

THE U.S. COMMISSION ON WARTIME RELOCATION AND INTERNMENT
OF CIVILIANS

Public Law 96-317, passed July 31, 1980, established a commission to review the circumstances surrounding Executive Order 9066 and its impact on American citizens and permanent residents. The commission will also recommend any remedies it finds appropriate.

Hearings on this matter will be held in the following cities:

Washington, D.C.	July 14 and 16, 1981
Los Angeles, California	August 4, 5, and 6, 1981
San Francisco, California	August 11, 12, and 13, 1981
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON	September 9, 10, and 11, 1981
Anchorage, Alaska	September 15, 1981
Aleutian Islands	September 17, 1981
Pribilof Islands	September 19, 1981
Chicago, Illinois	September 22 and 23, 1981

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Joan Zeldes Bernstein, chair
Congressman Daniel E. Lungren, vice chair
Senator Edward W. Brooke
Father Robert F. Drinan
Dr. Arthur S. Flemming
Justice Arthur J. Goldberg
Father I. V. Gromoff
Judge William M. Marutani
Senator Hugh B. Mitchell

* * * * *

The Seattle hearing will be held at the Federal Building (Second and Madison), September 9, 10, and 11. For information about the hearing please call or write Community Committee on Redress/Reparations, 318 Sixth Avenue South #108, Seattle, WA 98104. Telephone (206) 623-5088.

The U.S. Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians is located in the New Executive Office Building, 726 Jackson Place NW, Suite 2020, Washington, D.C. 20506. Telephone (202) 395-7390.

THE INCARCERATION OF JAPANESE AMERICANS DURING WORLD WAR II

The United States government began the wholesale uprooting and imprisonment of all Pacific Coast residents of Japanese ancestry on February 19, 1942, two months after the U.S. entered World War II. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 authorized military commanders to exclude civilians from prescribed military zones. Congress backed up the Order by authorizing imprisonment and fines for persons violating it.

The Western Defense Command subsequently issued more than 100 orders, aimed exclusively at persons of Japanese ancestry, who were forced out of their homes, classrooms, and businesses; deprived of their civil rights; stigmatized as "enemy aliens" even though the vast majority of them were American citizens; and impounded in "relocation centers," where they lived behind barbed wire, under guard, for an average term of three and one-half years.

These actions were taken despite arguments by the Attorney General and the FBI against the military necessity for mass evacuation. No person of Japanese ancestry living in the U.S. was ever charged with espionage or sabotage.

The losses and injuries suffered as a result of the expulsion and internment are enormous. The Evacuation Claims Act of 1948 paid former internees a total of \$34.2 million (after legal and processing fees) as compensation for property losses--which were conservatively estimated by the Federal Reserve Bank at \$400 million.

Other losses include:

- Loss of normal wage and salary incomes, and the loss of business income for those who owned businesses and farms. The total wages and salaries lost by Japanese Americans during their imprisonment was more than \$280 million. No amounts for the value of lost pension rights, job seniority, lost opportunities for promotion, etc., are included in that figure. The total loss of net incomes for businesses and farms is estimated at \$155 million in 1942 dollars.
- Mental and emotional injuries.
- Loss of personal liberty and civil rights. The following constitutional rights were denied: freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, right to assemble, freedom from unreasonable search and seizure, right to be informed of charges, right to speedy and public trial by jury, right to be confronted by unfavorable witnesses, right to legal counsel, right to reasonable bail, right to life and to liberty, right to property, right against involuntary servitude, right to vote, freedom from cruel and unusual punishment, right to equal protection under the law.

The First Amendment to the Bill of Rights guarantees individuals the right to petition the government for a redress of grievances. Many organizations have asked that such redress take the form of monetary restitution to individuals who suffered the losses described above. As part of its duties, the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians is charged with considering this proposal and making a recommendation to Congress by early 1982.