



WAR PARTY: Emi, Kuromiya and Hoshizaki track down former resisters for a reunion in L.A.

JACL members were government informants, and one infamous JACL memo suggested the formation of Japanese American “suicide battalions” whose families and friends would be held as hostages to guarantee loyalty.

“They should do themselves a favor and deal with the damn thing,” says former resister Yosh Kuromiya, who was a 19-year-old student at Pasadena Junior College when he was sent to Heart Mountain. “They don’t have to keep trying to justify it.”

Japanese Americans held at western U.S. internment camps were still drafted into the armed forces.



In May 1944, nisei pack a Wyoming courtroom for the largest draft resistance trial in U.S. history

Selective Service

SOME WORLD WAR II DRAFT RESISTERS STILL BATTLE PREJUDICE—FROM THEIR FELLOW JAPANESE AMERICANS

WHEN TAK HOSHIZAKI DECIDED TO FIGHT HIS DRAFT NOTICE in 1944, he figured he had a pretty strong legal case. For two years, the 18-year-old L.A. native had been incarcerated at the Japanese American internment camp in Heart Mountain, Wyoming. The U.S. government had labeled his parents “enemy aliens” and imprisoned his entire family behind barbed wire. Now they wanted to draft him? • “According to their own rules, you can’t draft people out of prison,” Hoshizaki says. He found out otherwise. “As soon as the judge started calling us Japs, I figured we’d had it,” he recalls. He was right—Hoshizaki was convicted of draft evasion and spent the next two years in a federal penitentiary in Washington State.

Ironically, scores of Japanese American draft resisters like Hoshizaki were ostracized not only by white America but within their own communities. Many blame the Japanese American Citizen’s League (JACL), the community’s leading civil rights organization. “They called us cowards and said we should be charged with sedition,” recalls Frank Emi, a leader of the draft-resistance movement who was sentenced to four years in Fort Leavenworth.

This month, the JACL will vote at its national convention on whether to formally apologize to the resisters. Although similar resolutions have failed, the change from a unanimous vote to a simple majority may allow the resolution to pass.

For years, the JACL has been heavily criticized for its activities during the internment period. Many

But even if the resolution passes, many Japanese Americans will never support the apology. Harold Harada, a Culver City physician who served as a medic with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team during World War II, considers it an “insult” to the memories of those who served. “The 850 [Japanese American] men who gave their lives in World War II are the true heroes, not these resisters,” he says.

After more than five decades, many resisters continue to hide their past. “One told me not to write or call him anymore because his wife didn’t want him involved in any of the resister stuff,” says Martha Nakagawa, a reporter at the *Pacific Citizen*, the JACL newspaper.

Emi, whose conspiracy conviction was reversed on appeal, has a hard time understanding this. “I never felt ashamed, because we won our case,” he says. “We had fought the government over our constitutional rights. We felt very proud of that.” —ROBERT ITO

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LEFT: WENDY STENZEL