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Weekend symposium links past, recent internments

Professor Arif Dirlik said the event was necessary to prevent recurrences of U.S. wartime acts

By **Jeremy Berrington**
Freelance Reporter

The Center for Critical Theory and Transnational Studies hosted a symposium on the Japanese-American Internment and its contemporary implications on Friday and Saturday. The symposium included lectures and panel discussions featuring more than a dozen scholars, authors and survivors of the Japanese Internment.

Although some speakers shed tears during the symposium, most participants shared good humor. Author and playwright Frank Chin opened the conference with a lecture. Chin acknowledged the fault of the Roosevelt administration for issuing Executive Order 9066, which empowered the



Danielle Hickey Photo Editor

Maria Hwang spoke as part of a panel discussion titled "Perspectives of a New Generation" for the Japanese-American Internment Lectures on Saturday afternoon.

War Relocation Commission to establish military zones where the eventual internment took place. Chin also criticized the Japanese American Civilian League for its support of U.S. policy during the internment.

"I think the JACL is irrelevant; it is dead, it has proven itself obsolete and dedicated to preserving its obsolescence," Chin said when asked about the role of JACL in preserving civil rights in contemporary society.

Chin urged future generations of Japanese-Americans to "form other groups that are dedicated to preserving Japanese-American civil rights in the future."

Photographer and JACL member Rich Iwasaki, who was covering the event for several Portland-based Japanese-American newspapers, said times have change since JACL's controversial and volatile history.

"The JACL has come a long way, it has a very different focus than it did in the 1940s," he said.

Iwasaki said there is still a prejudice in "white America" toward Asian-Americans.

"We've come a long way as a society, but we have a long way to go," he said. "This is why organizations like the JACL are so important today."

One of the main themes of the symposium was the parallel between the

internment of Japanese-Americans under the status of "enemy combatants" during World War II and the internment of Arabs and other "enemy combatants" after 9/11 in the wake of the USA PATRIOT Act and the Homeland Security Act.

Peggy Nagae, panelist and former president of the Civil Liberties Public Education Fund Board, drew a comparison between past and present U.S. policies.

"Much of the same legal language and case law that was used to revoke Japanese civil rights during WWII is now being invoked by the lawmakers of the Bush administration to strip civil rights from our current 'enemy combatants,'" she said.

Nagae discussed the cases of Yasui v. U.S., in which she served as lead attorney, and Korematsu v. U.S., an almost identical case.

History and culture Professor Arif Dirlik, who organized the event, commented on the timeliness of the symposium and the necessity to continue such programs in the future.

"For a long time, I said that (the internment) could never happen again, I thought that the lessons of the past were too strong," he said. "We must keep doing (symposiums) over and over again to prevent the reoccurrence of past mistakes."

Jeremy Berrington is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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Mass & Ashes at 12:00 pm

Newman Center
1850 Emerald St. (across from Hayward Field)
Mass & Ashes at 5:15 pm
Mass & Ashes 7:30 pm



Erik Bishoff Photographer

Board of Higher Education President Neil Goldschmidt addresses OUS Senior Vice Chancellor Tom Anderes (foreground) as board members Geri Richmond and Henry Lorenzen listen in.

CUTS

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125 people, will determine which of its functions campuses can take. The office provides internal auditing, institutional research and technology services, among others, according to its Web site.

Goldschmidt, the board's president, said it is unlikely that downsizing the Chancellor's Office would ultimately have an effect on University students because the University provides many of its own functions.

"Almost anything that affects a student, it's provided here on the campus," he said, adding that the office provides more services for smaller

universities, such as data processing and finance services.

If the tentative plan to split the \$7.5 million falls through, Frohnmayer said it is even more difficult to determine where the cuts will fall.

"We really haven't formulated exactly how we're going to do it because it's a moving target," he said. "I think we're just going to have to absorb it as best we can, while protecting the instructional core of the University."

He said more specific plans should be developed before the May 1 deadline for final cut proposals to be submitted to Oregon's Department of Administrative Services.

Contact the higher education/student life/student affairs reporter at chelseaduncan@dailymerald.com.