang, one of the founders of AIR, says, "For a long time, the cultural contributions of Asian people in America have been neglected and excluded from educational and cultural institutions, as well as from the American entertainment industry. Some of us, as Asian cultural workers, have been able to get our foot in the door, though it has often been a 'bound foot' with but a few exceptions. With AIR, we want to not only get both our 'unbound feet' in the door, but most importantly our feet out onto the streets of the communities to which we serve."



In the jazz field, exclusion has certainly been the case. Fred Houn's critically-acclaimed albums *Tomorrow Is Now!* and *We Refused To Be Used and Abused!*, both on the prestigious Italian label Soul Note, have been virtually impossible to obtain in the U.S. because they are not considered "commercially-viable" by the American distribution company Polygram (a major importer of foreign-produced music). Polygram and other American record labels are not interested in promoting creative, innovative and daring music. And they will not promote Asian American artists who are lesser known. As a result, Houn has sold more of these albums in Europe than in the U.S. This situation was one of the main reasons why we formed AIR. AIR has been working with various independent distributors to get *We Refuse . . .* out there. We are also investigating the possibilities for helping other Asian American creative musicians. Houn explains the approach. "By developing close working relationships with progressive and supportive music critics, presenters, musical organizations and Asian community groups, AIR is contributing to an effort for a real alternative, multicultural new American music movement."

As a musician and community activist, I see the formation of AIR as an achievement both for the artists involved and for the Asian American movement. For the most part, the artists who appear on AIR albums, namely Jon Jang, Glenn Horiuchi and Fred Houn, have long histories in the Asian communities, making contributions to such grassroots movements as the campaigns for redress/reparations and for justice for Vincent Chin. In fact, the music that has been released in 1988 by AIR has been largely inspired by the struggles of Asian and other oppressed people. Jon's album, *The Ballad or the Bullet?*, pays tributes to Happy Lim, pioneer Chinese American writer and labor organizer, to the anti-Marcos struggle in the Philippines and to the Watsonville and Hormel strikers. Horiuchi, a member of the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations (NCR), was moved by the hearings of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians to write "In Movement" and other compositions included in his debut album *Next Step*. Fred Houn's *A Song for Manong*, the music from the multimedia theatre production, is a monument to Pilipino workers. Jon Jang's *Jangle Bells* cassette includes a medley entitled "Happy New Years Ahead Suite," inspired by Jesse Jackson's historic 1988 campaign.

AIR strongly believes that the success of Asian American artists is tied to the political empowerment of our communities. Thus, AIR sees itself playing an active role in community and progressive politics,

not solely promoting and selling albums. According to Houn, "Artists of color must build unity with political activists and other sectors of our community. Our work is part of the social, economic, political and cultural development of our people."

In addition to promoting the history of Asian Americans, artists on AIR are striving to promote the contributions of Asian American's MUSICALLY. These artists are best known for their efforts to develop a distinct Asian American voice in the jazz field through the use of Asian musical elements. Horiuchi uses taiko rhythms as the basis of many of his compositions. Jang at times thinks of his piano as a *yang chin* (Chinese hammered dulcimer) and recorded an arrangement of the Chinese classic "Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto" (Chen/Ho). Houn's *A Song for Manong* is a collaboration between his Asian American Art Ensemble and Kulingtang Arts, a Pilipino percussion ensemble. Indeed, combining the traditional with the contemporary is a major thrust of AIR's artistic goals.

It is important to note, however, that these Asian American artists have a very deep indebtedness to the African American tradition in American music. African American music, whether it be blues, gospel, jazz, etc., has had a profound impact on the music of America and of the world. In America, African American musicians have been the primary leaders in carrying forth the music and message of pride, self-respect and liberation. This has influenced musicians of all nationalities.

AIR's projects have included artists of many backgrounds. On the albums released so far there have been Chinese, Japanese, Pilipino, Samoan, African American, Chicano and white musicians, visual artists, photographers and writers. In this way, the music has been a product of Pan-Asian and multinational unity.



CURTIS FUKUDA

As for the future, 1989 promises to be another year of growth. We will release Glenn Horiuchi's second album *Issei Spirit*. We also plan to expand the organization of AIR to include a board of directors and embark on a fund-raising campaign to pay for staff (right now AIR is a completely volunteer operation).

This music can only be heard if the artists themselves get together with community supporters and organize. This is where AIR, while primarily musician-run, needs a lot of help. The needs of current and emerging Asian American musicians and their audience are great and our resources small. Hopefully, with everyone's participation, AIR and our audience will continue to thrive. □



Francis Wong is currently president of AsianImprov Records and an aspiring musician. AIR is a new company formed to promote and distribute recordings of Asian American creative musicians.



Now It Is Broccoli

My mother who loses a piece
of herself each day
is bowing before the conveyor belt
as a river of broccoli
rolls by under the fluorescent.
All night
at the canneries of J.J. Crosetti
she trims the yellow and bunches the green.
Trims and bunches.
Until the colors blend
and she is lost
before this river of one color
that is neither green nor yellow
and unable to hold it back
lets it slip past her.
She remembers, once, in another shed
slicing off part of her index finger.
It wasn't the pain
or horror she remembered
but how the day was hot
and the shade of the corrugated
tin roof bore down cool
on the back of her neck
and the metal click
of the spinning rollers
echoes in her ears
long after the crates had passed.
It wasn't the kindness
of the floor lady turning off the machine
that she wanted to remember —
the floor lady who would just as soon
bark at her like a dog.

Jeff Tagami was born in Watsonville, California. He co-translated the chapbook, *This Wanting to Sing*, Asian American Poets in South America, Contact II Press, and co-edited *Without Names*, a collection of poetry by Bay Area Pilipino American writers, Kearny Street Workshop Press. He and his family live in San Francisco, California.

continued on page 58

It wasn't the concern
of the forklift driver who searched
between the chopped heads of cabbage
thinking the finger could be sewn back.
No, it was the face
she longed for, that serene
face she lost years ago.
A face the young woman
across from her now owned
who did not once look up from her work
who smiled
as if remembering a silly joke
or the slight tremble
of her boyfriend's lips
as he kissed her goodnight.
Now she keeps the finger in the freezer
in an envelope with a plastic window.
Because it is still a part of her
she cannot let go, like her man
who pickled her miscarriage
in a bottle of alcohol could not let go.
For two years
he kept it beside the bed.
Each night he held it up to the lamp
stroking the glass clear of his choked breath
as if to contemplate a son without future.
Finally, as if that bottle
could no longer contain his grief
he buried it beneath the porch steps
near the mint.

Now it is broccoli
and my mother must be careful
though she has given up forty years
to the passing of vegetables
though she knows the knife
and the fat clumsy fingers
that betray each other
though she knows
broccoli is only a river
through which we carve our simple life.
Her raised knife wavers in the air
while the colors go on playing tricks
with her eyes, and the nail
of her clipped finger
slowly turns black
behind the box of frozen peas
and ice cubes.

*From October Light, a book of poetry by Jeff Tagami.
See review on page 66.*

ALESKEROS ATESKEROS

FILIPINO CANNERY WORKERS

Photography by John Stamets

In the 1920s, after U.S. laws were passed preventing Chinese and Japanese workers from immigrating, Filipinos were recruited to fill the vacuum of cheap labor caused by these laws.

"Before we came, our impression of America was that you got to pick up gold in the streets, that everybody was nice," said Leo Lorenzo, an Aleskero (Filipino cannery worker). "But as soon as we got out on the pier — well, naturally there was the police and everybody like that, meeting the boat. They had a different attitude. Before we arrived, there were already problems in the social atmosphere."

The seasonal Alaska cannery labor was considered by many to be the best of a series of poor jobs open to Filipinos who worked a migrant labor circuit up and down the West Coast. The oppressive conditions these workers faced opened them to union organizing. The early '30s were the beginning of a history of union organizing for the Aleskeros.

The following portraits and oral histories are part of the Pioneer Aleskeros Project, developed to preserve the history and lives of these workers. The men, all of whom are from the Seattle area, poignantly recall their first years in America, the founding of the Cannery Workers Union, and the important role that the Alaska salmon canneries played in their lives. Most of the men continued to work in the canneries well into their 60s and 70s. The men are between 75 and 88 years old, and three of them worked in Alaska for the 1987 season.

The 31-portrait exhibit was sponsored by the Cannery Workers Union, Region 37 ILWU/IBU and was funded mostly by the Washington Commission for the Humanities. Oral histories were collected by a dozen younger members of the union and others in the community. The photographer and project director is John Stamets.

For information on the exhibit, write to John Stamets, 403 - 14th Ave. E., Seattle, WA 98112, or Cannery Workers Union, Local 37 ILWU, 2800 First Ave., #226, Seattle, WA 98121.

**Before we came,
our impression
of America was
that you got to
pick up gold
in the streets,
that everybody
was nice . . .**



Trinidad Rojo

Ilocos Sur province, born 1902, arrived U.S. 1926

At first (early 1930s) there were at least three independent Filipino labor movements, and in one, they mix the cannery workers with the musicians. But we must give credit where credit is due, whether they are socialists or communists. A contemporary of mine, Lorenzo Zamora, he was a musician and being a communist, if he was, he realized that an independent Filipino union cannot flourish. That we must be organized on an international basis: Filipinos in the union, Japanese in the union, Mexicans, whites, etc., so to confront the whites, the Chinese contractors and the Mexican contractors on the other side. Then there is equal force. Right? So he was correct.

ALESKEROS
ATEŠKEBOS



Leo Lorenzo

Ilocos Norte province, born 1908, arrived U.S. 1927

It was in 1927, July 10, when I came to America. There were at least 400 Filipinos on that boat. Gee, that was one of the worst sights you could have ever seen, in comparison to nowadays.

So, two of us take a taxicab. The address we took was for a hotel on 2nd Avenue. And when we went upstairs, they said that we were not supposed to be in that hotel. And we said, "Even if we are going to pay now?" And they said, "No. You get out of here!" The cab driver took us down to Chinatown and let us out on Jackson Street, and we saw lots of Filipinos down there. And we look different from them, you know. Most of them are Americanized, in their clothes, but we were still in the clothes we brought with us. So of course we were out of place, and they looked at us, even the old-timer Filipinos who had been there two or three years.

So we got our hotel, it was up there above the community garden. Of course, I didn't realize that we were social outcasts. That feeling that we first had in the Islands is that when you arrive in this country, you get to be treated just like we treated the Americans, out there in the Islands. But after a couple of days, we realize that when we see the Americans, it's very different from that. They wouldn't even talk to us if we wanted to talk with them.



Al Masigat

Ilocos Norte province, born 1904, arrived U.S. 1927

When you don't have a job, Alaska is all right. But if you find a job here in town, a good job for you, never mind Alaska. Because there is magic in going to Alaska. The magic is that in a short time, you go in there and have \$1,000 or \$2,000. Every time I was there, I'd say, "I'll never come back. Never come back." But when the time of Alaska comes, oh that magic of \$1,000 is in my mind again. But that magic does not work.

When you go to a theatre, you pay the same price, but you can't sit any place that you want. There is a place for Orientals only, for colored people, see? That is the discrimination that you have. And most of all, they don't like us to speak to the white people, white girls. Because we are man, you know? And if we speak to white girl, there was always a fight.

You know why I never married? Because there was no Filipina then. The few Filipinas who came here did not like the Filipinos . . . If we had more Filipinas then, it might have been different. We might have had a better life.



Jose Aguinaldo

Ilocos Norte province, born 1902, arrived U.S. 1921

I landed in Seattle July 9, 1921. I came because lots of friends came here earlier. They'd send all their pictures, all dressed up. Oh my gosh, and they'd tell about their experiences going to Alaska. Back then in the Philippines, there's no job. All the students, when they got through, the only job they can get is a clerk in the municipality or as a school teacher. And you know there are lots of graduates year after year.

So when I came here, I started to ask if there is a job I could get. They said go to Alaska. So that is how I went to Alaska. When I got a job in Alaska, it was from 6am to 6pm. And there's lots of fish, and we'd work until the fish are all canned. That's how I learned that Alaska was not so good after all . . . During those days it was the contract system. Our foreman gets a contract from the company, and we are allowed a dollar a day for subsistence. When there are fish, we'd eat nothing but fish so that the contractor would gain. He'd spend about 35 cents, 40 cents and the rest goes to his pocket. And then on Sunday we eat rice. You'd know it was Sunday when you saw an egg on the table. The bunkhouses were also not so good, squeaky old springs on the beds. Especially the restrooms, the toilets were antiquated. It was like that for many years until there was a union. When the union came along, there seemed to be progress. The laborers were getting better pay, they were treated better, and their sleeping quarters were modernized. And we got showers. Before, you have no shower.

**But as soon as
we got out on
the pier — well, . . .
they had a
different attitude.**

ALESKEROS
ATEŠKEBOS

P o e t r y b y **Thelma Estrada**

LETTER TO M.

Your absence, my love,
is crowding my thoughts as I move around
the country
collecting snapshots in my mind
living beneath everyone's skin.

I thought of you when
I saw a young boy
in the countryside
walking to school:
is he going to be
one of the few
like you, love, who will
escape from the bog of indifference
or is he going to be like the rest of our people
for whom tomorrow is a false promise?

I saw your mother today
sitting by the roadside
face bare of memories
waiting patiently for the cars
that arrogantly spit at her fruits and
vegetables.
They eye her produce with suspicion
oblivious to her pain.
(Haggling over the price is a sport;
the two pesos mean nothing —
to her, it means more rice for you
and your brothers.)
Triumphant in their game, they
disappear
forgetting her and you.

Your gentle eyes stared at me
when I talked to a peasant
his one eye clouded by poverty.
He told me how the military shot down
his brother like a dog
for throwing a stone at the soldier's dog chasing him.

Listening to a people's fighter
explain to me why the people
in the barrios have asked the guerillas
not to lay down their arms
I suddenly remembered why
I love you.

As I walk amongst your brothers, my
sisters,
I love them more and
missing you is less urgent

16 March 86



Thelma Estrada has been a writer, poet, and political activist in the Philippine support movement for the last 12 years. She resides in Oakland, Calif., and works as an attorney in San Francisco.



Winter Place is a collection of poems written over a period of about ten years. The emotional landscape of Lim's work reflects a rootedness in her native Chinatown-North Beach, San Francisco upbringing.

There is much rage and cynicism, much sadness, introspection and hopeful exploration in these poems, which comprise Lim's vision of being an ethnic minority working class woman poet in modern America.

WINTER

A Collection of poems by Genny Lim

Grandmother

Don't let me forget
to light the candles of my ancestors
and not abandon them to ghosts
who wander deep into my dreams
Don't let me forget
the beauty of the phoenix
When I grasp its luminous tail
it is your piercing bones I find
curving into the lifeline of my own hand
When I look into its slender eyes
it is the deep lagoons of yours I find
drowning tradition

China's past is but a coffin to me
It is a legacy of thirst and hunger
embroidered with the tears and
sweat of centuries
It is a dream
passed down in jade heirlooms and
shut inside small lacquered boxes

I have never kissed your high cheeks
nor stroked your pale, scented feet
yet I know how grandfather must have loved
the subtle furrow of your waist
between his peasant's hands and
the gentle incline of your neck
whenever you cried

I imagine him grieving
when there was nothing left but
the delicate memory of your song
emerging from the ashes
weaving so deep a valley
its echoing slopes
carried you over the wind

PLACE

Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show

*They could not capture me, except under a white flag.
They cannot hold me except with a chain.*
— Osceola, 1838

I don't cry for the love of you
Tears vanish like smoke
Don't think it is for the loss of you
My heart is an ox surrendered to its yoke

Osceola never wept in battle
He galloped into the cannon-fire, into the muzzles
of guns
Had he pondered dying in the white man's prison
Osceola undoubtedly would have killed himself

Had Sitting Bull known he would be a freak in
a white man's circus
He would have succumbed to two bullets
But it was the light along the trembling Black Hills
which moved him towards the moon
It was the sun he watched for
not the river's bottom nor the darkness of the trail

The heart is a lonely animal which never sleeps
and
Hope is the unseen crown
which drives mankind to believe
there are no good guys or bad guys
no unhappy endings
only false starts



JIM DONG

Genny Lim lives in San Francisco with her two daughters, Colette and Danielle. She is the author of the play, *Paper Angels*, a bilingual children's book, *Wings of Lai Ho*, and co-author of *Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island*. *Winter Place* is her first book of poetry.

OCTOBER LIGHT

poems by Jeff Tagami

Book review by Ernestine Tayabas

October Light by Jeff Tagami. Photography, book design, and production by Lenny Limjoco. Published by Kearny Street Workshop, 827 Pacific Street, Box 3, San Francisco, CA 94133, \$7.95.

Jeff Tagami's *October Light* is an important collection of poems that depicts the lives of working class Pilipinos in Watsonville, California. Not since Carlos Bulosan's writing has there been a body of work dedicated to the experiences of Pilipino laborers who toiled in the lumberyards, fields, and canneries of California.

The experiences of the "first wave" of Pilipinos are a source of pride and strength for all Pilipinos. The first generation were mostly men, the "manongs" who were farm workers and cannery workers. They faced discrimination, anti-Pilipino sentiment, anti-miscegenation laws, and were objects of racial violence. In the face of this, Pilipinos fought back and resisted unfair labor practices. Their stories have helped to shape the national consciousness of Pilipino Americans today. Tagami highlights this in his poetry. Watsonville holds particular significance since it was the site of anti-Pilipino sentiments and race riots during the 1930's. Today, Watsonville and the Central Valley still employ Pilipino laborers, now mostly women who work in the multi-million dollar cannery industry.

The poems are largely autobiographical. Written over the past 10 years, this third generation Pilipino American poet writes about his mother, his family, and other people he grew up with. "I write about the human spirit, about struggling," says Tagami, "people can identify with it because they see themselves in it." Indeed this is true. His poetry struck a familiar chord for me since my parents and grandparents came to this country, as his originally did, as contract laborers in Hawai'i.

The poems convey the aspirations and dreams of Pilipinos who are trying to make a better life for themselves and their families. They describe the hardships of working long hours of back-breaking work in the fields. From "Without Names":

*Back of our farmhouse
Filipinos hunchbacked
From a lifetime of hauling
Irrigation pipes,
Squeeze goat entrails clean,
Sticking their fingers
In places I think
Not possible.*

Tagami's poetry also gives us a sense of the joy, pain and frustration of living in a society that treats you as second class citizens. In "Tobera", Tagami pays tribute to Fermin Tobera, a Pilipino laborer, a young man, a dreamer, an immigrant in a strange land, who was shot and killed during the Watsonville race riots of the 1930's.

*Yes, a man gets lonely
but he has to do something
to stop from going crazy.
And it's not craziness
when men get together
to buy a '29 Model T
and drive from Watsonville
to Lompoc, San Pedro
to Oxnard and back again
past the neatly clipped lawns
of white neighborhoods
where they are not wanted
in a country
where they are not welcome.
And to do this over and over
like a man slapping
his own face again and again.*

Since its publication in October 1987, Tagami has done numerous poetry readings on college campuses in California and Hawai'i. The response has been tremendous and positive. Pilipino audiences are often amazed to learn that there are Pilipinos who are writing and being published. Tagami believes there should be more published works by Pilipino Americans. He and other writers in the Bay Area Pilipino Writers group are just beginning to tell the stories of our people so that they may not be forgotten. *October Light* is a good example of this. □

Ernestine Tayabas is on the executive committee of the *Filipino American Democratic Caucus of California*.



Japanese American military intelligence linguist interrogates a Japanese prisoner of war.

The Color of Honor

The Color of Honor, a Vox Production, directed by Loni Ding, presented on PBS by National Asian American Telecommunications Association.

Reviewed by Denise Imura

Loni Ding's documentary, *The Color of Honor*, reveals the untold story of the terrible choices and redeeming courage of the young Nisei men, many barely out of their teens, who were confronted by a country where anyone with even one drop of Japanese blood was sent away to concentration camps. What unfolds in this 90-minute montage of rare archival footage, present-day interviews and docu-drama, are the results of these lonely decisions. We relive the valor of those who enlisted or were drafted into the highly decorated, highly decimated 442nd/100th Regimental Combat Teams.

Interviewed is Hakuban Nozawa, one of the 28 "Detention Boys" — Kibei GI's who protested being held at gunpoint when President Roosevelt visited the troops, and who were

court-martialed for refusing combat training until the rights of all Japanese Americans were restored. We hear Frank Emi tell of the Fair Play Committee, Heart Mountain internees who refused the conscription order, standing on their conviction that it was unconstitutional to be drafted from concentration camps.

But the heart of the film is the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) soldiers, Japanese Americans who served in the Pacific theatre as linguists, translators, interrogators, decoders and propagandists. These men provided General MacArthur with invaluable information about the enemy, thereby shortening the war and saving thousands of lives. What comes alive is incredible footage and testimony of men who were sent on secret missions, often behind enemy lines, who were told to expect a seventy-five percent casualty rate and who faced the double jeopardy of being mistaken for the enemy by their own troops. Ding has riveting footage of these MIS soldiers. Recollections of the experiences of coaxing Japanese women and children from underground caves in Saipan or securing vital pieces of information from dying soldiers uncovers history

never before revealed. The film chronicles a history that the U.S. government had classified as secret for three decades and for whom the record is conspicuously silent. As Senator Spark Matsunaga states, these men were doing what most clearly demonstrated their loyalty but because theirs was a tale not to be told, their incarcerated families could not benefit from their heroism and sacrifice.

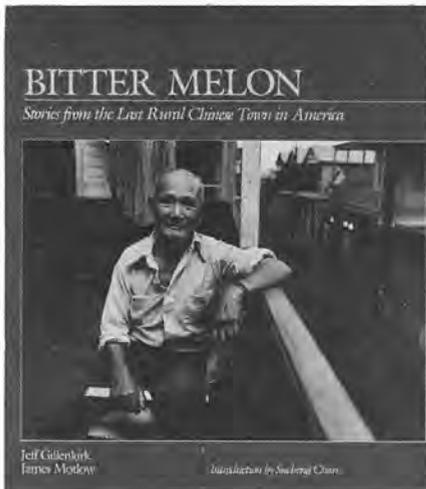
At the conclusion of the war, the head of Allied Translation in Australia, Col. Sydney Mashbir prophetically said, "Your country owes you and your families a debt it will never fully be able to repay."

Shown in Congress at the time that body was considering the Japanese American reparations bill, the film validates the history of Japanese Americans who believed in democracy and who chose to fight for the realization of its principles by serving in its armed forces, as well as those who went to prison in order to test the U.S. Constitution and make it a living document of equality and justice for all Americans. □

Denise Imura is on the East Wind staff.

In Release . . .

Books



Bitter Melon, Stories from the Last Rural Chinese Town in America

by Jeff Gillenkirk and James Motlow.

University of Washington Press, PO Box 50096, Seattle, WA 98145-5096.

Oral histories, portraits, and photographs of the Chinese American residents of Locke, California.

Unlikely Liberators, The Men of the 100th and 442nd

by Masayo Umezawa Duus.

University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, HI 96822.

Personalized account of the young men of the 100th and 442nd battalions, separated from their families and friends, often confused and suspicious about what the army wanted from them. Based on nearly three hundred interviews with Japanese American veterans.

Desert Run, Poems and Stories

by Mitsuye Yamada.

Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, PO Box 908, Latham, NY 12110.

Yamada explores many aspects of her identity as a Japanese American woman and scrutinizes the experience of the concentration camps, returning to the terrain of the desert itself.

A Comrade Is As Precious As A Rice Seedling

poems by Mila D. Aguilar.

Second edition. Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, PO Box 908, Latham, NY 12110.

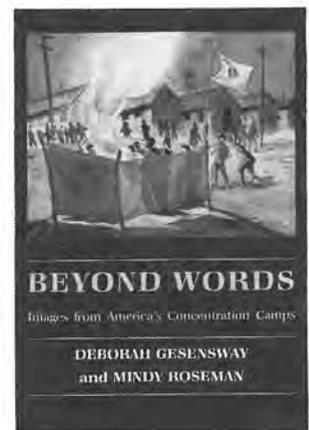
This edition contains poems written while Aguilar was imprisoned in the Philippines, from August 1984 to her release by President Corazon Aquino on February 27, 1986.



Versus, Philippine Protest Poetry, 1983-1986

edited by Alfredo Navarro Salanga and Esther M. Pacheco.
University of Washington Press, PO Box 50096, Seattle, WA 98145-5096.

Poems are of the crucial months between the assassination of Benigno Aquino, Jr. on August 21, 1983, and the inauguration of his widow, Corazon, as President of the Philippines on February 25, 1986.



Beyond Words, Images from America's Concentration Camps

by Deborah Gesensway and Mindy Roseman.

Cornell University Press, 124 Roberts Place, PO Box 250, Ithaca, NY 14851.

Seventy-seven paintings, drawings, and sketches created in the camps are reproduced along with testimonies and oral histories of the artists. The artists share their memories of the evacuation, the tribulations of camp life, the desolate swamps and deserts in which the camps were situated, and the prison fences that encircled them.

In Release . . .

Country Voices, the Oral History of a Japanese American Family Farm Community

by David Mas Masumoto.
Inaka Countryside Publications, 9336
E. Lincoln, Del Rey, CA 93616.

Through interviews, essays, and photographs, the saga of a Japanese American family farm community in the San Joaquin Valley of California is told.

Records

We Refuse to be Used and Abused

by Fred Houn and the Afro-Asian Music Ensemble.
Soul Note Records. Information: 22 W.
24th Street, New York, NY 10010.

The Ballad or the Bullet?

by Jon Jang and the 4 in One Quartet.
AsianImprov Records, 5825 Telegraph
Ave., #66, Oakland, CA 94610.

Films

Carved In Silence

produced and directed by Felicia Lowe.
Information: Felicia Lowe, 398
Eleventh Street, San Francisco,
CA 94103.

Tells the story of the detention of Chinese immigrants to America during the years of the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882-1943) through rare



From the film
Family
Gathering by
Lise Yasui.

archival footage, interviews with former detainees, and historical reenactments.

Family Gathering

produced and directed by Lise Yasui.
Information: Lise Yasui, 218 West
Walnut Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19144.

A deeply personal look at the effects of the World War II evacuation and internment of Japanese Americans on one family, told through the perspective of the filmmaker, a third-generation Japanese American.

Otemba

directed by Kayo Hatta
Information: Kayo Hatta, National
Asian American Telecommunications
Association, 346 Ninth Street, 2/F, San
Francisco, CA 94103.

About an eight-year-old Japanese American girl's struggle to find her identity in the face of traditional Japanese cultural values as expressed in her father's obsessive desire for a son.

Coming to a Theater Near You

Forbidden City, USA

produced and directed by Arthur Dong.
Information: 1737 No. Orange Grove
Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90046.

During the 1930s and '40s, San Francisco Chinatown's Forbidden City Nightclub captured the imagination of an international and elite clientele. *Forbidden City, USA* presents triumphant and humorous tales of Chinese Americans who broke through their own cultural barriers as well as discrimination in the entertainment industry.

Eat A Bowl of Tea

directed by Wayne Wang.

Adapted from the book by Louis Chu, the film tells the story of New York's Chinatown as it undergoes "modern" transition in the post World War II era. Scheduled to be released this spring, and then on the American Playhouse television series in 1990.

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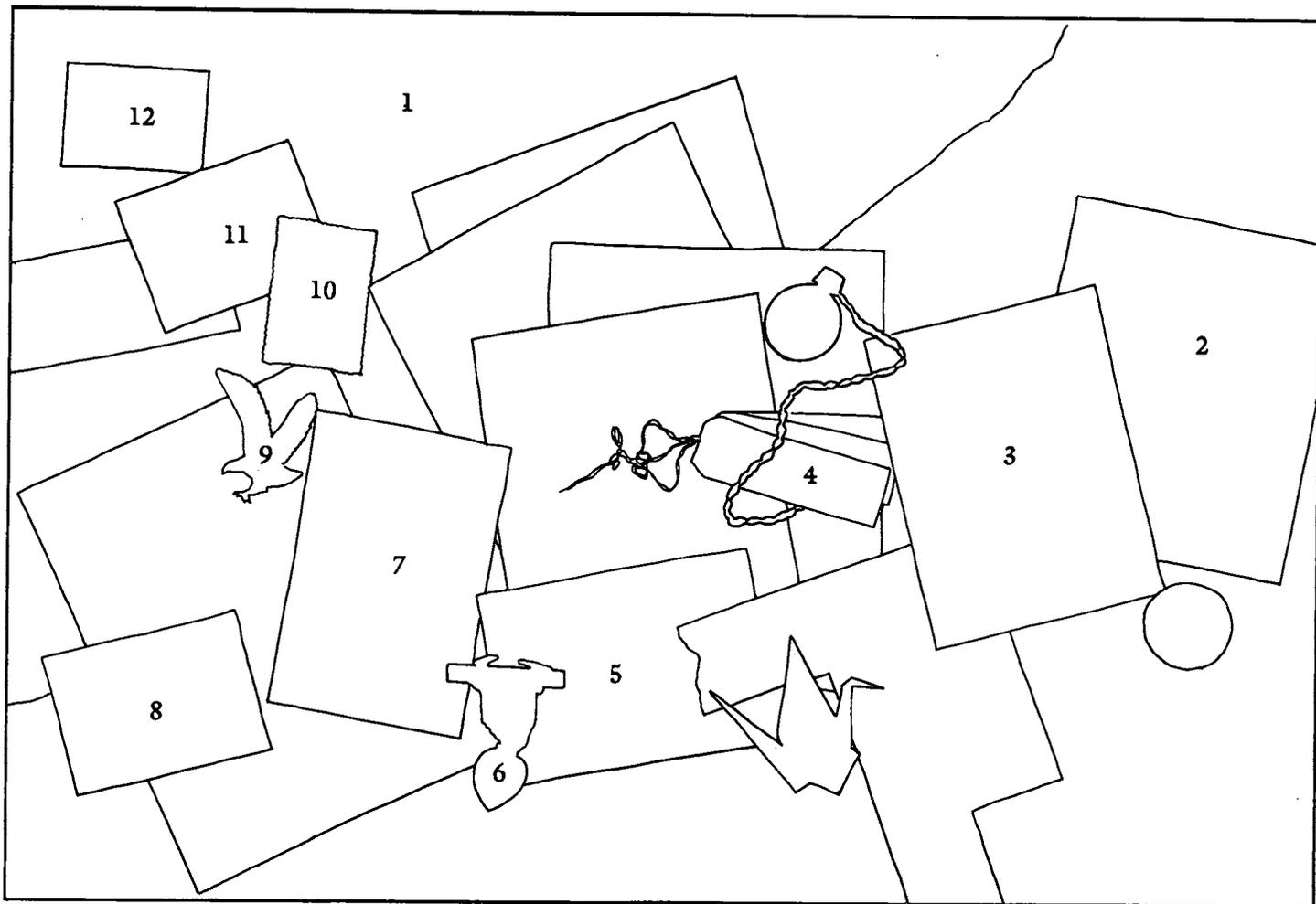
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Notes on items in cover photo

1. Duffel bag from the Tokushige family, San Jose, California.
2. Camp at Amache, Colorado. Photo courtesy of George Yoshioka.
3. Charles Hamasaki testifying at the Commission hearings in Los Angeles, 1981.
4. Camp identification tags from the Tatsuno family, San Jose, California.
- 5, 10, 11, 12. Photos courtesy of George Yoshioka.
6. Purple Heart belonging to Rudy Tokiwa, 442nd Regimental Combat Team.
7. Pilgrimage to camp at Manzanar, May 1982.
8. 1982 Day of Remembrance, Los Angeles.
9. Eagle carved by Paul Sawabe from the wood of his trunk, one of few personal belongings allowed in camp.



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