

To the New York Japanese Consulate
March 24, 2020j

Dear Messers X and Y

You might be interested in a redress *kenka* laid out below. During the 1980s, a Minister Without Portfolio in the Nakasone cabinet, Hiraizumi Wataru, thought that Japanese Americans had the same clout in Washington as Jewish Americans. On Israel, for example. And by analogy, Japanese Americans – the JACL in particular – could be employed in the trade troubles Japan was then experiencing. This was a completely misbegotten policy idea, but it was put into play by the then Consul General in Los Angeles.

The gold-plated trips offered and taken and the promise of other goodies to come for the JACL hierarchy -- including the JACL staffer in charge of redress, John Tateishi -- put redress in great danger and had to be stopped. And it was by Ambassador and New York Consul General Ukawa Hidetoshi, who had over five years time, become a good friend of mine. After I talked to Ukawa about the issue, he said Nakasone was coming to New York in three weeks time and then said he would bring the issue up with the Prime Minister. Nakasone got the Hiraizumi JACL outreach stopped, and in my view, Japanese American redress, then hanging by a thread for other reasons as well, was saved.

The Japanese government, I think, liked the idea of Japanese American redress and supported it behind the scenes. Why? Because the Japanese government felt that internment was caused by racial prejudice, just as the feelings toward Toyota was in part the result of anti-Asian feeling. No such animus existed against Volkswagen of white Germany. Behind the scenes is where the Japanese government should have stayed.

Anyway, long ago it was, but it was not a good idea for anyone in the Japanese cabinet to get involved with Japanese American political efforts in Washington. We needed all the Lotto numbers to fall into place to get redress passed and enacted. The Japan Trade

faction in the JACL hierarchy (see below) did not hold any of them.
Absolutely to the contrary

Stay healthy,

Grant Ujifusa

Dear HeyBooks Editor,

It is my sense that the manuscript you published was not fact checked. I say so because I was an editor of general interest books for 26 years at Houghton Mifflin, Random House, and Macmillan, and I am familiar with how things work in trade publishing. The subtitle is clearly incorrect because Mr. Tateishi was relieved of his duties at JACL in early 1985 when HR 442 was bottled up and left for dead in both the House and Senate, while the bill at that point was publicly opposed by Reagan Administration.

So the successful effort occurred after Mr. Tateishi was no longer a JACL staffer. He was and is therefore in no position whatever to tell any "inside story" of how the bill was passed and enacted into law. He was not around, long gone, when it was.

Mr. Tateishi was a vocal member of the so-called Japan Trade faction at National JACL when its Board met twice yearly in San Francisco. This group wanted to back Japanese corporate and governmental interests while giving lip service only to redress -- a hopeless enterprise to any sophisticated observer of our politics, supported, according to members of Japan Trade faction, only by the naïve teachers and social workers in the JACL rank and file.

There were huge fights between the two factions on the JACL National Board whose minutes from the era -- 1982 to 1986 -- you can easily consult.

The Redress Faction wanted nothing to do with backing any Japanese interest, but to concentrate solely on redress in Washington. To be in bed with the Japanese in 1984 begged the question: What were you Japanese Americans up to in 1942? One story in a major media outlet, especially from one unsympathetic to us, would have doomed Japanese American redress. First you bomb Pearl Harbor and now you're in bed with people who decimated Detroit and then bought Pebble Beach. And after that you're asking our politicians to write everyone of you a check for \$20,000?

For his support, Mr. Tateishi was given a gold-plated trip to Japan where he was received as a major American dignitary. Other benefits were to follow. In short, he sold out redress, while saying publicly that he "didn't want JACL to become a single issue organization."

The bill began to move only after JACL redirected its redress effort to a non-taxable deductible entity called the Legislative Education Committee, headed by the indomitable Grayce Uyehara of Philadelphia, the greatest female Japanese American leader our community has yet to produce.

John is trying to take credit for the work Grayce did.

Grant Ujifusa
JACL Redress Strategy Chair
1982 - 1992