



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 2, 2021

***WE HEREBY REFUSE: Japanese American Resistance to Wartime Incarceration* to hit bookstores on May 18, 2021**

Wing Luke Museum & Chin Music Press Team Up to Deliver Powerful New Graphic Novel on Historic Example of Anti-Asian Violence

Three voices. Three acts of defiance. One mass injustice.

SEATTLE—As the nation comes to a reckoning with a wave of anti-Asian violence that is rooted in a history of systemic exclusion and racism, the Wing Luke Museum and Chin Music Press are publishing a graphic novel that sheds new light on a major part of that history – the WW2 exclusion and incarceration of Japanese Americans.

WE HEREBY REFUSE: Japanese American Resistance to Wartime Incarceration is the story of camp as you've never seen it before. While they complied when evicted from their homes in 1942, many refused to submit to imprisonment in American concentration camps without a fight. Based upon painstaking research, *We Hereby Refuse* presents an original vision of America's past with disturbing links to the American present.

In this groundbreaking graphic novel, we meet:

- JIM AKUTSU, the inspiration for John Okada's acclaimed novel *No-No Boy*, who refuses to be drafted from the camp at Minidoka after the Selective Service classifies him not as a citizen but as an enemy alien;
- HIROSHI KASHIWAGI, who resists government pressure to sign a loyalty oath at Tule Lake, but yields to family pressure to renounce his U.S. citizenship, putting himself at risk of deportation; and
- MITSUYE ENDO, a reluctant recruit to a lawsuit contesting her imprisonment, who refuses a chance to leave the camp at Topaz so that her case could reach the U.S. Supreme Court. For the first time, we see Mitzi Endo as a person and not just a name on a legal brief.

Through these characters, we see the devastating impacts of mass incarceration based solely on race, reveal the depth and breadth of the long-suppressed story of camp resistance, and locate the government's wartime actions in the continuum of systemic exclusion of Asian Americans.

We Hereby Refuse is set for publication on May 18, 2021.

This project was funded, in part, by a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program.

Chin Music Press
1501 Pike Place #329
Seattle, WA 98101-1542
www.chinmusicpress.com



The project's webpage can be found at: wingluke.org/we-hereby-refuse. An associated Educators' Guide will be available from May 18 at curriculum.wingluke.org.

Authors Frank Abe and Tamiko Nimura and artist Ross Ishikawa are available for interviews on the creation of the graphic novel, the history of anti-Asian racism that includes the wartime incarceration, and the place of this new book in that history.

THE AUTHORS

Frank Abe wrote and directed the PBS film on the largest organized resistance to incarceration, *Conscience and the Constitution*. He won an American Book Award for *JOHN OKADA: The Life & Rediscovered Work of the Author of No-No Boy* and is co-editing a new anthology of incarceration literature for Penguin Classics. He blogs at Resisters.com.

Tamiko Nimura is an Asian American (Sansei/Pinay) writer living in Tacoma, Washington. Her training in community journalism, literature, and American ethnic studies (MA, PhD, University of Washington) prepared her to research, document, and tell the stories of people of color. She can be found at tamikonimura.net.

THE ILLUSTRATORS

Ross Ishikawa is a cartoonist and animator living in Seattle. He is working on a graphic novel about his parents and their coming of age during World War II. His work is online at rossishikawa.com.

Matt Sasaki is the artist on the previous volume in this series, *Fighting for America: Nisei Soldiers*. He lives with his wife and dog north of Seattle. Samples of his work are online at mattsasaki.com.

THE PUBLISHING TEAM

The Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience, located in the heart of Seattle's Chinatown-International District, connects people to the dynamic history, cultures, and art of Asian Pacific Americans through vivid storytelling and inspiring experiences to advance racial and social equity. The museum is a Smithsonian affiliate and a National Park Service Affiliated Area. www.wingluke.org

Chin Music Press is an independent book publisher in Seattle's historic Pike Place Market dedicated to creating beautiful, engaging, and affordable books that bring marginalized topics into the mainstream.

INFORMATION FOR BOOKSELLERS

Chin Music Press books are distributed to the trade by Consortium Book Sales & Distribution, a division of Ingram Publisher Services.

WE HEREBY REFUSE: Japanese American Resistance to Wartime Incarceration

Trade paper with French flaps

Color Illustrations throughout

\$19.95, 168 pages

ISBN: 9781634059763

CONTACT: Bruce Rutledge, 206-380-1947, speak@chinmusicpress.com

Chin Music Press
1501 Pike Place #329
Seattle, WA 98101-1542
www.chinmusicpress.com