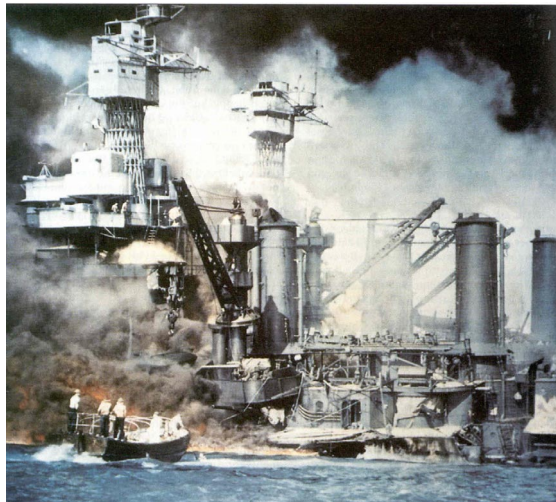


If World War II is the “good war”, then how do we explain Japanese American Internment?

1

Why War?

- Fascism versus Democracy
- Atlantic Charter (August 1941)
 - right of all peoples to live in freedom from fear, want, and tyranny
 - pledged to all nations the right to self-determination
 - free trade and disarmament
- Pearl Harbor
 - 18 battleships disabled, 340 planes wrecked, more than 3,500 killed

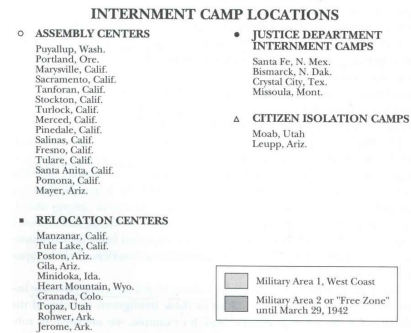


“Yesterday, December 7, 1941 - a date which will live in infamy - the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan....Always will we remember the character of the onslaught against us.” FDR

2

Japanese American internment

- Executive Order 9066 (2/19/42)
 - results in the removal and mass internment of approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans from the West Coast of the United States
 - 2/3 are American citizens (Nisei)
 - Issei (immigrants) prevented from becoming U.S. citizens
- 1,393 Germans, 264 Italians, and 2,192 Japanese interned in Department of Justice camps but no mass internment



Why mass internment from the West Coast?

- military necessity vs. racial, economic, and political explanations
- mainland versus Hawaii
 - 90% of Japanese Americans on the mainland were interned (2/3 citizens)
 - 1% (979 aliens and 525 citizens) from Hawaii

military leadership

- “In the war in which we are now engaged racial affinities are not severed by migration. The Japanese race is an enemy race and while many second and third generation Japanese born on United States soil, possessed of United States citizenship, has become ‘Americanized,’ the racial strains are undiluted....The very fact that no sabotage has taken place to date is a disturbing and confirming indication such action will be taken.”
 - General John L. DeWitt, head of the Western Defense Command
- “We must distinguish between loyalty and disloyalty among our people.”
 - General Delos Emmons, military governor of Hawaii

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How does one evaluate military necessity?

- Munson Report (Nov. 1941):
 - Japanese Americans no more likely to be “disloyal than any other racial group in the United States with whom we went to war.”
- Lt. Commander K. D. Ringle, Office of Naval Intelligence (Jan. 1942):
 - no need for mass action, estimated only 3,500 could be potential military threats
- Director J. Edgar Hoover, F.B.I. (Feb. 1942)
 - Mass evacuation of the Japanese could not be justified for security reasons, because suspected individuals already in custody.
- Federal Communications Commission
 - Monitored all radio broadcasts and reported that the army’s fears of Japanese American radio transmissions to Japanese ships were groundless.
- 13 ships sunk in January 1942 and over 60 vessels lost in North Atlantic and off of eastern seaboard due to German submarine attacks
- West Coast did not suffer any attacks from the Japanese until after President Roosevelt issued E.O. 9066 ⁶

newspaper coverage

- Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox:
 - informed press that Pearl Harbor resulted from 5th column activity despite lack of evidence from internal military reports
- Westcoast Media:
 - “In Hawaii...treachery by residents, who although of Japanese ancestry had been regarded as loyal, has played an important part in the success of Japanese attacks.” *San Diego Union*
 - “A Viper is nonetheless a viper wherever the egg is hatched – so a Japanese American, born of Japanese parents – grows up to be a Japanese, not an American.” *Los Angeles Times*

7

Hawaii

- economic dependence versus competition
 - 37% of Hawaii vs. 1-2% of California
- cultural traditions of ethnic diversity versus racial purity

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Mainland

- civilian (political and economic) pressures on military leadership
 - California Attorney General Earl Warren
 - “We’ve been charged with wanting to get rid of the Japs for selfish reasons....We might as well be honest. We do. It’s a question of whether the white man lives on the Pacific Coast or the brown man. They came into this valley to work, and they stayed to take over....If all the Japs were removed tomorrow, we’d never miss them in two weeks, because the white farmers can take over and produce everything the Jap grows.”
 - Grower-Shipper Vegetable Association, May 1942
- history of racialized economic competition and political exclusion
 - Alien land laws
 - Ozawa - aliens ineligible for citizenship

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“A failure of political leadership”

- Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson :
 - Mass internment “will make a tremendous hole in our constitutional system” but supported DeWitt’s recommendation without “a clear military justification”
- Attorney General Francis Biddle:
 - “There were no reasons for mass evacuation.” (lunch with President Roosevelt 2/7/42)
 - “My last advice from the War Department is that there is no evidence of imminent attack and from the F.B. I. That there is no evidence of planned sabotage.” (2/17/42)
 - Did not publicly voice his objections
- President Roosevelt
 - Detention finally declared unconstitutional in December 1944

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What was the impact of internment on Japanese Americans?

- Concentration and dispersal of ethnic communities
 - planned assimilation
- family structure and relationships
 - Issei vs. Nisei
 - men vs. women

11

Financial and Psychological

- “The exclusion, removal and detention inflicted tremendous human cost. There was the obvious cost of homes and businesses sold or abandoned under circumstances of great distress, as well as injury to careers and professional advancement. But, more important, there was the loss of liberty and the personal stigma of suspected disloyalty for thousands of people who knew themselves to be devoted to their country’s cause and to its ideals but whose repeated protestations of loyalty were discounted- only to be demonstrated beyond any doubt by the record of Nisei soldiers, who returned from the battlefields of Europe as the most decorated and distinguished combat unit of World War II, and by the thousands of other Nisei who served against the enemy in the Pacific, mostly in military intelligence. The wounds of the exclusion and detention have healed in some respects, but the scars of that experience remain, painfully real in the minds of those who lived through the suffering and deprivation of the camps.”
 - *Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians*, 1982

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Why was there no resistance?

- imprisonment of community leaders
- lack of criticism during wartime from traditionally liberal and radical organizations
- patriotism as demonstration of resistance?
 - JACL
 - 33,000 Nisei served in Armed Forces
 - 100th Battalion (Hawaii) and 442nd Regimental Combat Team
 - Military Intelligence Service

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Another look at resistance: Supreme Court cases

- Korematsu v. U.S. (failure to report to assembly center)
 - 1983 Coram Nobis - error of the court
 - War Department withheld information from the Supreme Court
- Ex Parte Endo
 - WRA cannot detain loyal citizens in the camps nor bar them from the West Coast
 - December 18, 1944 - One day after the War Department rescinds the exclusion and detention order, the U.S. Supreme Court holds the exclusion of a single racial group to be within the war powers of Congress and the president. On the same day, the Supreme Court announces that the WRA cannot detain loyal citizens in the camps nor bar them from the West Coast.

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Resistance in the Camps

- loyalty questionnaire and No-Nos
 - Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?
 - Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the U.S. from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor or any other foreign government, power, or organization?
 - 5,300 answered no-no; 4,600 refused to answer or qualified answers
 - It was difficult to distinguish “the No of protest against discrimination, the No of protest against a father interned apart from his family, the No of bitter antagonism to subordinates in the relocation center, the No of a gang sticking together, the No of thoughtless defiance, the No of family duty, the No of hopeless confusion, the No of fear of military service, and the No of felt loyalty to Japan.” WRA staff member

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Redress and Reparations

- 1948 Japanese American Evacuation Claims Act
 - \$400,000 to \$1 million loss
 - “There were many kinds of injury the Evacuation Claims Act made no attempt to compensate: the stigma placed on people who fell under the exclusion and relocation orders; the deprivation of liberty suffered during detention; the psychological impact of exclusion and relocation; the breakdown of family structure; the loss of earnings or profits; physical injury or illness during detention.”
- repression of memories
- social movements of 1960s
- Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians
 - 20 days of hearings, 750 witnesses

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A Historical and National Assessment

- “The promulgation of Executive Order 9066 was not justified by military necessity, and the decisions which followed from it - detention, ending detention and ending exclusion - were not driven by analysis of military conditions. The broad historical causes which shaped these decisions were race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership. Widespread ignorance of Japanese Americans contributed to a policy conceived in haste and executed in an atmosphere of fear and anger at Japan. A grave injustice was done to American citizens and resident aliens of Japanese ancestry who, without individual review or any probative evidence against them, were excluded, removed and detained by the United States during World War II.”
 - Personal Justice Denied
- “I have since deeply regretted the removal order and my own testimony advocating it, because it was not in keeping with our American concept of freedom and rights of citizens.”
 - Chief Justice Earl Warren
- 1988 Civil Liberties Act
 - Public apology
 - \$20,000 for remaining 60,000 survivors

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Factors in treatment of Japanese Americans

- military and political leadership
- media response
- history and tradition of anti-Japanese sentiment
- cultural attitudes that shaped perceptions of military necessity
- military necessity as cover for economic, racist, and political motives

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