

## AMERICA'S FIRST CONCENTRATIONS CAMPS

# The World War II Internment of Japanese Americans

by Mark Calney

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*A Japanese American family, including Kihachi Hirakawa (right) pastor of the Japanese church at Winslow, Washington, under military guard en route to an internment camp.*

*All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.*

– Amendment XIV; U.S. Constitution

The car pulls up slowly to the gate and stops. A military police officers walks to the car and opens the driver-side door, as sentries in a nearby tower stand ready with a 50-caliber machine gun. The driver steps out of the vehicle. He is wearing an old U.S. Army uniform, decorated with numerous battle ribbons and honors. The old veteran is

then escorted through the gate, and onto the grounds of the Santa Anita Race Track in Arcadia, California. There are no races that day. The track has been converted into an enclave of tar-paper shacks to accommodate more than 18,000 people, and is surrounded by a barb-wire fence and armed patrols. The old veteran had committed no crime. He had served his nation with distinction, and was an upstanding family man in his community. His house and all this worldly possessions, except those things he carries in his suitcase, have been sold out from under him for a pittance. After processing, he will be placed in a horse stable where he will live until being transported to another camp further inland for an indefinite period of time.

In the eyes of the U.S. Justice Department the old veteran was guilty of the “possibility” that he might commit an act of sabotage against a U.S. military installation.

This is not a scenario from the latest Hollywood movie. During the winter of 1942, that World War I veteran, and more than 110,000 other Americans of Japanese ancestry, were placed in concentration camps in the United States. Today, sweeping measures have already been undertaken which reverse the guidelines imposed by Congress in the 1970s on the FBI and Justice Department, that now threaten the very freedoms and “American way of life,” which U.S. Attorney John Ashcroft claims to be defending.

On May 30<sup>th</sup>, Ashcroft revised the Attorney General Guidelines for FBI investigations, stating that the priority of the FBI must be “prevention” and “disruption.” Solving and prosecuting crimes have taken a backseat to Ashcroft’s desire to have FBI agents unencumbered “from the bureaucratic, organizational, and operational restrictions and structures that had hindered them from doing their jobs effectively.”

Currently, the United States is holding prisoners from the war in Afghanistan in a camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. They are being afforded fewer legal rights than common prisoners of war. Additionally, Ashcroft’s Department of Justice has just declared that anyone labeled an “enemy combatant” by the President has absolutely no Constitutional rights, including the right to legal counsel, and is subject to confinement for an indefinite time. This is the situation of Yaser Esam Hamdi, an American-born citizen captured with Taliban forces in Afghanistan, who has been removed from the detention camp in Cuba and remains isolated in a military brig in Norfolk, Virginia.

The United States has issued no declaration of war, and not one shred of evidence has been presented to prove that Osama bin Laden, and his nefarious band of cave-dwelling Luddites, authored the highly sophisticated atrocities of Sept. 11, 2001. Those American traitors, and others, responsible for 9/11 and the ongoing coup against the U.S. government, are still free, and are now preparing to stampede the American people into accepting a suspension of the Constitution, while a Clash of Civilizations is unleashed on the world.

We are facing a situation eerily similar to Feb. 29, 1933, when the Nazis set fire to the Reichstag, as the pretext to force a “state of emergency” in Germany, allowing Adolph Hitler to suspend civil rights. Nazi political opponents (called “suspects”) were arrested, imprisoned, and often executed, as the first Nazi concentration camp was established at Dachau the following month.

## Before Pearl Harbor

The Nov. 3, 1920 banner headline of the *Los Angeles Times* blared, “Harding Wins by Landslide.” Republican candidate Warren Harding had replaced Ku Klux Klan booster Woodrow Wilson in the White House and California’s “Vote White” Sen. James D. Phelan was also defeated. The second major article of the paper read, “Anti-Jap Law Wins,” referring to the state ballot initiative, under which the “Japanese are forbidden to lease agricultural land.” This “Anti-Alien Initiative Measure” plugged the loop-holes in the 1903 state Alien Land Law which had made “alien[s] [i.e. all Asian immigrants] ineligible to citizenship”; ineligible to own land, but permitted three-year land leases. Similar laws were subsequently adopted in Oregon, Washington State, and other Western states.

In 1922, the U.S. Supreme Court (*Ozawa v. United States*) reaffirmed that Asian immigrants were ineligible to become naturalized citizens. The chief political figure behind the “Anti-Jap Law” was the populist Progressive Party Governor of California, Hiram Johnson. Governor Johnson had a long history of racism. He had attended, and publicly endorsed, the D.W. Griffith film *The Clansman* (later called *The Birth of a Nation*), which launched the national revival of the KKK. After its premier on Feb. 9, 1915 in Los Angeles, the Governor called it “A very wonderful moving picture.”



Johnson also created California’s populist ballot-initiative process, and had been the Vice Presidential running mate of Mr. “Yellow Peril” himself, Theodore Roosevelt, on the Progressive Party ticket in 1912.

Prior to this, Congress had passed the Chinese Exclusionary Act of 1882, suspending the immigration of Chinese laborers in the U.S. for ten years. This act, coupled with the 1868 Meiji Restoration of Japan, which had established close cooperation between the Meiji leaders and the American System circles of Lincoln's economic adviser Henry Carey, established the first substantial immigration of Japanese to the Pacific Coast of North America, replacing Chinese workers. In 1880, there were 148 Japanese in the United States. By 1890, there was 2,039 and 72,157 by 1910.

Though certainly not alone in his efforts, Hiram Johnson institutionalized the anti-Asian climate in California, which made that state the seat of anti-Japanese hysteria and racist opportunism, in the wake of the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor.<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Census of 1940 found that there were 126,947 Japanese Americans, of whom 67% were citizens by birth (known as Nisei, or second generation). Additionally, there were 157,905 living in the Territory of Hawaii, and 263 in the Territory of Alaska.

In anticipation of a possible war with Japan, President Franklin Roosevelt dispatched Special Representative of the State Department, Curtis B. Munson, with orders to carry out an intelligence investigate on the loyalty of Japanese Americans. After two months in Hawaii and on the West Coast, Munson submitted his report to FDR in November 1941. The report was clear: "There is no Japanese 'problem' on the Coast. There will be no armed uprising of Japanese. There will undoubtedly be some sabotage financed by Japan and executed largely by imported agents. . . [There is a] remarkable, even, extraordinary degree of loyalty among this generally suspect ethnic group."

During the summer of 1941, the Hawaiian National Guard, composed primarily of Nisei, was federalized. It would later become the 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion and 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team.

### **“Enemy Alien” Hysteria**

On the day Pearl Harbor was attacked, before the Sun had set on the West Coast, some 1,300 potentially dangerous aliens, mostly Japanese, had been arrested. It was a very selective operation, based on a well-prepared list of suspected enemy agents and sympathizers put together by the FBI and Naval Intelligence. Of the more than 12,000 enemy aliens (including those of Italian and German heritage) seized nationally in the wake of the Japanese attack, only one Japanese – Tsutomu Obana – was tried and convicted. He served a two to six month sentence for a minor bureaucratic trade violation with the Japanese government.

On Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, the day after Pearl Harbor, the United States declared war on Japan. At the same time, a federal order was issued, that froze the bank credits of all Japanese Americans. Unable to pay employees or vendors, virtually every Japanese American-owned business went bankrupt overnight.

In the three weeks following December 7<sup>th</sup>, there was not a single act of sabotage on the West Coast. The first war casualties in California, were seven Japanese

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<sup>1</sup> Though various labor and farm organizations were involved, the most active of the anti-Japanese (Asian) organizations in California were the Joint Immigration Committee, Oriental Exclusion League, the American Legion, and the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West.

Americans killed, victims of racist hysteria, including one Nisei who had just been honorably discharged from the U.S. Army. Rumors and scare stories, fed by false news reports that the West Coast was about to be invaded with the aid of local Japanese, spread rapidly among the non-Asian population.

Some sample headlines from *The Los Angeles Times* read: “Jap Boat Flashes Messages Ashore,” “Caps on Japanese Tomato Plants Point to Air Base,” and “Map Reveals Jap Menace.”



*December 8, 1942, Oakland, California: A sign outside the store owned by a Japanese American; newspaper headlines reflect the anti-alien hysteria.*

An American tanker had been fired on from the deck gun of a Japanese submarine off the California coast at Monterey, and another tanker was sunk near Eureka. On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, fifteen five-and-one-half inch shells from a Japanese sub had been lobbed into an oil-tank complex near Santa Barbara with little effect. The following night the “Battle of Los Angeles” was fought, when a Navy weather balloon was mistaken for a Japanese “bogey” coming in from the Pacific Ocean. In a scene reminiscent of Orson Wells’ “War of the Worlds” broadcast, a widespread panic ensued, as anti-aircraft batteries blasted into the empty night sky.

General John L. DeWitt, head of the Western Defense Command, based in the Presidio at San Francisco, was convinced that Japanese American “enemy agents” were using radio transmitters to signal the movement of U.S. ships. In his “Final Report; Japanese Evacuation from the West Coast” (June, 5,1943), DeWitt claimed that “for a period of several weeks following December 7, substantially every ship leaving a West Coast port was attacked by an enemy submarine.”

This allegation was investigated by the Federal Communication Commission Radio Intelligence Division and the U.S. Navy and found to be absolutely false. After

conferring with Secretary of War Henry Stimson, U.S. Attorney General Francis Biddle, on January 5<sup>th</sup>, called for enemy aliens on the West Coast to turn in all short-wave receivers, radio transmitters, and various types of cameras. On January 29, 1942, the U.S. Attorney General ordered enemy aliens to evacuate certain “strategic areas.” One of those areas, Terminal Island in the Port of Los Angeles, was home for five hundred Japanese American families.

On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, a small army of FBI agents unleashed a panic as they arrested 336 Issei (first generation Japanese) on a Presidential warrant as enemy agents. On that same day, California Attorney General Earl Warren convened a meeting of a majority of the county sheriffs and district attorneys in the state. He stated that there had been no significant sabotage in California by fifth column agents, but that was probably because they were waiting for an exact zero hour. This is the same argument he would make later to the Congressional investigators of evacuation on the Tolan Commission. Warren also instructed each county to draw-up detailed maps to show all land in the state which was owned, occupied, or otherwise controlled by Japanese, whether or not they were citizens.

On February 4<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. Army established 12 “restricted areas,” in which “enemy aliens” were restricted by a 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew, allowed to only travel between home and the work place, and not travel more than five miles from their home. On February 13<sup>th</sup>, a West Coast Congressional delegation requested that the President remove “all persons of Japanese lineage . . . alien and citizen alike, from the strategic areas of California, Oregon, and Washington.”

On February 19<sup>th</sup>, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the Secretary of War to define military areas “from which any or all person may be excluded as deemed necessary or desirable.”

### **“One Drop of Japanese Blood”**

One of the first people to publicly call for the internment of Japanese Americans was John B. Hughes, a radio commentator for the Mutual Broadcasting Company in Los Angeles, who started his month long radio campaign at the end of December. California newspapers, lead by William Randolph Hearst, picked-up on Hughes’ crusade and began the drum beat for internment. In Congress, John Rankin of Mississippi, had stated, “Once a Jap always a Jap. You can't change him. . . . The white man’s civilization has come into conflict with Japanese barbarism [and] one of them must be destroyed.” And, on December 15<sup>th</sup>, before the Congress, Rankin screeched, “I’m for catching every Japanese in America, Alaska, and Hawaii now, and putting them in concentration camps. . . Damn them! Let’s get rid of them now!”

On January 21<sup>st</sup>, the Representative from Santa Monica, Leland M. Ford, became the first California Congressman to call, on the floor of the U.S. Congress, for mass evacuation of Japanese Americans. Then, on February 29<sup>th</sup>, America’s establishment guru of popular opinion, Walter Lippmann, wrote in his syndicated column:

“the Pacific Coast is in imminent danger of a combined attack from within and from without . . . the blow [by a Japanese American fifth column] is well organized and that it is held back until it can be struck with maximum

effect . . . I am sure I understand fully and appreciate thoroughly the unwillingness of Washington to adopt a policy of mass evacuation and internment of all those who are technically enemy aliens. But I submit that Washington is not defining the problem correctly . . . The Pacific Coast is officially a combat zone; some part of it may at any moment be a battlefield. Nobody's constitutional rights include the right to reside and do business on a battlefield. And nobody ought to be on a battlefield who has no good reason to be there.”

Just as John Ashcroft and his like-minded brethren use the term “national security” to justify their shredding of the U.S. Constitution and their targeting of American Muslims today, it was under the rubric of “military necessity” that Japanese Americans were literally railroaded into concentration camps in 1942. It is a bitter historic irony that the man whose leadership defeated the evil of fascism, won World War II, and got the world out of the Great Depression – President Franklin D. Roosevelt – signed the orders that created America’s own concentration camps. But knowing that fact, does not tell the truth of the whole story.

It is often claimed that General John “A Jap's a Jap” DeWitt, the Western Defense Commander, was the primary mover behind establishing the internment camps. However, the person most responsible for conceiving of the plan, in all its tragic details, and then carrying it out, was Colonel Karl R. Bendetsen. His public affirmation of his mission became infamous: “I am determined that if they have one drop of Japanese blood in them, they must go to camp.” For all his published statements about how he always wanted to be a field officer, Karl Bendetsen was nothing more than third-rate, legal bureaucrat, with an expertise in logistics, for the Anglophile/Wall Street Establishment.

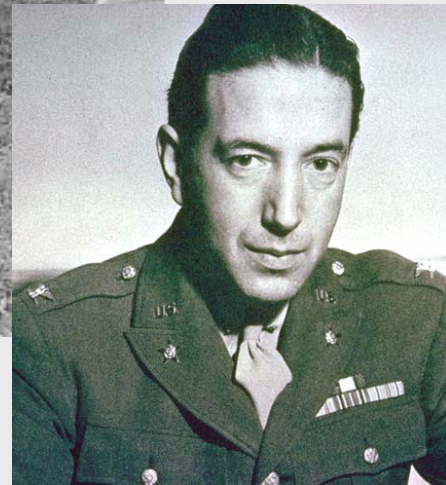
Before World War II, Captain Bendetsen had been assigned to the Judge Advocate General (JAG) in Washington, DC, serving under his old buddy from Fort Lewis, Washington, Maj. General Allen Gullion. Working for the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff G-1, as legal counsel on Capitol Hill, he became a close associate of various movers and shakers, particularly Senator Harry Truman, whom he continually briefed about his plans for wartime internment.

Bendetsen soon became involved in generating various legal/logistical scenarios, in the event of war, over such issues as how prisoners of war would be handled, how to establish a Corp of Military Police, establishing military coordination with the FBI and other civilian organizations, etc. Bendetsen was then appointed to the newly created position of chief of the Aliens Division of the Provost Marshall General, and assigned to the JAG office at the Presidio in San Francisco with the rank of Major, by General Gullion, who said, “He (Bendetsen) knows more about what needs to be done than anybody else. He made the study, he did the work . . . This will require coordination with the FBI, the Justice Department and other agencies.”<sup>2</sup> So, plans for the concentration camps had already been established before the war had started, and before President Roosevelt had been approached about the issue.

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<sup>2</sup> Harry S Truman Presidential Library; “Oral History Interview with Karl R. Bendetsen,” conducted and transcribed by Jerry N. Hess, New York City, October 24, 1972., p. 8.

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Colonel Karl Bendetsen was put in charge of the evacuation of Japanese Americans, shown here lined up at the Santa Anita Racetrack to board trains bound for the camps.

Immediately, prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, Bendetsen was dispatched to the Hawaiian and the Philippine Departments of the Army, where he conferred with General MacArthur, Admiral Husband E. Kimmel and others regarding prisoner of war issues. Bendetsen stated, "We also discussed at length the arrangements which were to be placed into effect concerning enemy aliens within their respective jurisdictions, who, for reasons established by intelligence sources, were presumed to be dangerous, or potentially dangerous, in a wartime situation."<sup>3</sup>

After Pearl Harbor, Bendetsen began to work full time on his camps. He was shuttling between the Presidio and Washington, briefing General Gullion, John McCloy, the Chief of Staff, James Rowe of the DOJ, and "reported the concerns of all of these officials to Senator Truman." In turn, General DeWitt was in contact with Secretary of

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

War John Stimson, to whom he sent a memo on February 14<sup>th</sup>, advocating the evacuation of “Japanese and other subversive persons.” McCloy requested Bendetsen to send him a letter of a proposal as to how evacuation and internment would be carried out. Stimson and Attorney General Frances Biddle each report in their memoirs that, although they had initial misgivings over imprisoning Japanese Americans, they finally acquiesced to the Bendetsen’s proposals. Stimson and McCloy then sold the idea to the President.

A few days after McCloy received Bendetsen's report, the President signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the Secretary of War, or any designated military commander, to establish “military areas” and exclude from them “any or all persons.” Exactly how the order would be interpreted and carried out Roosevelt did not say, and left the matter entirely up to the discretion of Stimson. A meeting was then convened at the Presidio among McCloy, DeWitt, Chief of Staff General Marshall, and Bendetsen. It was decided that Bentedsen would be promoted two ranks to Colonel, and put in command of the entire evacuation program. General DeWitt told Bendetsen, “I will create the Wartime Civil Control Administration which you yourself mentioned in your letter [to McCloy] should be the main vehicle. You will be the commanding officer of the WCCA . . . [and] you will thus have the power and authority to act.”<sup>4</sup>

## The Camps

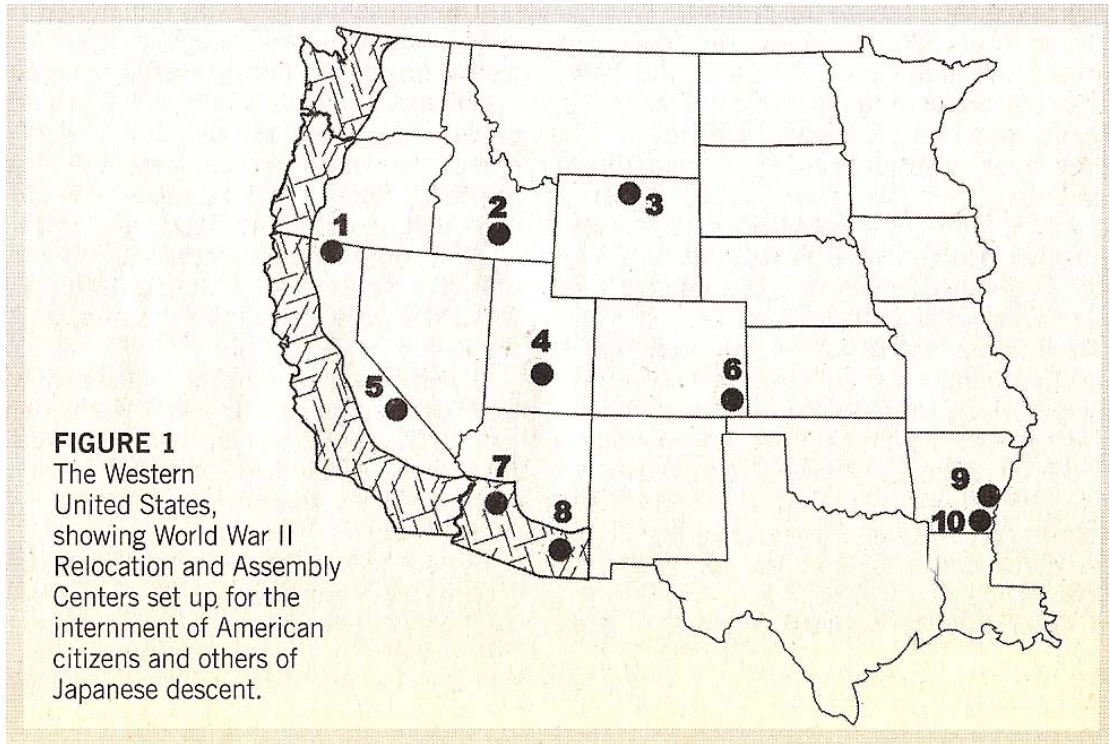
Every detail of the evacuation and interment, from press briefings to coordinating the actions of Federal, state, and local government agencies, were carried out by Colonel Bendetsen. He selected the 24 temporary Assembly Centers and 10 Relocation Centers. The “military areas” of exclusion comprised the western half of California, Oregon, and Washington, with the eastern border being the Cascade and Sierra mountain ranges, in addition to the southern third of Arizona (**Figure 1**). The WCCA (Wartime Civil Control Administration) divided the West Coast into 108 exclusion areas, to include roughly 1,000 Japanese Americans each. With the formal establishment of the WCCA in March, the Western Command of General Dewitt began issuing a series of Civilian Exclusion Orders, authored by Bendetsen. As the Assembly Centers and camps were established, a request for voluntary relocation was issued, but fewer than ten thousand people responded.

At the beginning of May, orders were issued to begin mandatory relocation to the respective Assembly Centers. Before an evacuee began his trip to an Assembly Center he or she was processed through a “control station,” set up by the U.S. Employment Service. Each station had a representative of the Federal Reserve Bank, the Federal Security Agency, and the Farm Security Administration to assist in the settlement of the evacuee’s land and property. The only property allowed into the Assembly Centers were personal affects that could be carried by hand – a list of required articles (such as bedding, clothing, toiletries, and eating utensils) had been provided to each evacuee by the government.

While the personal property losses of those interned were staggering (for property items which actually made it to the point of being placed into custodial protection by the

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 20.



## Japanese American Internment Camps

(location and population)

1. **Newell** (Tule Lake, CA) 18,789
2. **Mindota** (Hunt, Idaho) 9,397
3. **Heart Mountain** (Wyoming) 10,767
4. **Topaz** (Utah) 8,130
5. **Manzanar** (Manzanar, CA) 10,046
6. **Amache** (Grand, Colorado) 7,318
7. **Colorado River** (Poston, AZ) 17,814
8. **Gila** (Gila Rivers, AZ) 13,348
9. **Rohwer** (Rohwer, Arkansas) 8,475
10. **Jerome** (Denson, Arkansas) 8,497

**TOTAL POPULATION 112,581**

Note: These figures do not reflect the fact that some prisoners were released while others were interned. The total is more than 120,000.

The shaded area on the West Coast is the Exclusion Area



*The Manzanar Internment Camp*

government, the compensation was only ten cents returned on the dollar), a greater tragedy was the loss of production manpower to the war effort. In 1940, Japanese Americans operated 5,135 farms in California, comprising 226,094 acres, valued at \$12,800 on the average, and grew 42% of the commercial truck crops in the state. If you include farm equipment, buildings, and lost revenues, the farm losses in the Japanese American community alone is easily in the hundreds of millions of dollars. The Federal Reserve, in 1942, estimated the total loss to the evacuees at approximately \$400 million.

The government argued in its handbook, "Questions and Answers for Evacuees," that Japanese Americans were being placed into internment camps "for their own protection." One eleven year-old prisoner replied to this by saying, "If it is for our protection, why did all the machine guns point inward, rather than outward?" That child eventually became a California Congressman and Secretary of Transportation, Norman Mineta.

Following the U.S. victory in the Battle of Midway on June 6, 1942, it became clear that there would be no Japanese invasion of the West Coast. Military reality and Constitutional law, unfortunately, had no effect on Bendetsen's mission of "military necessity." With an efficiency that would have made Nazi SS chief Heinrich Himmler envious, Bendetsen made sure that the evacuee railroad trains ran on time. By August of 1942, more than 110,000 Japanese Americans had been removed from the "military areas" and placed in the ten Relocation Camps.

Not satisfied with locking up all the Japanese Americans on the continent, Colonel Bendetsen next turned his attention to those living in Hawaii. However, several things prevented that. The Hawaiian Islands, at that time, were subject to the judicial oversight accorded to a territorial possession of the United States. Also, the Japanese population comprised 40% of the island's labor force, including 90% of the carpenters who were Nisei, needed to rebuild Pearl Harbor. Ironically, the territorial governor and commander of the Hawaiian Department, General Delos C. Emmons, as well as the U.S. Navy, which had suffered the brunt of the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, were not convinced that the Japanese Hawaiian population posed any significant military threat.

Executive Order 9102, issued on March 18, 1942, gave control of the Wartime Relocation Camps to a civilian agency, the War Relocation Authority, once all Japanese Americans had been moved. Though there were no gas chambers or prisoners forced to work to death, conditions at the camps were bitter. The Manzanar camp in California's Owens Valley consisted of 504 hastily fabricated barracks – inadequate shelter for the freezing winter weather and the extremely hot summers. Yet, the harsh living conditions, and cases of prisoners killed by guards, pale in comparison to the greatest suffering – the dishonor and criminal humiliation forced upon those American citizens loyal to their nation. Even their identities and names had been replaced by numbers.

## **In Service to Their Nation**

While Japanese Americans were sitting in concentration camps on the mainland, Nisei were serving in the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) in the Pacific Theater. More than 6,000 Nisei served in the MIS as translators, interpreters, carrying out surveillance, and counterespionage in special operations. General Charles Willoughby,

Chief of Staff for Intelligence to General Douglas MacArthur, reported that “MacArthur, unlike the panicky Californian authorities who insisted on herding second-generation Japanese Americans into concentration camps had ‘complete confidence in the Nisei.’”<sup>5</sup> It was Willoughby’s assessment that the work of the Nisei shortened the war by two years and prevented hundreds of thousands of American casualties.

In early 1943, a decision was made by President Roosevelt to allow Japanese Americans to serve in the U.S. military: “The principle on which this county was founded and by which it has always been governed is that Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry. . . . Every American should be given the opportunity to serve this country . . .” This decision was the first, and absolutely necessary, step towards reconciliation for the crime of Japanese American internment.

On January 28<sup>th</sup>, more than 2,500 Nisei volunteered for service, as restrictions were removed. The following week the WRA (War Relocation Authority) began processing the “loyalty questionnaire” at the ten Relocation Camps, and the U.S. Army officially reactivated the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team, which was composed of the 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion from Hawaii, and Japanese American volunteers from the mainland camps. Those Nisei eligible in camps also became subject to the draft. According to Selective Service reports, the total number of Japanese Americans who served in the U.S. military during World War II was about 33,000. The 442<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, whose motto was “Go for Broke” (a Hawaiian crapsshooters term for “shoot the works”), made U.S. military history, as they fought through Italy, France, and German. In seven major campaigns, the 442<sup>nd</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup> fought with distinction, receiving the greatest number of medals and awards of any combat unit in U.S. history.

In addition to seven Presidential Unit citations, there were 18,143 individual decorations, including one Congressional Medal of Honor, 560 Silver Stars (with 28 Oak Leaf Clusters), and almost 9,486 Purple Hearts, representing what was the highest number of casualties of any unit in U.S. history. The casualty rate for the Nisei was over 300% of its authorized strength of 4,000 troops. This was due to the fact that many of the soldiers who were wounded returned to the front line, as soon as possible. Moreover no soldier ever deserted the 442<sup>nd</sup> Combat Regiment.

During the fighting in France, the 100/442 liberated 11 towns. In the Vosges Mountains, Texans of the 141<sup>st</sup> Regiment of the 36<sup>th</sup> Division were surrounded for a week and became known as the “Lost Battalion.” It took the Nisei troops three days and nights of continual combat to break through the Nazi stronghold and liberate the Texans. The 100/442 suffered 60% casualties in the offensive, including 140 killed, which was a greater number than those they rescued. As a result, all the members of the 100/442 were made “Honorary Texans” by Gov. John Connolly.

While their own families were living in U.S. internment camps, it was the scouting troops of the 552<sup>nd</sup> Field Artillery of the 100/442 who shot off the lock on the gate of the Dachau concentration camp to help free its prisoners.

Captain Daniel Inouye of the 442<sup>nd</sup>, who had lost an arm in the Italian campaign, later became a U.S. Senator from Hawaii. On his way back home, he stopped in to have

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<sup>5</sup> *MacArthur: 1941-1951* by Charles A. Willoughby and John Chamberlain, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1954, p. 98. MacArthur goes on at some length on the specific contributions of the Nisei.

his hair cut at a San Francisco barber shop. Although he was in uniform, with all this decorations, the barber told him, “We don’t serve Japs here.”



*Japanese Americans served heroically in World War II. Here, infantrymen of the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, under German attack in Italy.*

### **The Legacy of the ‘Loaded Weapon’**

On August 11, 1945, the Japanese government announced its unconditional surrender, and on September 4<sup>th</sup> the Western Defense Command revoked all individual exclusion orders and all military restriction against Japanese Americans. However, it would not be until the end of January 1946, that most prisoners had left the camps. Tule Lake Center on the north California border, which had been the official “Segregation Center,” housing Nisei who had renounced their citizenship, and Issei that had requested repatriation to Japan, was the last to close its gates on March 20, 1946.

Finally, on June 30<sup>th</sup>, the WRA program officially ended. Earlier, on January 2, 1945, Major General H.C. Pratt, the new commander of the Western Defense Command, announced that the mass exclusion orders on the West Coast would be revoked. With some exceptions, this meant that Japanese Americans could return to their homes. Pratt’s decision was not due to any sudden moral epiphany, but a reaction to a unanimous U.S. Supreme Court ruling 48 hours earlier, regarding the case of Mitsuye Endo. Due to the fighting tenacity of James Purcell, a San Francisco lawyer, who challenged the

constitutionality of evacuation by filing a *habeas corpus* petition on behalf of his client, Miss Endo was found innocent of the charges that the Army had used to justify her evacuation. Supreme Court Justice Murphy stated:

“I am of the view that detention in Relocation Centers of persons of Japanese ancestry regardless of loyalty is not only unauthorized by Congress or the Executive, but is another example of the unconstitutional resort to racism inherent in the entire evacuation program . . . racial discrimination of this nature bears no reasonable relation to military necessity and is utterly foreign to the ideals and traditions of the American people.”

Unfortunately, the case and ruling didn't substantively address the issue of the constitutionality of evacuation. That matter had been ruled on by the Supreme Court in the earlier case of *Korematsu v. the U.S.*, and, much to the detriment of the nation, has not been revisited since. In opposition to the majority opinion of Justice Hugo Black (himself a “former” member of the Ku Klux Klan), a dissenting opinion in that case was filed by Justice Robert H. Jackson, who warned of the type of danger to liberty that we are now facing again:

“A military order, however unconstitutional, is not apt to last longer than the military emergency. . . . But once a judicial opinion rationalizes such an order to show that it conforms to the Constitution . . . the Court for all time has validated the principle of racial discrimination in criminal procedure and of transplanting American citizens. **The principle then lies about like a loaded weapon ready for the hand of any authority that can bring forward a plausible claim of an urgent need.**” [emphasis added]

At the conclusion of World War II, most Americans believed that the ugly idea of American concentration camps was now merely a bad episode in the nation's history. But in 1946, the Justice Department and its FBI had secretly created their own detention program, based on its own “Security Index.” Four years later, Congress passed the McCarran “Internal Security Act.” Title II of that Act was called “Emergency Detention of Suspected Security Risks,” which contained provisions for the creation of emergency detention camps. The camps were constructed and maintained by the U.S. Bureau of Prisons, until Congress repealed the McCarran Act in 1971, fearing that the camps might be used against the anti-war activists, civil-rights leaders, and others. The FBI still continued with its own program. While changing the name of the program from “Security Index” to an “Administration Index” (ADEX), the FBI maintained a list of approximately 15,000 names of those people who would be picked up and detained in the event of a “national emergency.” Even after the death of J. Edgar Hoover, the FBI maintained its ADEX detention program until it was officially terminated in 1978.

Today, Attorney General Ashcroft has already committed the crime of racial profiling of the American Muslim population, included unjustified raids and detentions. The U.S. Department of State reports that, “in mid-2000 there were 4,175,000 Muslims in

the United States, 1,650,000 of who are African American in origin.”<sup>6</sup> Of that total, a reported 22.4% are U.S.-born citizens and the remainder immigrants. At the projected rate of growth, Islam will replace Judaism by 2010, as the nation’s second largest religion, after Christianity. Perhaps John Ashcroft, in one of his “Armageddon now” moments of judicial insight, is contemplating some area, like the Nevada Nuclear Proving Grounds, to be the new “relocation center” for those American Muslims exhibiting the potential to be “enemy combatants,” and other “suspects.”

## **Bendetsen vs. LaRouche**

It is ironic, but lawful that Karl R. Bendetsen, who systematically organized and carried out one of the greatest crimes ever committed against American citizens, would become an enemy of Lyndon H. LaRouche. Although LaRouche's illegal imprisonment is a correlative crime, which this author personally knows had a profound resonance among Japanese Americans who had been interned, it is in the arena of strategic policy which Bendetsen personally opposed LaRouche.

After leaving the concentration camp business, for which he received the Distinguished Service Medal, Colonel Bendetsen served as a logistics bureaucrat in the European Theater. Following World War II, Bendetsen was brought into the highest levels of the Pentagon by the Anglo-American establishment and his old friend Harry Truman. Bendetsen become the personal towel-boy for Gordon Gray, an avid Anglophile, whose family fortune was based on control of the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company. Known as the “founder of operational intelligence,” Gray would later become the National Security Council under President Eisenhower. Among other things, Gray headed the so-called counterintelligence investigation team that “cleared” British intelligence, triple-agent Kim Philby and his cohorts. When Gordon Gray became Secretary of the Army in the autumn of 1949, he brought along Bendetsen, whom he nominated to be Assistant Secretary of the Army.

Father Hugh Lavery of the Catholic Maryknoll Center in Los Angeles protested the appointment, stating, “Colonel Bendetsen showed himself to be a little Hitler. I mentioned that we had an orphanage with children of Japanese ancestry, and that some of these children were half Japanese, other’s one-fourth or less. I asked which children should we send. . . Bendetsen said: ‘I am determined that if they have one drop of Japanese blood in them, they must go to camp.’”

When Truman fired General Douglas MacArthur, during the Korean War in 1951, Bendetsen came down of the side of the Cold War “Utopians” against the patriotic nationalists, that MacArthur represented. Though feigning admiration for MacArthur, Bendetsen, who had actually done planning for MacArthur's nuclear option against North

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<sup>6</sup> The U.S. State Department (International Information Programs), true to the nature of its deeper loyalties, uses the *Britannica Book of the Year* as the authoritative source for these figures, which would appear to be a fair approximation.

Korean/China, whined that MacArthur's crossing of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel was a "grievous error . . . which meant he considered himself to be invincible."<sup>7</sup>

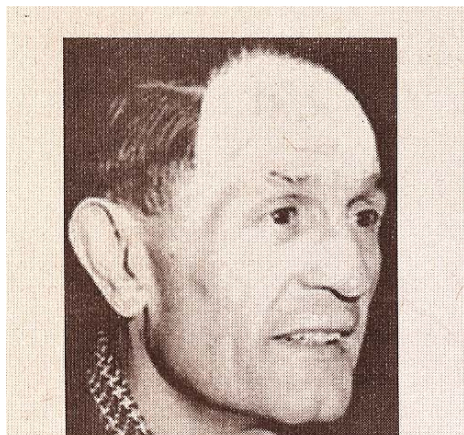
Bendetsen was always the consummate "armchair commander" and bureaucratic lackey for the Utopians. He was confirmed as the Under Secretary of the Army in 1952. Later, Karl Bendetsen became a founding member and financier of retired-General Danny Graham's High Frontier organization (i.e. "smart pebbles" in space), which was established to counter the strategic, beam-weapon, defense policy created by Lyndon LaRouche, and adopted by President Reagan as the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) in 1983. From inside the President's civilian advisory panel on the SDI, Bendetsen worked to steer Reagan away from LaRouche's concept of Mutual Assured Survival, based on the development of defense systems derived from new physical principles that would be shared with the Soviet Union.

Bendetsen was also a director of the National Strategy Information Center, a Utopian rightwing, think-tank which was run by the notorious, anti-LaRouche operative, Roy Godson.

The "loaded weapon" that Justice Jackson had referred to, as a continuing danger to liberty, is not merely a legal matter. The "loaded weapon" that the enemies of the United States and humanity are counting on is that Americans will continue to be slaves to the great god *vox populi* (public opinion). Just as Pastor Niemöller [see box] laid the

blame for the Nazi takeover of Germany on the fear of the average citizen to publicly denounce what he knew was wrong; and, just as non-Japanese Americans feared what "others would say" in 1941, if they defended their Japanese friends; and, just as the American population trembled during the period of anti-communist Trumanism/McCarthyism, terrified that they might lose their jobs and positions if they weren't considered "normal" by their co-workers and neighbors; so, it is the same today.

To prevent a repeat of a return to fascism, as LaRouche has identified, Americans must break the prevailing axioms of *vox populi*. Myths perpetuated to cover-up the greatest economic collapse in history must be confronted, and appropriately lampooned. We must start to think



**Martin Niemöller**, a Lutheran minister who resisted the Nazis, and spent seven years in concentration camps, was asked after the war by a youth, how Hitler was able to come to power. His answer has since become famous:

'First they came for the Communists, but I was not a Communist, so I said nothing. Then they came for the Socialists and the trade unionists, but I was neither, so I did not speak out. And then they came for the Jews, but I was not a Jew, so I did kept silent. And when they came for me, there was no one left to speak out for me.'

<sup>7</sup> Harry S Truman Presidential Library; "Oral History Interview with Karl R. Bendetsen," November 21, 1972, p.19.

“outside of the box,” least wise we all be placed inside one.

On December 10, 2001, Congressman Faleomavaega (D-American Samoa) addressed the House of Representative in support of National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, and offered the following warning:

“The wholesale and arbitrary abolishment of the constitutional rights of these loyal Japanese Americans will forever serve as a reminder and testament that this must never be allowed to occur again. Madam Speaker, as our government deals with the ramifications of the horrific terrorist attacks of September 11, I would hope our Nation would not forget this one basic lesson.”

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