

RESOLUTION

Honoring Our Japanese American Resisters of Conscience

WHEREAS, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt responded to objections from JACL leaders in 1943 by reversing a decision to ban the induction of Japanese Americans into the U.S. Armed Forces during a period when the U.S. government unjustly interned over 110,000 Japanese Americans in World War II concentration camps; and

WHEREAS, *Question 27*, relating to service in the U.S. armed forces, and *Question 28*, asking Japanese Americans to swear unqualified allegiance to the U.S. and renounce allegiance to the emperor of Japan, presented a difficult dilemma for those who were unjustly imprisoned in World War II concentration camps without due process of the law; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 315 Japanese Americans, including the *Heart Mountain Fair Play Committee*, refused to be inducted while their government violated their constitutional rights as citizens by imprisoning them and their families in concentration camps; and

WHEREAS, Those *Resisters of Conscience* who declared their loyalty to the U.S. but refused to be inducted based on their belief in the fundamental principles of the U.S. Constitution were convicted of violating the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940; and

WHEREAS, Many *Resisters of Conscience* were sentenced to federal prison terms, but were later pardoned by President Truman in 1947 for their unlawful imprisonment and recognized for their courageous civil rights stand; and

WHEREAS, For at least 50 years, many *Resisters of Conscience* and their families were ostracized by members of their own community for their actions to defy induction into military service; and

WHEREAS, The United States began the healing process to remedy the gross injustices perpetrated against Americans of Japanese ancestry when the "*Civil Liberties Act of 1988*" was signed on August 10, 1988; and

WHEREAS, The JACL in 1990 took the first step to atone for the emotional pain endured by the World War II Japanese American *Resisters of Conscience* when delegates to the National Convention unanimously adopted Resolution 13; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 13 explicitly states that "*the JACL regrets any pain or bitterness caused by its failure to recognize this group of patriotic Americans and further resolves to educate our own community and the public that loyalty is not necessarily demonstrated in any singular form but can be manifested in other praiseworthy and admirable acts, and that by this recognition the JACL strives to promote and nurture the healing process of an issue that has divided our community...*;" and

WHEREAS, The Japanese American Citizens League endeavors to begin the New Millennium by providing strong leadership to facilitate a process of healing and reconciliation for patriotic Americans in our community who resisted service in the U.S. military during World War II and those who sacrificed life and limb to serve in that military effort with courage, skill and honor.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE urges all Japanese Americans to embrace this effort to extend our heartfelt apology for

the pain and suffering endured by Japanese American *Resisters of Conscience* and their families and to recognize their courage and adherence to U.S. democratic principles as they defied orders for induction into military service.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT THE JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE will integrate information about the World War II *Resisters of Conscience* and their families into all educational materials about the Japanese American wartime experience and will honor them at an appropriate public ceremony to be held during the first year of the New Millennium.

Signed 17 July, 1999

Elaine Akagi, Co-Governor
JACL, Pacific NW District Council

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*Submitted by the Pacific NW District Council for Approval by the
Tri-District Conference in Ogden, Utah.
If approved, this resolution will be submitted for approval by the
JACL National Board at their third quarter meeting in October, 1999.*