

TOPAZ JAPANESE AMERICAN INTERNMENT CAMP
WHY WERE JAPANESE AMERICANS SENT TO RELOCATION CAMPS
DURING WORLD WAR II?

LESSON PLAN
WITH PRIMARY SOURCES

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Background Information for Teachers

Why were Japanese Americans sent to relocation camps during World War II?

In order for students to engage in the analysis of documents related to the internment of Japanese Americans, they should understand the following background information, ideas that almost all historians agree upon. Specific people and concepts that appear in the document set are underlined.

1. Between the late 1860s and 1924 there were large numbers of Japanese who immigrated to the United States. Unlike European immigrants, who usually arrived on the East coast, the Japanese immigrants usually arrived on the West coast. The racist Immigration Act of 1924 banned the immigration of almost all Japanese.
2. By 1940, the Japanese American community was categorized into the Issei, individuals who had been born in Japan and immigrated to the US, and the Nisei, individuals born in the US to Japanese immigrant parents. The Nisei, who grew up in the US, were US citizens and generally spoke English fluently. First and second generation Japanese Americans often settled in cities on the West coast or began farming in California, Washington, and Oregon. They often obtained college educations and held respected occupations in business and other fields.
3. During the 1930s tension grew between the US and Japan. In 1937, the Japanese formally allied themselves with Nazi Germany. They invaded China that same year. In 1939, the Germans invaded Poland. As World War II broke out in Asia and Europe, the US imposed an embargo on Japan, cutting off all trade. This further strained the relations between the US and Japan. Still, Americans hoped that the US could remain out of war combat.
4. As tension between the US and Japan increased, some questioned the loyalty of Japanese Americans. As war with Japan appeared imminent, President Franklin Roosevelt asked Curtis Munson to investigate the loyalty of Japanese Americans living on the West coast. Munson traveled across California and the Pacific Northwest interviewing city officials, military officers, and FBI agents gathering information on the loyalty of Japanese Americans. His findings were called the Munson Report.
5. On December 7, 1941, without a declaration of war, the Japanese launched a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. The attack plunged the US into World War II and created hostile feelings toward Japan and the Japanese. Japanese Americans, both Issei and Nisei, were sometimes targeted for retribution. Their loyalty was questioned by government officials, in letters to the editor, and in political cartoons. It was feared that they would become part of the “5th Column” a term that meant people within a society that would help the enemy. The offensive racial slur, “Japs.” was applied to them in many public venues.
6. Not everyone was hostile toward Japanese Americans. Some people, especially members of other minority groups who faced their own racial oppression, were sympathetic.
7. In January 1942, President Roosevelt received the Munson Report, which downplayed the threat of Japanese Americans. Yet, in February, Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 ordering the forced removal of “any or all persons” from locations deemed by military officials to be vulnerable. Even though the order did not specify the removal of Japanese Americans almost everyone understood that was what the president intended.

8. In response to President Roosevelt's executive order, large tracts of California, Washington, Oregon, and Arizona were designated as "exclusion zones," where Japanese Americans would not be allowed to remain. Japanese Americans were given only a few weeks to sell their homes, belongings, farms, and businesses, usually at a fraction of their value, or to make arrangements for others to look after their property. Japanese Americans were moved temporarily into Civilian Assembly Centers as more permanent camps were being constructed.
9. The War Relocation Authority (WRA) was created in March 1942 to oversee the relocation of Japanese Americans. The WRA chose ten remote sites for camps, like Topaz, Utah, Heart Mountain, Wyoming, and Jerome, Arkansas, throughout the US interior. As Japanese Americans were being removed from their homes, the camps were being hastily constructed. In some cases, the Japanese Americans who arrived at the camps participated in their construction.
10. Between 110,000 and 120,000 Japanese Americans were removed from their homes on the West coast. The relocation centers became small cities with thousands of residents. Families in shared barracks had little space or privacy. They ate in common mess halls and used common restrooms. Armed guards patrolled the perimeters of the complex.
11. In spite of hardships, few Japanese Americans tried to escape. Instead, they made the most of the difficult situation by establishing schools, Christian and Buddhist churches, baseball leagues, theaters, and newspapers.
12. Some Japanese Americans found ways to protest their mistreatment by refusing to cooperate with WRA programs or by organizing demonstrations. Some protested through the US legal system. In the 1944 Supreme Court case of *Korematsu v. the United States* the Supreme Court found that President Roosevelt's order was constitutional and that the need for protection outweighed the rights of those who had been removed.
13. Shortly after the creation and occupation of the camps, the WRA began to consider ways to reintroduce Japanese Americans into civilian communities. Some internees left the camps to go to college, others worked on farms outside of camps, and some were even recruited to serve in the armed forces. The exclusionary order was rescinded in January, 1945, at which time about a quarter of those who had been interned had already been released. Those who remained received \$25 and a train ticket to their former homes. Most of them had nothing to return to. Those who were in particularly difficult circumstances were allowed to remain in the camps. Gradually all of the services were ended and the internment camps were closed.
14. During the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s and 70s some Japanese Americans demanded that the wrongs committed against them be redressed. In 1980 Congress created the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians to study the decisions involved in issuing Order 9066. They issued a report entitled *Personal Justice Denied* summarizing their findings.
15. In 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed legislation that provided \$20,000 for all surviving detainees. In 1991, President George H. W. Bush issued a formal apology from the US government.

Name _____
Period _____

Why were Japanese Americans sent to relocation camps during World War II?

During World War II, over 100,000 Japanese Americans, most of them citizens of the United States, were removed from their homes on the West coast and forced to live in relocation camps in remote locations in the interior. You will be given a number of documents to use as evidence to try to determine why Japanese Americans were sent to the relocation camps. You should think about these four interpretations and see if there is evidence to support them, or whether the evidence leads to other conclusions:

1. Japanese American relocation was for NATIONAL SECURITY, to prevent sabotage and protect lives and property.
2. Japanese American relocation was motivated by GREED and the desire to seize their property.
3. Japanese American relocation was motivated by RACISM and PREJUDICE and a desire for REVENGE following Pearl Harbor.
4. Japanese American relocation was done to PROTECT THEM from harm to themselves or their property in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor.

Use the following worksheet to take notes on the evidence that supports or discredits each of the four interpretations. You should also include in your notes whether the evidence is strong or weak. To do that you will need to think about the source of the evidence, the perspectives of the authors, their purpose in producing the document, and how it checks out with other pieces of evidence.

Interpretation 1: Japanese Americans were relocated for the sake of NATIONAL SECURITY	
Evidence that supports this claim	Evidence that discredits this claim
Interpretation 2: Japanese Americans were relocated out of GREED and a desire to take their property	
Evidence that supports this claim	Evidence that discredits this claim

Interpretation 3: Japanese Americans were relocated because of RACISM and PREJUDICE and a desire for REVENGE	
Evidence that supports this claim	Evidence that discredits this claim
Interpretation 4: Japanese Americans were relocated to PROTECT THEM from harm	
Evidence that supports this claim	Evidence that discredits this claim

In the space below make a claim about the causes of the Japanese American relocation. You might use any of the four interpretations, a combination of them, or something completely different. Once you have made a claim, use your notes from this worksheet to write about how the evidence supports your claim.

**Japanese American Internment
Document Packet for Students**

Document 1

SOURCE: Excerpt from “Executive Order Number 9066,” which President Franklin D. Roosevelt wrote, allowing the army to force Japanese Americans to move to internment camps. (Changed to make it easier to read).

**ALLOWING THE SECRETARY OF WAR
TO SET UP MILITARY AREAS**
Executive Order No. 9066

Successfully fighting the war makes it so we have to protect ourselves however we can against spying and damage to army equipment, supplies, and bases. So, with my power as President of the United States and Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, I will allow and tell the Secretary of War and the Military Commanders to set up military areas wherever he thinks are needed where we will not allow certain people to live or go. The Secretary of War can also give the people who won't be allowed to live in these areas the transportation, food, shelter, and other things they need and take them away from these areas. The Military Commander may use the army and federal government to enforce this as well as state and local officials. I ask all government departments to help the Secretary of War by giving medical aid, hospitals, food, clothing, transportation, land, shelter, supplies, buildings, and services.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
February 19, 1942

Document 2

Source: Video produced by the War Relocations Authority to explain the Japanese American internment camps. Located at <https://archive.org/details/Japanese1943>

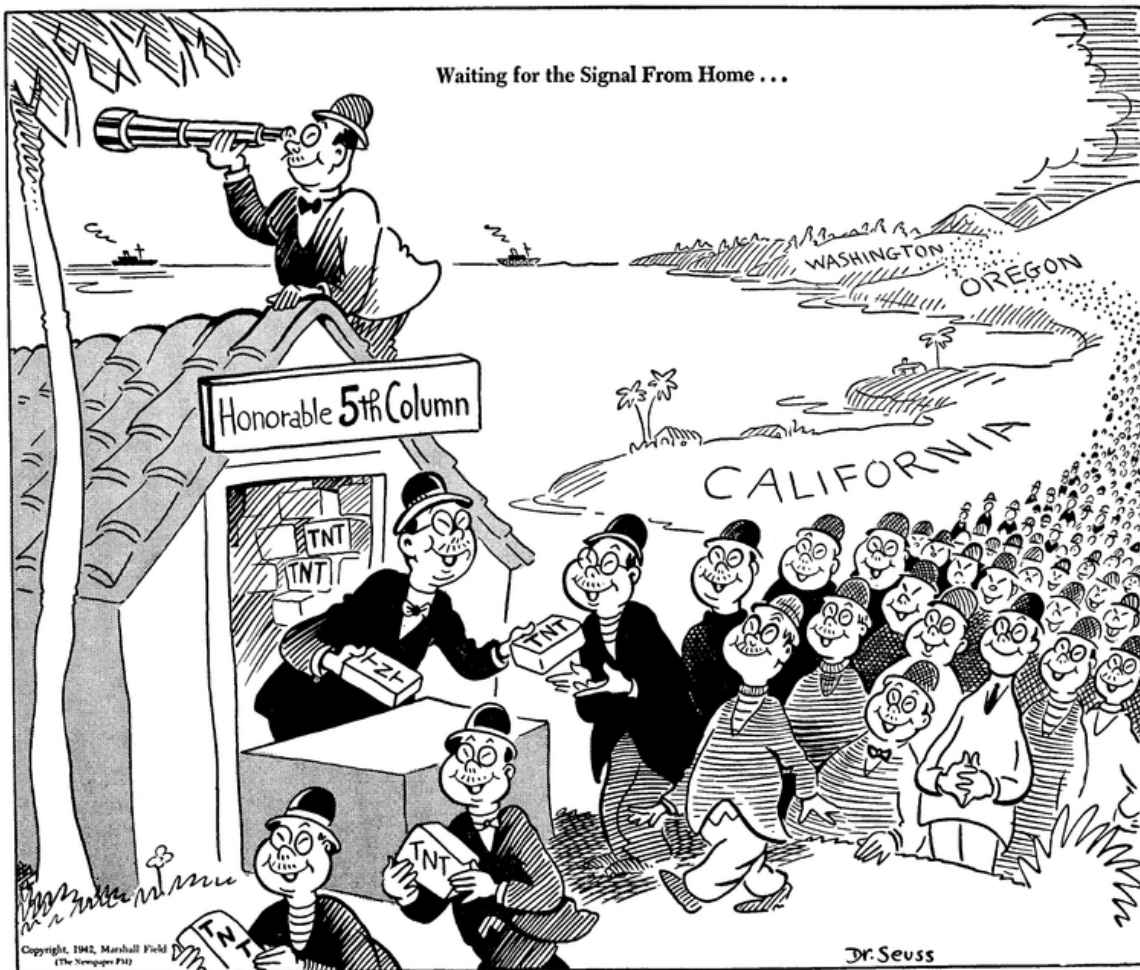
Document 3

SOURCE: Photograph taken in California about 1942 by an unknown photographer. The photograph is currently available through the U.S. National Archives and can be found at http://oberlinlibstaff.com/omeka_hist244/items/show/217



Document 4

SOURCE: Political cartoon drawn by Dr. Seuss (Theodor Seuss Geisel) on February 13, 1942. Dr. Seuss would later become famous as an author of children's books, including some that celebrate diversity, tolerance, and peace and others that have later been viewed as racist.



Document 5

SOURCE: Excerpt from a newspaper article published in the San Francisco News on March 6, 1942. The article tells about California Governor Culbert Olson, who spoke to a committee of the House of Representatives. (Changed to make it easier to read).

Governor Olson was the first to speak to the House committee... The committee is studying the problems of the emergency migration, especially the removal of foreign Japanese people from some important places.

The governor said he thought that there was a difference between the way people from Germany and Italy should be treated compared with the Japanese. "Because it is really hard to tell between loyal Japanese-Americans (and there are many who are loyal to this country) and those other Japanese who are loyal to Japan, I believe that all of the Japanese people should be evacuated from the California coast," Governor Olson said.

Document 6

SOURCE: Note written on April 29, 1942 to Governor Arthur Langlie by one of the War Relocation Authority workers, P. Hetherton, talking about the evacuation of Japanese Americans from their farms in the state of Washington.

Found at

http://oberlinlibstaff.com/omeka_hist244/files/original/3777cfd31fa3ae41ea7724416ab0e95f.jpg

April 29, 1942

Subject: Japanese Evacuation

MEMORANDUM TO GOVERNOR ARTHUR B. LANGLEIE

FROM P. HETHERTON, EXECUTIVE OFFICER.

Mr. H. E. Drew, State Director, Farm Security Administration, by telephone Tuesday morning, April 28, gave me the following information about Japanese evacuation and the number of farms taken over:

King County. 18 farms evacuated
17 farms taken over
540 individual deals remaining
20% of these "buttoned up", as he termed it
Great lack of experienced operators
7,000 laborers needed

Pierce County:
70% of 113 Japanese operators of farms have been filled
An actual excess of applications to take over the remainder.

Six groups have been formed, 50% of which are private corporations, to take over extensive tracts. One of these mentioned by him, namely, Victory Farms, Inc., is, I believe, the organization of Filipinos which Mr. Villamin talked about when he called on you recently.

PH/vm

BHK

Document 7

SOURCE: An excerpt from the Munson Report, which was completed on November 7, 1941 by Curtis B. Munson, a representative from the U.S. State Department. Munson had investigated Japanese Americans in October and November, 1941.

(Changed to make easier to read). Found at http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/japanese_internment/munson_report.cfm

There is no Japanese 'problem' on the coast. There will be no armed uprising of Japanese. There will probably be some destroying of property paid for by Japan and done mostly by agents from Japan... In each Naval District there are about 250 to 300 suspects that are being watched. It is easy to become a suspect, just speaking in favor of Japan at a dinner is enough. The Intelligence Services call many people suspects and are taking no chances. Privately, they believe that only 50 or 60 in each district are dangerous. The Japanese have a hard time damaging things because of the way they look. It will be hard for them to get close to anything to blow up if it is guarded. There is a lot more danger from Communists and union workers on the Coast than there is from Japanese. The Japanese here is almost always a farmer, a fisherman or a small businessman. He has no way to get into factories or complicated machinery.

Document 8

SOURCE: Excerpt from an editorial in the newspaper The Crisis, just after the internment camps for Japanese Americans were built. The Crisis is the official magazine of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, an organization that protects civil rights. This article was written by Harry Paxton Howard and published in September 1942. (Changed to make it easier to read). Found at https://advancingjustice-la.org/sites/default/files/WJIU%20Americans_in_Concentration_Camps_The_Crisis_excerpt.pdf

On the East coast of the United States there are not as many Americans of Japanese ancestry. No concentration camps have been made there. The army thinks that only Germany and Italy are dangerous on the East coast. But the American government has not taken any rude action against Germans and Italians and their descendants who have been born in America, who live on the East coast like they have done against the Japanese and their descendants who were born in America on the West coast. Germans and Italians are “white.”

Color seems to be the only possible reason why thousands of American citizens of Japanese ancestry are in concentration camps. Anyway, there are no Italian-American or German-American citizens in camps like those.

Army and Federal government officials said that lynchings [the killing of people for racial reasons] had to be stopped. To do this, they had to herd Japanese and Japanese-Americans into concentration camps—“for their own protection.”... It says something sad about the American way of life when we have to put American citizens behind barbed wire in order to protect them.

Document 9

SOURCE: Excerpt from the majority opinion of the U.S. Supreme Court, written by Chief Justice Hugo Black, in the case of Korematsu v. United States in 1944. Korematsu was a Japanese American who was convicted of evading internment and appealed his case to the Supreme Court. (Changed for easier reading). Found at <http://sheg.stanford.edu/japanese-internment>

We agree with the exclusion order [Order 9066] ... Even though we agree with it, we understand that it makes things hard for a lot of American citizens. ... But hardships are part of war, and war is a lot of hardships. All citizens, both soldiers and those at home, feel the effects of the war—some more and some less. Citizenship has its responsibilities and privileges, and during wars the load is always heavier. Forcing a large group of people from their homes goes against our basic government, except for during times of emergency and danger. But in warfare today, when hostile armies threaten our shores the power to protect has to be equal to the threatened danger.

To say that this case is about racial prejudice, without talking about the real military dangers, is confusing. Korematsu was not kept out of the military area because of anger toward him or his race. He was kept out because we are at war with Japan and because military officials were afraid of an invasion of our West coast. They decided that military urgency made it so that all citizens of Japanese ancestry be removed from the West coast for some time, and, finally, because Congress decided that our military leaders should have the power to do this.

Document 10

SOURCE: Excerpt from the summary of a report made by the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians on February 24, 1983, after a three-year investigation of whether Executive Order 9066 had been a violation of civil rights. Their report was entitled Personal Justice Denied. (Changed for easier reading). Found at <https://www.archives.gov/research/japanese-americans/justice-denied>

The Commission had 20 days of meetings in cities across the country, many on the West coast, listening to more than 750 witnesses, evacuees, past government officials, citizens, historians, and other professionals who have studied the people involved in the Commission's report. We tried very hard to find and look at the records of government action and to study other sources of information...

Executive Order 9066 was not right based on what the army needed, and the decisions which followed it...did not come by thinking about the needs of the army. The big, historical causes for these decisions were racial prejudice, fear during the war, and bad political leaders. Many people did not understand Japanese Americans and this led to policies that happened too quickly and were done at a time when people felt fear and anger toward Japan. American citizens and others who had Japanese ancestors were treated wrongly without any of them thought about individually and without any evidence against them. They were moved and held by the United States during World War II.

Japanese American Internment Original Documents

Note: These documents have been changed in the Document Packet for Students.

Document 1 Original

SOURCE: Excerpt from "Executive Order Number 9066," which President Franklin D. Roosevelt wrote, authorizing the army to force Japanese Americans to move to internment camps.

AUTHORIZING THE SECRETARY OF WAR TO PRESCRIBE MILITARY AREAS Executive Order No. 9066

WHEREAS the successful prosecution of the war requires every possible protection against espionage and against sabotage to national-defense material, national-defense premises, and national-defense utilities as defined in section 4, Act of April 20, 1918, 40 Stat. 533, as amended by the act of November 30, 1940, 54 Stat. 1220, and the Act of August 21, 1941, 55 Stat. 655 (U. S. C., Title 50, Sec. 104):

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, and Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, I hereby authorize and direct the Secretary of War, and the Military Commanders whom he may from time to time designate, whenever he or any designated Commander deems such actions necessary or desirable, to prescribe military areas in such places and of such extent as he or the appropriate Military Commanders may determine, from which any or all persons may be excluded, and with such respect to which, the right of any person to enter, remain in, or leave shall be subject to whatever restrictions the Secretary of War or the appropriate Military Commander may impose in his discretion. The Secretary of War is hereby authorized to provide for residents of any such area who are excluded therefrom, such transportation, food, shelter, and other accommodations as may be necessary, in the judgement of the Secretary of War or the said Military Commander, and until other arrangements are made, to accomplish the purpose of this order. The designation of military areas in any region or locality shall supersede designations of prohibited and restricted areas by the Attorney General under the Proclamations of December 7 and 8, 1941, and shall supersede the responsibility and authority of the Attorney General under the said Proclamations in respect of such prohibited and restricted areas.

I hereby further authorize and direct the Secretary of War and the said Military Commanders to take such other steps as he or the appropriate Military Commander may deem advisable to

enforce compliance with the restrictions applicable to each Military area hereinabove authorized to be designated, including the use of Federal troops and other Federal Agencies, with authority to accept assistance of state and local agencies.

I hereby further authorize and direct all Executive Departments, independent establishments and other Federal Agencies, to assist the Secretary of War or the said Military Commanders in carrying out this Executive Order, including the furnishing of medical aid, hospitalization, food, clothing, transportation, use of land, shelter, and other supplies, equipment, utilities, facilities and services.

This order shall not be construed as modifying or limiting in any way the authority heretofore granted under Executive Order No. 8972, dated December 12, 1941, nor shall it be construed as limiting or modifying the duty and responsibility of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with respect to the investigation of alleged acts of sabotage or the duty and responsibility of the Attorney General and the Department of Justice under the Proclamations of December 7 and 8, 1941, prescribing regulations for the conduct and control of alien enemies, except as such duty and responsibility is superseded by the designation of military areas hereunder.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
February 19, 1942

Document 5 Original

SOURCE: Excerpt from a newspaper article published in the San Francisco News on March 6, 1942. The article tells about California Governor Culbert Olson, who spoke to a committee of the House of Representatives. (Changed to make it easier to read).

Olson Wants All Japs Moved Tells Committee Some Might Be Returned

By United Press

LOS ANGELES, March 6.—Governor Olson told the Tolán congressional committee today he favored wholesale evacuation of Japanese from coastal California, but that subsequent classification might permit certain individuals to return.

Governor Olson was the first witness before the House committee, headed by Rep. John H. Tolán (D., Cal.) The committee is studying problems connected with emergency migration, with particular emphasis on removal of alien Japanese from strategic areas.

The governor said he thought a distinction should be made in the handling of German and Italian aliens as compared with the Japanese.

“Because of the extreme difficulty in distinguishing between loyal Japanese-Americans, and there are many who are loyal to this country, and those other Japanese whose loyalty is to the Mikado. I believe in the wholesale evacuation of the Japanese people from coastal California,” Governor Olson said.

Mayor Fletcher Bowron of Los Angeles, following Governor Olson as a witness, criticized the wartime work of the FBI and said he thought its duties more properly could be performed by the military authorities.

“It is a wonderful peacetime organization but is not adequate in wartime,” Mayor Bowron said. “There has not been sufficient co-operation between the FBI and Army and Navy intelligence. The FBI in opinion is not the proper agency to handle the military angles involved in wartime problems.

The San Francisco News
March 6, 1942

Document 7 Original

SOURCE: An excerpt from the Munson Report, which was completed on November 7, 1941 by Curtis B. Munson, a representative from the U.S. State Department. Munson had investigated Japanese Americans from October and November, 1941. (Changed to make easier to read).

Found at

http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/japanese_internment/munson_report.cfm

The Munson Report

The story was all the same. 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... In each Naval District there are about 250 to 300 suspects under surveillance. It is easy to get on the suspect list, merely a speech in favor of Japan at some banquet being sufficient to land one there. The Intelligence Services are generous with the title of suspect and are taking no chances. Privately, they believe that only 50 or 60 in each district can be classed as really dangerous. The Japanese are hampered as saboteurs because of their easily recognized physical appearance. It will be hard for them to get near anything to blow up if it is guarded. There is far more danger from Communists and people of the Bridges type on the Coast than there is from Japanese. The Japanese here is almost exclusively a farmer, a fisherman or a small businessman. He has no entree to plants or intricate machinery.

In case we have not made it apparent, the aim of this report is that all Japanese Nationals in the continental United States and property owned and operated by them within the country be immediately placed under absolute Federal control. The aim of this will be to squeeze control from the hands of the Japanese Nationals into the hands of the loyal Nisei who are American citizens... It is the aim that the Nisei should police themselves, and as a result police their parents.

Document 8 Original

SOURCE: Excerpt from an editorial in the newspaper The Crisis, just after the internment camps for Japanese Americans were built. The Crisis is the official magazine of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and organization that protects civil rights. This article was written by Harry Paxton Howard and published in September 1942. (Changed to make it easier to read).

Found at https://advancingjustice-la.org/sites/default/files/WJIU%20Americans_in_Concentration_Camps_The_Crisis_excerpt.pdf

...

“Protective” Custody...

Army and Federal government officials...expressed...lynchings had to be prevented; for this, it was necessary to herd Japanese and Japanese-Americans into concentration camps –“for their own protection.” ... It is a sad commentary on the American way of life when we find it necessary to put American citizens behind barbed wire in order to protect them....The government...could have clamped down on the Hitler-like racial fury of the anti-Japanese press, could have given wide circulation to the facts regarding Pearl Harbor and the splendid loyalty of most Americans of Japanese descent. ... So, instead, we slapped the “Japs” into concentration camps – for the protection of American soldiers in Japanese hands. So our Army also got some “prisoners” –and hostages....

Filth and Squalor

There was no direct torture. It was an American, not a Nazi, concentration camp. Some of the older inhabitants ... suffered from insufficiency of their customary rice....lacking tubs, buckets, washing machines, or sufficient soap. Perpetually dusty and dirty eyes were painful and “troublesome.” Babies found unwashed diapers painful as well as odorous. ...children sickened and died, living in a filth and squalor... But there was no “torture.”...

It Concerns the Negro

What has happened to these Americans in recent months is of direct concern to the American Negro. For the barbarous treatment of these Americans is the result of the color line. These men, women, and children have been taken from their pleasant homes and long-cultivated farms and businesses because their skins are yellow Americans of German or Italian descent ... are not being stuck into filthy and noisome shacks in vile concentration camps because they are of German and Italian ancestry; they are white....Negros have been told again and again “Work quietly, be industrious, mind your own business, and you will get justice even in America.” That is what these yellow-skinned Americans believed. They worked, cheerfully and industriously. They turned deserts into beautiful and fertile farmland, grew vegetables and fruits for themselves

and for others. They distinguished themselves at school, abstained from politics, had the lowest crime-rate of any group in the entire country. They earned the respect of all decent white personsWhat has been their reward? They have been plundered of everything, and crowded in concentration camps fit only for pigs. ... And if native-born Americans of Asiatic descent can be denied all civil rights and civil liberties, what about Americans of African descent?...This is an integral part of the struggle for human and racial equality. It concerns every Negro. It concerns every believer in democracy and human equality, regardless of color.

Document 9 Original

SOURCE: Excerpt from the majority opinion of the U.S. Supreme Court, written by Chief Justice Hugo Black, in the case of Korematsu v. United States in 1944. Korematsu was a Japanese American who was convicted of evading internment and appealed his case to the Supreme Court. Found at http://liberalarts.utexas.edu/coretexts/_files/resources/texts/1944%20Korematsu.pdf

We uphold the exclusion order as of the time it was made and when the petitioner violated it. In doing so, we are not unmindful of the hardships imposed by it upon a large group of American citizens. But hardships are part of war, and war is an aggregation of hardships. All citizens alike, both in and out of uniform, feel the impact of war in greater or lesser measure. Citizenship has its responsibilities, as well as its privileges, and, in time of war, the burden is always heavier. Compulsory exclusion of large groups of citizens from their homes, except under circumstances of direst emergency and peril, is inconsistent with our basic governmental institutions. But when, under conditions of modern warfare, our shores are threatened by hostile forces, the power to protect must be commensurate with the threatened danger....

To cast this case into outlines of racial prejudice, without reference to the real military dangers which were presented, merely confuses the issue. Korematsu was not excluded from the Military Area because of hostility to him or his race. He was excluded because we are at war with the Japanese Empire, because the properly constituted military authorities feared an invasion of our West Coast and felt constrained to take proper security measures, because they decided that the military urgency of the situation demanded that all citizens of Japanese ancestry be segregated from the West Coast temporarily, and, finally, because Congress, reposing its confidence in this time of war in our military leaders--as inevitably it must--determined that they should have the power to do just this. There was evidence of disloyalty on the part of some, the military authorities considered that the need for action was great, and time was short. We cannot --by availing ourselves of the calm perspective of hindsight--now say that, at that time, these actions were unjustified.

Document 10 Original

SOURCE: Excerpt from a report made by the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians on February 24, 1983, after a three-year investigating whether Executive Order 9066 had been a violation of civil rights. Their report was entitled Personal Justice Denied. Found at <https://www.archives.gov/research/japanese-americans/justice-denied>

In fulfilling this mandate, the Commission held 20 days of hearings in cities across the country, particularly on the West Coast, hearing testimony from more than 750 witnesses: evacuees, former government officials, public figures, interested citizens, and historians and other professionals who have studied the subjects of Commission inquiry. An extensive effort was made to locate and to review the records of government action and to analyze other sources of information including contemporary writings, personal accounts and historical analyses...

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.