

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JAPANESE CANADIANS

National Executive Office: 735 Ash Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3N 0R5

* * * WEEKLY UPDATE * * *
MARCH 27, 1985

To: Members, NAJC Council
From: National Redress Co-ordinator
#525 - 890 West Pender Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6C 1J9
(604) 662-3200

1. This update is being sent out a bit earlier this week for two reasons: there has been a slight emergency in the organization, and I'm scheduled to be in San Francisco from Thursday to Saturday (March 28-30) to meet with Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) officials to compare our redress programmes.

2. The slight emergency concerns a petition circulating in our community without the endorsement of the NAJC. Issued by the Toronto-based group calling itself "The Japanese Canadian National Redress Committee for Survivors", a group that includes George Imai and Jack Oki, the petition advocates a redress settlement with two components: an Acknowledgement and a trust foundation in the name of Issei survivors. It has just been published in The Canada Times, and it asks individuals to send their names and addresses to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney in support of the Committee of Survivors.

Of course, a petition in itself is an acceptable method of airing a point of view, but this one has potentially harmful side effects:

a) As published in The Canada Times, the petition is issued anonymously, without a mailing address or phone number for the organization. Many innocent people across Canada could send in their names mistakenly thinking they are supporting an aspect of the NAJC's campaign.

b) The group, the "Japanese Canadian National Redress Committee of Survivors", opposes the NAJC, alleging falsely that the NAJC does not represent the survivors of internment. They have been working through their spokesman George Imai, to disrupt the NAJC's redress programme and to undermine the credibility of our organization.

c) The Committee of Survivors is on record as supporting the government's recent redress package (Acknowledgement and the \$6-10 million trust foundation), which the NAJC has found unacceptable. In other words, this group is taking advantage of the political situation to push forward a position intended to embarrass the NAJC and to undercut its position that a redress settlement must be negotiated.

d) The Committee of Survivors is a small group of self-appointed individuals who are determined to use whatever means available to oppose the NAJC's efforts to establish a consensus based on community meetings and deliberations by the NAJC Council.

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What can be done to counter the harmful effects of the
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d) The Committee of Survivors is a small group of self-appointed individuals who are determined to use whatever means available to oppose the NAJC's efforts to establish a consensus based on community meetings and deliberations by the NAJC Council.

What can be done to counteract the possible harmful effects of the petition?

- throughout our communities by the time this update reaches you. Any problems, please report them to us. Any ideas for improving the
- a) If at all possible, Council members should issue a written directive to members of their communities advising them not to sign the petition, since their names may be used at a future date against the NAJC. If a written directive is not possible, every effort should be made to convey the same information by word-of-mouth.
 - b) There was a suggestion that all Council members should send telegrams to Prime Minister Mulroney, but I think this emergency does not warrant such a response. In fact, over-reaction could harm the stability and the credibility of our organization. A letter has been sent to Mulroney by our President (attached to this update) disclaiming the petition. Council members who feel compelled to respond in detail to Mulroney could do so on behalf of their redress committee, and the letter could indicate the number of Japanese Canadians represented in the Centre.
 - c) Of more importance at this time, we should take action in our communities to build support for the NAJC. As your National Redress Co-ordinator, I am submitting an article (attached to this update) to our community newspapers warning people about the potential dangers of signing the petition and outlining the NAJC's position.
 - d) Centres should circulate a petition in support of the NAJC, to be used as evidence--if this becomes necessary-- of community endorsement. A sample petition, which can be reproduced as needed, is attached to this update. Why not mount a campaign in your Centre to get as many signatures as possible?
 - e) In addition, we are thinking of taking out large ads in all the community newspapers (in both English and Japanese) calling for united action and presenting the NAJC's position. The ad would be issued by all the Council members on behalf of their local organizations. We'll be exploring this idea during the next week. Any comments?

* * *

3. We're still waiting for the completed Information Sheet. At the very least send us the name of your local organization and the names and addresses of your Official Delegate and your Alternate Delegate.

4. Centres should make another effort to sell copies of Democracy Betrayed, in English or Japanese. \$2.50 per copy to Centres; sell for \$5. Distributors: Roger Obata for Ontario and Quebec; Art Miki for Manitoba and Saskatchewan; National Redress Co-ordinator for B.C. and Alberta.

5. Don't forget to send us reports on recent community meetings to include in the April issue of the NAJC Newsletter. Hamilton??

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Winnipeg?? Deadline: April 10.

6. The first issue of the NAJC Newsletter should be circulating throughout our communities by the time this update reaches you. Any problems? Please report these to us. Any ideas for improving the efficiency of our distribution system?

7. Some enclosures were just received from Art Miki: Letter from Rits Inouye, March 4; letter to Rits Inouye, March 24; letter to Jack Oki, March 24; letter to Rits Inouye, March 24.

OTTAWA, Ontario

Ray Miki

Prime Minister,

It has come to my attention that a petition on redress directed to you is circulating without the approval of the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC). The petition, issued by a group calling itself "The Japanese Canadian National Redress Committee for Survivors", calls for individuals in our community to support a settlement consisting of an acknowledgement and a trust foundation. Since it is issued anonymously, without a mailing address for the organization, the inference is that its content is a part of the NAJC's redress programme. Some people may submit their names, erroneously thinking they are supporting my association's redress initiatives.

I would like to make it very clear that this petition has not been endorsed by the NAJC. My association's position is that bi-lateral discussions be continued to arrive at a mutual settlement. This was affirmed by the NAJC Council at the Calgary conference, February 2 to 3, and is being further confirmed at community meetings across the country. Moreover, at these meetings, the NAJC is receiving strong support for a settlement based on a socio-economic study documenting our community's wartime losses. In this regard, I expect to meet with Mr Murta shortly to discuss the details of a Feasibility Study for the socio-economic study.

However, may I assure you that the issues raised in the above mentioned petition will be given full consideration along with the many suggestions our association is receiving from members of our community.

I trust that our association's request for a meeting with you is still under consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Art Miki

Arthur Miki
President NAJC

cc Hon Jack Murta NAJC Council Members
John Turner Ed Broadbent

AM/JO

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March 25, 1985

The Right Honourable Brian Mulroney
Prime Minister
House of Commons
OTTAWA, Ontario

Dear Mr Prime Minister,

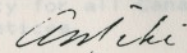
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Yours sincerely,



Arthur Miki
President NAJC

cc Hon Jack Murta NAJC Council Members
John Turner Ed Broadbent

AM/JO

Redress Petition Not Endorsed By the NAJC

Dr. Roy Miki

NAJC National Redress Co-ordinator

A group calling itself the "Japanese Canadian National Redress Committee for Survivors" has been circulating a petition in the Japanese Canadian community, most recently in The Canada Times. Issued without an address or phone number to contact the committee, the petition asks Japanese Canadian survivors of the wartime incarceration to send their names and addresses to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney in support of a redress settlement with two components: an Acknowledgement of the injustices inflicted on Japanese Canadians during World War II and a memorial trust foundation in the name of the Issei survivors.

Who is on this Committee of Survivors? How did it form? Who do its members represent? Why are they issuing this petition anonymously? These are questions the petition does not adequately answer.

The federal government recognizes the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) as the representative organization for Japanese Canadians. The NAJC succeeded the National Japanese Canadian Citizens Association (NJCCA) which formed in 1947 as the national voice of our dispersed communities. At present, the NAJC consists of 16 Centres: Victoria, Vancouver, Kamloops, Kelowna, Vernon, Lethbridge, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, Toronto, North York, Hamilton, Ottawa, and Montreal. The Council elects the President and Vice-President to carry out its policy decisions.

At the last NAJC meeting in Calgary on February 2-3, the Council decided not to accept Jack Murta's proposed \$6 - 10 million educational trust foundation as a redress settlement. Instead, they called for continuation of bilateral talks with the government to reach a mutual settlement.

Since then, many NAJC Centres across Canada having been holding community meetings to explain and solicit feedback on the NAJC's position that a settlement should reflect the losses suffered by our community. The NAJC has asked the government for a socio-economic study documenting the impact of incarceration, and this would establish an estimate of total losses. Areas of research would include loss of property, loss of income, disruption of education, loss of life insurance policies and pensions, and loss of civil liberties. As a permanent record of our community's wartime history, such a study would stand as a legacy for all Canadians to see and understand the enormity of the injustices.

Reports of the community meetings held recently show almost unanimous agreement that the government's proposed educational trust foundation is inadequate as a resolution to the redress

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issue. On the more positive side, there is growing support for the socio-economic study as the basis for an acceptable redress settlement.

The NAJJC encourages the participation of all Japanese Canadians. How the redress issue is finally resolved depends on co-operative action, feedback, positive criticism, and a commitment to the common good of our whole community.

As you consider the contents of the redress petition from the Japanese Canadian National Redress Committee for Survivors, please also consider the cost of short-circuiting the democratic process of reaching a community consensus. A settlement hastily made to satisfy the demands of a few will only foster disappointment and a sense of failure among the many. The Committee of Survivors has publicly stated its opposition to the NAJJC, and one of their spokesmen, George Imai of Toronto, has been trying to challenge the NAJJC's authority to speak on behalf of all generations of the Japanese Canadian community. Signing the Committee of Survivor's petition would mean that you are endorsing a redress position that the NAJJC has not accepted. Your name may even be used, at some later date, to discredit the NAJJC.

Join the NAJJC in its struggle to achieve a just and equitable resolution to the redress issue. Get involved through the NAJJC Centre in your area. For more information, contact: National Redress Co-ordinator, NAJJC, 525 -890 West Pender St., Vancouver, B.C., V6C 1J9; (604) 662-3200.

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c. The Committee of Survivors is on record as supporting the government's recent redress package (acknowledgment and the \$2.15 million trust foundation), which the NAJJC has found unacceptable. In other words, this group is taking its stance of the political situation to push forward a position intended to embarrass the NAJJC and to undercut its position that a redress settlement must be negotiated.

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