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From Despised Enemy to Wronged American: Images of the Japanese American Internment, 1942-1992

Kenichiro Tsuchihashi
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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Kenichiro Tsuchihashi entitled "From Despised Enemy to Wronged American: Images of the Japanese American Internment, 1942-1992." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in History.

G. Kurt Piehler, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Lynn Sacco, George White, Jr.

Accepted for the Council:
Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
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Kenichiro Tsuchihashi
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Mr. Kenshi Tsuchihashi and Mrs. Tokiko Tsuchihashi.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to elucidate the popular image of the World War II Japanese American internment in postwar America. It examines how the internment was described in the print press, high school history textbooks, and motion pictures between the early 1940s and the early 1990s, and explains when, why, and how the description changed.

The popular image of the internment was transformed from "justifiable relocation of despised enemies" to "unjustifiable incarceration of wronged American citizens." Despite earlier studies on the internment, which often suggest this dramatic shift occurred in the late 1980s, this thesis demonstrates that the shift actually took place in the mid 1950s and the early 1960s. Although the image of Japanese Americans as hateful enemies dominated the wartime print media, it dissipated quickly after the end of the war and never became prevalent in the postwar era. The counter image of them as wronged citizens emerged in the midst of the war, and swiftly replaced the negative image within a decade after the war. From then on, the internment has always been depicted as a grave injustice and a tragic mistake. Therefore, at least at the level of the popular image, the American public's critical attitude toward the internment and their sympathy for Japanese Americans were obvious three decades before the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which mandated a formal apology by the president and monetary compensation to surviving ex-internees.

This transition of Japanese American image seems attributable to a series of reversals of longstanding legal discrimination against Asian Americans in the late 1940s and the early 1950s, as well as to the enactment of the Japanese American Claims Act of

1948. These legal changes presumably raised the image of ex-internees. Furthermore, Japanese Americans' wartime good behavior contributed to the development of their own image as wronged citizens.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Background

In 1988, the U.S. Congress passed the Civil Liberties Act, which included a formal apology by the president and granted reparation to Japanese Americans who had been interned by the U.S. government during World War II. Each of about 60,000 surviving ex-internees received $20,000 in compensation and a letter of apology signed by the president for having violated their civil liberties and constitutional rights. The passage of this legislation was the result of a so-called "redress movement," grassroots efforts begun by Japanese Americans in the early 1970s that advocated recognition of, and reparations for, the injustice of the internment. Japanese Americans welcomed the passage of the redress bill. The *New York Times* reported on August 11, 1988, the day after its passage, that Japanese American leaders "reacted with 'a collective sigh of relief' in receiving an official apology."[1]

The passage of the Civil Liberties Act highlighted World War II internment of Japanese Americans as a grievous mistake. The *New York Times* conveyed President Ronald Reagan's comments upon his signature of the bill. He said that, by signing the bill, he moved to "right a grave wrong" and end "a sad chapter in American history in a way that reaffirms America's commitment to the preservation of liberty and justice for

[1] Katherine Bishop, "Day of Apology and 'Sign of Relief,'" *New York Times*, August 11, 1988.

all."[2] The description of the wartime internment as a grave mistake was remarkable given the fact that Japanese Americans had been treated as "enemies" and the internment had been considered "necessary" by the major print media at the outset of the Second World War. When, why, and how did such a dramatic shift in the popular images of the internment in postwar U.S. society – from "justifiable relocation of despised enemies" to "unjustifiable incarceration of wronged citizens" – occur? To answer these questions, this thesis examines the popular print press, including national magazines and newspapers, and other sources including high school history textbooks and popular films, and attempts to elucidate how the internment has been described in these sources, and when, why, and how the description has changed.

Literature Review

Since the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, scholars, mostly Japanese Americans themselves, have examined the redress movement and tried to figure out why and how the passage of the legislation was possible. Probably the best-known and the most widely read are Leslie Hatamiya's *Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and the Passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988*, which was published in 1993; Yasuko Takezawa's *Breaking the Silence: Redress and Japanese American Ethnicity*, published in 1995; and Mitchell Maki, Harry Kitano, and Megan Berthold's *Achieving the Impossible Dream: How Japanese Americans Obtained Redress*, published in 1999.

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[2] Associated Press, "President Signs Law to Redress Wartime Wrong: Former Internees to Get Payment and Apology," *New York Times*, August 11, 1988; Associated Press, "Measure to Pay War Detainees Goes to Reagan: Japanese-Americans to Get $20,000 Each," *New York Times*, August 5, 1988.

Hatamiya's *Righting a Wrong* is a comprehensive and balanced account of the lobbying efforts of the Japanese American community for redress, the workings of Congress, and the policymaking process. Hatamiya, a third-generation Japanese American who worked as an assistant for Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey, convincingly argues that Japanese Americans can hardly be seen as an ideal organized interest group given the fact that they are small in number, geographically concentrated, and politically incohesive. She therefore contends that the passage of the redress bill was not due to their electoral interest pressure, but to the significance of the institutional structure of Congress, the influence of Japanese American members of Congress, the efforts of Japanese American lobbyists, and the importance of ideological and personal beliefs. Maki, Kitano, and Berthold's *Achieving the Impossible Dream* also studies the complex legislative process to enact the Civil Liberties Act, arguing that the social, political, and economic maturity of the Japanese American community made it possible to achieve the "impossible" dream of obtaining redress from the United States government against all odds.[3]

Japanese anthropologist Yasuko Takezawa's *Breaking the Silence*, an important study of Japanese Americans in Seattle and their efforts in the redress movement, engages both cultural anthropological and sociological works on ethnicity. Takezawa demonstrates how Japanese Americans have interpreted the meaning of their ethnic and racial identities and drawn the boundary between themselves and other Americans. She argues that this identity formation is attributable to the importance of their historical

[3] Leslie T. Hatamiya, *Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and the Passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993); Mitchell T. Maki, Harry H. L. Kitano, and S. Megan Berthold, *Achieving the Impossible Dream: How Japanese Americans Obtained Redress* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999).

experience, namely the wartime internment and the redress movement. She proves that, based on her exhaustive research, the redress movement reconstructed Japanese American history through ritual dramatization of evacuation and camp life, through the emotional hearings of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, and through other cultural productions such as plays and movies. In this process, Japanese American ethnicity was revived as Japanese Americans redefined what it meant to be a minority in U.S. society. At the same time, however, the redress movement, which presented redress as an American issue and not a special-interest issue, reaffirmed Japanese American identification as American and furthered their assimilation into the larger American society. Takezawa argues that, because Japanese Americans identified themselves as Americans and internalized American values, they initiated and enthusiastically engaged in the redress movement. Furthermore, because they employed and coordinated American tactics such as a class action and *coram nobis* appeals in the courts, the movement was successful. Thus, in Takezawa's account, ethnic identification and Americanization occurred simultaneously for Japanese Americans during the redress movement, and both thrust the movement forward.

Combined, those monographs show that the 1988 Civil Liberties Act resulted not only from Japanese Americans' political efforts inside the Beltway, but also from dramatic changes in their self-perception. Generally, these scholars credit the passage of the redress legislation to Japanese Americans themselves. However, these scholarly works have fallen short of shedding light on precise and inclusive circumstances of the passage of the redress bill. They have not paid much attention to the popular images of Japanese American internment among the American public. *Righting a Wrong* and

Achieving the Impossible Dream focus almost exclusively on the mechanism within Congress, and *Breaking the Silence* on the identity transformation within the Japanese American community in Seattle. The way in which the American public has interpreted the wartime internment and understood Japanese Americans' experience is left largely unexamined in these monographs. However, a grasp of the popular image of the internment in post-World War II America is crucial in understanding the success of the redress movement because, as President Reagan's comments clearly show, the images of the internment as a grave wrong were essential for the bill's passage.

Among these three scholars, only Takezawa suggests that the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 resulted partly from the American public's willingness in the late 1980s to highlight Japanese Americans innocently wronged by a repentant majority. She mentions that Japanese Americans in the 1980s, who experienced social upward mobility and were now accepted as a "model minority" by American society, "had much less need to struggle for assimilation."[4] Thus the social acceptance of Japanese Americans by the majority of Americans allowed them to reexamine and reinterpret their past experience and eventually revive their ethnic consciousness, which led them to initiate the redress movement. However, Takezawa does not discuss exactly how American society had accepted Japanese Americans and the process by which their popular image had been transformed.

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[4] Yasuko Takezawa, *Breaking the Silence: Redress and Japanese American Ethnicity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 211-2.

Materials, Methodology, and Organization

Takezawa suggests it was in the late 1980s that Americans began to see the internment as unjustifiable and Japanese Americans as wronged during the war years. However, my own research shows that it was much sooner. In the following chapters, I argue that the popular images of Japanese Americans as a despised enemy dissipated fairly quickly after the end of the war, and the images of them as wronged Americans emerged as early as the mid 1950s and early 1960s. This does not imply that in the 1950s the majority of Americans would have supported a governmental apology and monetary compensation for Japanese Americans' loss and suffering. However, careful examination of the American popular press from the war's end until the passage of the redress bill suggests that, at least at the level of the popular images, Americans' sympathetic attitudes toward the ex-internees were evident even a few decades earlier than the passage of the redress bill. Therefore it seems natural to conclude that Americans' self-examination of the recent past began within a decade after the end of the war, and they reached a consensus that the internment was unjustifiable and Japanese Americans were wronged by the U.S. government by the early 1960s.

In order to discuss the popular images of the wartime internment and Japanese Americans in post-World War II America, besides the secondary literature on Japanese American studies, I examine American mainstream print press, namely national newspapers and magazines, as well as cultural products such as high school history textbooks and popular films. All of the materials examined here were produced and published between the early 1940s and the early 1990s.

Regarding the print press, I have mainly examined major national newspapers and magazines, including the *New York Times*, the *New York Times Magazine*, *Newsweek*, *Reader's Digest*, and *Time*. Several regional and smaller publications such as the *Chicago Tribune* and *Farm Journal* have also been surveyed. In order to analyze the liberal stance on the internment during the wartime, this thesis drew on *Christian Century* and the *Nation*.

Textbooks often avoid controversial issues and seldom reflect the latest in historical scholarship. However, my thesis will show that as early as the mid 1950s high school history textbooks denounced the internment. In order to prove this, I have collected and examined various history textbooks, the majority of which were used in American high schools from the 1950s to the 1990s. Because numerous textbooks have been published and used all over the United States and it is virtually impossible to examine all kinds of them, I intentionally limited the range of the textbooks I examine here. Even though their titles are varied, the textbooks under study were published by seven relatively well-known textbook publishers: Allyn and Bacon; D.C. Heath; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; Harper and Brothers; Holt; Houghton Mifflin; and Laidlaw Brothers. In addition to these, I examine textbooks published by the California State Department of Education for the State's "official" view of the internment. This is of our particular interest because California was, needless to say, one of the most anti-Japanese American states during the war years. In many cases these textbooks were revised every three to four years, and I trace the transition of the description of the internment.

Regarding the movies, not many films have dealt exclusively with the wartime internment. Among the popular films (including television movies but excluding

documentary films) released between 1942 and 1992, the notable exceptions are *If Tomorrow Comes* (1971), *Farewell to Manzanar* (1976), and *Come See the Paradise* (1990), all of which address directly the issue of the internment. However, some other Hollywood films also touch on the internment; two films produced in the 1950s – a war film entitled *Go for Broke!* (1951) and a Western film *Bad Day at Black Rock* (1955) – are good examples. I examine all of these films and analyze how they portray Japanese Americans and the wartime internment. These materials, complementing each other, help us foster greater understanding of the popular image of Japanese American internment and the historical transformation of it.

Generally speaking, my analysis and argument throughout the following chapters focus on two points: when the transition of the popular images of Japanese Americans – from despised enemy to wronged American – occurred, and how these images manifested themselves in these materials. I arrange my argument by the source material. Thus, Chapter I deals with the popular images of Japanese Americans and their internment in newspapers and magazines; Chapter II examines the images in high school history textbooks; and Chapter III discusses the images in films. These chapters show that the transition occurred in the mid 1950s and early 1960s, and the Japanese American image has always been one of wronged citizens since then. This brings up another question: why did this transition occur when it did? In Conclusion, I tackle this question as well as summarize my preceding arguments.

CHAPTER I

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

In order to grasp the popular image of Japanese American internment, this chapter examines American mainstream print media's presentations of Japanese Americans and the internment from the early 1940s until the late 1980s. There is a substantial number of scholarly works on the wartime representations of Japanese Americans in the popular print media. For instance, Walt Stromer examines national magazines such as *Atlantic*, *Collier's*, *Life*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*, and claims that these magazines almost never criticized the U.S. government's policy toward Japanese Americans during the war years. Similarly, Morton Grodzins analyzes over one hundred California newspapers published from December of 1941 until March of 1942, and finds out that the majority of them were unfriendly to Japanese Americans throughout the period. According to his study, especially after the last week of January 1942 (approximately two weeks earlier than the government's official announcement of the internment), all the newspapers turned pro-internment, and sympathetic attitudes toward Japanese Americans completely disappeared.[5]

Some scholars argue that the mainstream media of the war years was not only uncritical of the internment but also highly antagonistic toward Japanese Americans. For instance, John W. Dower studies the manifestation of anti-Japanese racism in everyday

[5] Walt Stromer, "Why I Went Along: 1942 and the Invisible Evacuees," *Columbia Journalism Review* 31 (1983): 15-17; Morton Grodzins, *Americans Betrayed: Politics and the Japanese Evacuation* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1949), 377-399. Similar scholarly works includes: Ives Neely, "The Press Was an Accessory: Winter of '42," *Quill* 64 (1976): 19-23.

discourse, concluding that the racial slang such as "Nip" and "Jap" were routinely used in the media and official memoranda. He argues that wartime media depicted the Japanese as grotesque, uncivilized barbarians, and they often did not distinguish the Japanese in Japan from the Japanese Americans on the U.S. soil.[6] Overall, these scholars agree that the majority of the print press uncritically supported the internment policy.

On the other hand, the postwar print media's presentations of Japanese Americans have not yet been fully examined by scholars. Historian Caroline Chung Simpson is one of the few scholars who have studied this unexplored field. In her monograph *An Absent Presence: Japanese Americans in Postwar American Culture, 1945-1960*, she examines the printed media's presentation of the internment in the wake of World War II. She argues that the media coverage of the internment in the immediate postwar years effaced the displacement and racial discrimination suffered by Japanese Americans. Examining five specific cases such as the Tokyo Rose trial and Japanese war brides, she shows that the print press either ignored the internment experience completely, or obscured the institutional and societal racism that shaped it. Simpson argues that the print media of the designated period still doubted Japanese Americans' loyalty, therefore their stories about the camps tended to evade the harsh reality of the internment by focusing on the presumed guilt of the enemy aliens. Thus, in her words, the interment was the "absent presence" in the postwar mass media.[7]

However, the printed sources this chapter examines show that Simpson's argument is not always accurate. As we shall see, the postwar printed press neither

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[6] John W. Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 81.

[7] Caroline Chung Simpson, *An Absent Presence: Japanese Americans in Postwar American Culture, 1945-1960* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

ignored Japanese Americans' internment experience nor obscured the longstanding racism that caused it. Rather, a notable number of popular magazine articles in the immediate postwar years did refer to the internment and provided very critical views of it.

Thus, the following pages focus on how the popular print press describes Japanese Americans and their internment, and trace the transition of it. Before examining the postwar image of Japanese American internment, this chapter first devotes some pages to the wartime image of the internment. As many scholars argue, Japanese Americans' image as despised enemies dominated the print media during the war years. However, this chapter shows that a significant number of popular magazines presented Japanese Americans' image as wronged citizens even in the middle of the war. This image was passed to the postwar press, as the image of despised enemies quickly dissipated once the war ended.

Japanese Americans as Despised Enemy: The War Years

The image of Japanese Americans as enemies was prevalent in the printed media during the war years. The image was presented by various people, such as the top military officials, members of Congress, local missionaries, newspaper journalists, editorial writers, and cartoonists.

Among them is Army General John L. Dewitt, who commanded the Western Defense Command from 1939 until 1943 and vehemently pushed forward the project of Japanese American mass relocation and internment. In his final recommendation of the

relocation to Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson in February 1942, Dewitt explains the possibility of Japanese naval attack on the West Coast and Japanese Americans' sabotage. He states that the western part of the Washington, Oregon, and California coastline is important from the military strategic viewpoint, and describes the danger of the "Japanese race" in this area:

> 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, have become "Americanized," the racial strains are undiluted. To conclude otherwise is to expect that children born of white parents on Japanese soil sever all racial affinity and become loyal Japanese subjects, ready to fight and, if necessary, to die for Japan in a war against the nation of their parents. That Japan is allied with Germany and Italy in this struggle is no ground for assuring that any Japanese, barred from assimilation by convention as he is, though born and raised in the United States, will not turn against this nation when the final test of loyalty comes. It, therefore, follows that along the vital Pacific Coast over 112,000 potential enemies, of Japanese extraction, are at large today. There are indications that these are organized and ready for concerted action at a favorable opportunity. The very fact that no sabotage has taken place to date is a disturbing and confirming indication that such action will be taken.[8]

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[8] U. S. Army, *Final Report: Japanese Evacuation from the West Coast, 1942* (Washington, DC: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1943), 34.

In this often-quoted statement, Dewitt argues that the Japanese are all dangerous enemies regardless of their birthplace or their citizenship because they all are an "enemy race." On the same score he rejected the possibility that American-born Japanese were loyal to the United States and willing to fight for their country. Ironically, it was Japanese American soldiers themselves who proved this was wrong by adding their names on the list of casualties later in the war.

General Dewitt's other often-quoted remark only emphasized the image of Japanese Americans as despised enemies. According to several news reports, he mentions that "[a] Jap's a Jap. It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen or not. ... They are a dangerous element, whether loyal or not."[9] Interestingly, Secretary of War Stimson never noticed the racist nature of these statements. Indeed, in the forward of *Final Report: Japanese Evacuation from the West Coast, 1942*, Stimson gives "great credit" to Dewitt for his "humane yet efficient manner" in which the mass relocation was handled.[10]

Senator Tom Stewart (Democrat) of Tennessee made a similar remark in April 1943. Introducing to the Senate his legislation to seize all Japanese living in the United States regardless of their citizenship, he bitterly attacks the Japanese as a race. He tells the Senate: "Where there is a drop of Japanese blood there is Japanese treachery." Being enraged with the Empire of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, the Senator says that "the Japs by their very nature 'are not and never can be honest.'" The Tennessee Democrat

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[9] "A Jap's a Jap," *Washington Post*, April 15, 1943; William Petersen, "Success Story, Japanese-American Style," *New York Times Magazine*, January 9, 1966.
[10] U. S. Army, *Final Report*, v.

claims, unacceptable is the philosophy that it is the Japanese government, not the Japanese people, who are to blame.[11]

The image of Japanese Americans as despised enemies appears even in cartoons. On December 26, 1943, the *Chicago Tribune* carried a comic strip entitled "Little Joe." In this nine-panel cartoon, a good-hearted Caucasian American housewife named Mrs. Oak is pictured sending Christmas presents to some nearby Japanese American internees. However, a Caucasian American man tries to convince her not to do that because "Jap internees" will not understand her kindness. However, Mrs. Oak insists that they will understand it, and asks the man to deliver her gifts to "those poor Japs." He immediately comes back to her, holding in his hand a reciprocal gift from them. Mrs. Oak is pleased to the gift for her, but the man suggests opening the box outside. When he opens it with a long piece of rope, it abruptly explodes. Mrs. Oak resents: "Ohhh! Those awful inhuman beasts! They tried to kill us!" The man replies triumphantly: "Yep. I still claim Japs jest [sic] don't understand kindness..."[12]

When the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in December 1944 that those internees who had proved their loyalty to the United States had a right to leave their camps and live where they wanted to, local communities in the West Coast confronted the unpalatable truth that Japanese Americans were coming back to the coastal area. Frightened and enraged, these Westerners expressed the die-hard images of Japanese Americans as hateful enemies, which magazine articles conveyed to their readers. *Time* magazine, for instance, reports about a missionary in California, who claims "Japs take the body of a

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[11] "Seizure of All Japs in U.S. Demanded: Stewart Assails Treachery of Race before Senate," *Washington Post*, April 23, 1943.
[12] "Little Joe," *Chicago Tribune*, December 26, 1943.

Chinese, cut out the heart and liver and eat it." Another *Time* article conveys a story at Brawley, California, where thousands of citizens jammed into a high-school athletic field for an anti-Japanese mass meeting. They listened to an orator scream: "Do you want these yellow-bellied sneaks to return to Brawley?" The crowed roared: "No!" In Parker, Arizona, a barber put a sign in his shop: "Japs Keep out You Rats." A Nisei veteran, who had been injured in Italy, was ejected from the barber shop. Similarly, *Newsweek* reports about the Japanese Exclusion League, a local anti-Japanese organization in Portland, Oregon, whose journal warns that the U.S. government planned to "dump" the internees on the West Coast. The journal quotes a U.S. Navy admiral as saying "Japs are not fit to live in a civilized world." [13]

Coexisting awkwardly with these demonized images of Japanese Americans is the glamorous image of internment camps. The printed press during the war years promoted the image of the camps as safe and peaceful places, and the image of the internees as people living their lives happily there. These images unavoidably conveyed the impression that the internment was indeed good for Japanese Americans, and were used as a means to defend and justify the internment policy.

For instance, in June 1942 the *New York Times Magazine* printed an article entitled "Japanese at Work for the U.S.," which reported the life at the Manzanar War Relocation Center, one of the Japanese American camps that was located in a desert area in inland California. Calling Manzanar "one of the pioneer colonies," the article tells the readers how Japanese Americans, with their resilience and hard work, successfully

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[13] "Inquisition in Los Angeles," *Time*, December 20, 1943; "The Nisei Go Back," *Time*, December 25, 1944; "Are Japs Wanted?," *Newsweek*, May 28, 1945.

transformed the arid land to bloom. According to the article, the Japanese "evacuees" were "mobilized" for "a reclamation program" of the area.[14] Rather than the accurate image of a sandy, barren Mojave Desert, the article conveys the colorful image of flower gardens and vegetable fields.

The article repeatedly describes the camp as a comfortable living space. It refers to Manzanar as a "boom town," where "vegetables have been planted on 120 acres, to which newly dug irrigation ditches bring water from streams rising high in the Sierra Nevada." Each block of the town has "a mess hall," "separate buildings housing men's and women's lavatories and showers," and "a recreation hall," where the internees enjoy "arts, crafts and hobbies." In the town's "family apartments," where different families dwell together, "[a]n ingenious arrangement of curtains ... gives privacy and also enables the families to enjoy a common living room when company is invited." The article quotes a Japanese American former beauty shop owner, who suggests "more colorful clothes for Manzanar's Broadway." The article inserts two photos – one showing two Japanese American male adults standing in line at the Manzanar post office, and the other two Japanese American children playing with their marbles – both of which convey these persons' engaging smiles.[15]

The article stresses the peace of mind these internees enjoy in the camp. The writer of the article states: "[T]his correspondent was struck by the feeling of relief and security evident among the eager evacuees...For the first time since Pearl Harbor men of Japanese blood did not have to be afraid. They had reached a haven where they could not

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[14] Lawrence E. Davies, "Japanese at Work for the U.S.," *New York Times Magazine*, June 21, 1942.
[15] Ibid.

be blamed for any flashing lights along the shoreline or for the firing of a shotgun near an airport."[16] Here the camp is presented as a protection for Japanese Americans, who had been ostracized from the mainstream of American society since the outbreak of the war. In these depictions, an optimistic and upbeat atmosphere is apparent while the negative images of the camps are totally absent.

As discussed above, the image of Japanese Americans as despised enemies and of the internment as a justifiable action is prevalent in the wartime printed media. Many of the articles, some of them ostentatiously and others more subtly, defended the internment policy. As Seattle-based journalist Bruce Ramsey claims, the print press of the war years did not usually call the process "internment," but rather "evacuation," "relocation," "removal," or "moving." Many of the news stories of the time did not concern themselves with where the Japanese Americans were being moved. Those that did called the destination a "colony," "center," or "relocation center." They almost never called it a "concentration camp" or even a "camp," especially after the U.S. Army officially named the internment "Japanese evacuation to the War Relocation Centers."[17]

I agree with Ramsey for the most part, and with scholars who think that the majority of the print press uncritically supported the internment policy during the war. Indeed, the articles quoted above basically support their claim. However, there were exceptions; some liberal magazines and authors did present critical views against the internment even in the midst of war.

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[16] Ibid.
[17] Bruce Ramsey, "Seize All West Coast Japs: The Internment as Seen in 1942," *Liberty* 16, no. 4 (2002), http://libertyunbound.com/archive/2002_04/ramsey-japs.html (accessed March 2, 2007).

Japanese Americans as Wronged Citizens: The War Years

While the image of Japanese Americans as despised enemies prevailed in the mainstream media during the war years, criticisms against the internment policy appeared immediately after the U.S. government announced it. Challenges to the policy often came from liberal journalists. On their way to criticize the internment, they presented the conflicting image of Japanese Americans as wronged American citizens.

One of the earliest skeptical views about the internment was voiced by Alistair Cooke, a British American journalist and broadcaster. From 1941 to 1942, Cooke, a newly naturalized American citizen who worked for the BBC, traveled all around the United States and saw what the war had done to American people on the home front. He put together the stories of his journey into a travelogue entitled *The American Home Front: 1941-1942*, which he finished in 1945 but which was not published until 2006.

During his journey, he encountered Los Angelenos' hatred toward Japanese Americans, which motivated him to drive to the Manzanar War Relocation Center. "It seemed a good idea" he writes, "to go and see what had happened to the Japanese-Americans and know what their new home was like, whether a 'relocation center' could also be a concentration camp." At Manzanar he witnessed the camp's harsh physical conditions as well as bitter and cynical internees. "The awful human problem was what to do with their time," he reports. "They had, like the first colonist, to start a new society, but theirs was the hollow knowledge that it would be a toy society, a sham community barred from matching its skill and resource against the real society outside the barbed-wire fence." However, Cooke also found in this community a throng of citizens who considered the camp life as a test of democracy and tried to live according to American

ideals. He quotes a Japanese American girl as saying, "[b]y our actions, and attitudes [in the camp] ... we shall be responsible to this and future generations of free men."[18]

By the time he left Manzanar, he seemed to have an answer to his initial question – "whether a 'relocation center' could also be a concentration camp." He concludes his journey as follows: "I drove away from Manzanar none too proud of the showing we had made in running the first compulsory migration of American citizens in American history – not counting the Indians. How slippery seemed the solid abstractions we preach when you journey 6,000 miles and find democracy in a concentration camp."[19]

One of the most vocal challengers to the internment during the war years is *Christian Century*, a highly influential nondenominational magazine speaking for liberal Christians. Immediately after Pearl Harbor, even before the mass relocation began, *Christian Century* started its campaign to protect Japanese Americans. The issue from December 31, 1941, for instance, reports about Christian churchgoers in Southern California who rallied "to the opportunity to show a Christian spirit" toward the Issei and the Nisei. The magazine article writes that most of these people of Japanese descent in the area are "innocent of wrongdoing." It claims that many of them are devoted Christians and American-born citizens, who are loyal to the U.S. government in many ways. Japanese-born Issei, ineligible for U.S. citizenship, are also devoted to the country and to its ideal. "These good people," *Christian Century* states, are now standing in "grave danger of being discriminated against." It urges its readers: "The test of

[18] Alistair Cooke, *The American Home Front: 1941-1942* (New York: Atlantic Monthly, 2006), 143-148.
[19] Ibid., 148.

Christianity itself is involved in the Christlikeness of the attitudes and conduct which we exercise toward them."[20]

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 and officially ordered the relocation, *Christian Century* harshly criticized the government's decision. An article in the March 27, 1942 issue describes the internment as "a mass expulsion of Japanese residents," which "may convert a difficult minority problem into an incurable social cancer." "[T]ens of thousands of peaceful people ... are to be driven from their homes and packed off to some arid mountain valley in the interior." The article points out that the most tragic part of this "expulsion" is the psychological effect on young Japanese Americans. Until the relocation they considered themselves Americans and believed that they had a share in the democratic way of life. However, "[n]ow they are rudely made to understand that no democratic principle can save them from the stigma of their racial ancestry; that never again can they feel secure in their rights as citizens." The article warns that this kind of "wound...goes deep and festers long." Another article in *Christian Century* quotes an American citizen of Japanese ancestry, who, just before his bus to a camp pulled out, said the internment was "different from the treatment accorded to the Jews in Germany. It was just as effective, but 'subtler.'" [21]

Similar critical descriptions of the internment can also be found in non-religious magazines of the war years. For example, the *Nation*, another liberal magazine, prints a letter from an American World War I veteran who has helped Japanese Americans leave

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[20] "Churches Act to Shield Japanese: Californians Seek to Avert Suffering Among Japanese-Americans, Protect Children in the Schools," *Christian Century*, December 31, 1941.
[21] "Japanese Ordered from Coastal Area," *Christian Century*, March 18, 1942; "Tragedy Haunts Steps of Exiles," *Christian Century*, May 27, 1942.

San Francisco for their camps. The veteran reports about the "strange feeling" he had while seeing these people off – the feeling that "this could not be the America that I had fought for in 1918." He writes that "it was a pretty grim job to evacuate our own citizens ... just the simple people who want only a chance to make a modest honest living and, if need be, to serve under our common flag." He warns the readers that, although disloyalty may exist among Japanese Americans as well as other citizens, Americans should not "consider the color of a man's skin a test of his loyalty."[22]

The headline of another article in the *Nation* provocatively calls the internment the "'Jap Crow' Experiment." Published about a year after the issue of Executive Order 9066, the article claims that "enough time has rolled by...to enable us to appraise the undertaking [of the relocation] and perhaps to project a better way out of one of the strangest dilemmas in our history." Its appraisal of the internment policy is critical. The "experience with the relocation centers," it reads, "has not been a happy one either for the administrators or for the citizens and aliens taken into 'protective custody.'" The internment of Japanese Americans "has never been the Sunday school picnic or the Boy Scout jamboree that some of our more imaginative reporters have tried to make it out." Then the article reports all the defects of those camps – defects in camps' education, economic condition, agriculture, industry, and camp administration – and concludes that the "evil of relocation" is its psychic and emotional effect on internees. It reports that

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[22] Frank B. Duveneck, letter to the editor, *Nation*, May 9, 1942. A Japanese scholar Takeya Mizuno points out the bilateral character of the *Nation*. He argues that the magazine functioned as a "watch dog" by criticizing the government's internment policy during the wartime. At the same time, however, it also trusted the leadership in Roosevelt administration and tended to accept optimistically the administration's policies toward "enemy aliens." For details, see: Takeya Mizuno, *Nikkei Amerika-jin Kyosei-syuyo to Janarizumu: Riberaru-ha Zasshi to Nihongo Shinbun no Dainiji-sekai-taisen* [Japanese Mass Incarceration and Journalism: Liberal Magazines and Japanese Language Newspapers during World War II] (Yokohama: Shumpu-sha, 2005), 182.

especially young citizens in these camps, who are "for the most part courteous, industrious, earnest, and intelligent," are deeply troubled by "the paradox of their detention despite their citizenship in a country whose constitution is conspicuously devoted to safeguards of liberty and equality."[23]

Toward the end of the war, even the magazines that used to demonize Japanese Americans had made a positive turn, while *Christian Century* and the *Nation* constantly carried critical pieces on the internment during the war years. For instance, the June 25, 1945 issue of *Time* magazine printed an article entitled "Japs Are Human," which carries a report from Lieutenant Commander Alexander H. Leighton, who worked at Arizona's Poston Relocation Center as a social analyst for fifteen months. Commander Leighton describes the Center as a "concentration camp." His descriptions of the camp are strikingly different from the ones in the *New York Times Magazine* article cited above. He says: "The sun was cruel; dust was everywhere. The hospital had little medicine, food was often badly cooked; there was overcrowding, lack of privacy, discomfort." He concludes that many Americans simply fail to remember that "U.S. Japanese are human beings."[24]

The challenge to the internment policy came also from the U.S. veterans, in many cases from the ones who had fought the war with their Japanese American comrades. In 1943 Marine Private First Class Robert E. Borchers of Chicago, for example, wrote a letter to the American Legion from a California Marine camp where he was recovering from malaria. Upon returning from the offensive against the Japanese in Guadalcanal,

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[23] John Larison, "'Jap Crow' Experiment," *Nation*, April 10, 1943.
[24] "Japs Are Human," *Time*, June 25, 1945.

Pfc. Borchers writes that he found "a condition behind our backs that stuns." The "condition" is the Japanese American internment. He continues: "[O]ur American citizens, those of Japanese ancestry, are being persecuted, yes, persecuted as though Adolf Hitler himself were in charge." Calling the internment "a racial purge," he declares another war to fight: "I'm putting it mildly when I say it makes our blood boil. ...We shall fight this injustice, intolerance and un-Americanism at home!...We can endure the hell of battle, but we are resolved not to be sold out at home."[25]

As shown above, despite the opinions of many scholars that the majority of the mass media were pro-internment, there were liberal popular magazines that frequently challenged the internment during the wartime. Although many of them did not use such highly critical terms as "concentration camps," they certainly opposed the internment policy while presenting the image of Japanese Americans as wronged citizens. As we shall see, this liberal attitude was carried on by the printed press of the 1950s and 1960s, regardless of their political or religious orientation.

The 1950s and 1960s

Unlike the war years, when two conflicting images – the image of Japanese Americans as despised enemies and the image of them as wronged citizens – uncomfortably coexisted, the 1950s and 1960s exclusively witnessed the latter image. The printed articles under review in this chapter do not adduce any evidence to show that any popular magazines or newspapers defended the internment in these two decades. In

[25] "Inquisition in Los Angeles," *Time*, December 20, 1943.

other words, Japanese Americans' image as despised enemies already dissipated by the end of the 1940s, while their image as wronged citizens dominated the early postwar popular press.[26]

For instance, the September 1950 issue of *Reader's Digest* carries an article entitled "We Deeply Feel Honored," a newspaper story condensed from the *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. The article tells the readers about a Japanese American soldier, Private First Class Frank Shigemura, who fought as a member of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and was killed in Italy. When Pfc. Shigemura's former college published a booklet honoring him and other graduates who lost their lives in service, his Gold Star parents sent a letter to the college and said they "deeply feel honored" for his sacrifice. Even though the article does not mention the internment camps, it describes Japanese Americans as "our most persecuted minority group" and writes that they "not only fought the enemy abroad but had to bear the brunt of prejudice at home." *Reader's Digest* gave the article "Newspaper Human-Interest Award for the Month."[27]

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[26] A newspaper index is indicative of this transition of Japanese Americans' image in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In the *New York Times Index*, from 1942 until 1949 the majority of articles regarding Japanese American internment are categorized as "Foreign Population and Foreign Descent Groups." There is another category named "Minorities and Oppressed Groups" in the *Index*, but articles on the internment almost never appear under this category. Categorized as "Minorities and Oppressed Groups" in the 1940s are largely the articles on the Jewish Holocaust.
However, from 1951, the articles on Japanese American internment appear under the category of "War Claims and Compensation," while they gradually disappear from "Foreign Population and Foreign Descent Groups." By 1953 the latter category does not hold Japanese American articles anymore. More interestingly, from 1955, the majority of articles about the internment are categorized as "Minorities and Oppressed Groups," while a part of these articles continue to be indexed as "War Claims and Compensation." This suggests that the *New York Times*' attitude toward the internment turned very sympathetic within a decade after the end of the war.

[27] George Grim, "We Deeply Feel Honored," *Reader's Digest*, September, 1950.

As Japanese Americans resettled in the West Coast and rebounded from the losses of the internment in the mid 1950s and the 1960s,[28] the print media began to report about their upward mobility in the postwar society while condemning the internment policy. The *Saturday Evening Post*'s "California's Amazing Japanese," which was published in April 1955, is one of the earliest articles of this kind. As its headline indicates, the article reports about Japanese Americans' resilience in postwar California. These "uprooted" people, the article reads, "returned [to California] after the war and patiently started life over. This is their remarkable story."[29]

This article's depiction of the internment is highly critical. It writes that Japanese Americans were "rushed off to rude camps hastily constructed in isolated deserts and mountains. ... [T]housands of them were confined in the camps under prison conditions throughout the war." Despite these "shattering experiences," the article reports, those Japanese American returnees took the wartime hardship as "their greatest opportunity" and they "have lifted themselves higher in a few postwar years than they had done in the preceding half century."[30]

This "remarkable story" provides the readers with detailed descriptions of many successful Japanese American Californians – Los Angeles Municipal Judge John F. Aiso, prosperous insurance company owner Victor Ikeda, a celebrated teacher of classical Japanese dancing named Reiko Inouye, and so on. It reports that these persons'

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[28] A Japanese American journalist and historian, Bill Hosokawa, shows how legal and social barriers vanished for the Japanese Americans and how they seized chances to move up the social ladder in the 1950s and 1960s. He argues that this social move occurred first in Hawaii, then in the mainland United States. For details, see: Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans* (New York: William Morrow, 1969), 435-488.

[29] Demaree Bess, "California's Amazing Japanese," *Saturday Evening Post*, April 30, 1955.

[30] Ibid.

successes "silenced" white Californians' agitation against them. The article quotes the wartime Los Angeles Mayor Fletcher Bowron apologizing for his insistence upon evacuation, which he described as "a great error and injustice."[31] Presented in these lines is the positive image of Japanese Americans as wronged but still resourceful and strong citizens. The image of the internment is contrastingly negative, and the article declares that it was an evil injustice.

"The Japanese among Us," a detailed article that appeared in *Reader's Digest* in January 1956, is another harsh criticism against the internment and praise for postwar Japanese American society. "Barely 14 years ago," the author Albert Maisel opens his article, "native-born American citizens were ... confined, behind the barbed wire, in hastily erected detention camps. They had been accused of no crimes, tried in no courts. Instead, they were stigmatized as potential spies and saboteurs solely on the basis of their ancestry." Maisel calls this mass detention "our worst wartime mistake."[32]

Maisel points out that Japanese Americans had been discriminated against even before the war. Especially the Issei generation "stoically endured decades of discrimination for the sake of a dream, the hope of earning for their children the acceptance that they themselves had been denied." The Issei, ineligible for citizenship and therefore voteless, were used as "ideal scapegoats" by politicians "whenever they needed to divert attention from their own misdeeds." It is the Nisei, the author writes, who have made their parents' dream come true with their fortitude and sacrifice on battlefields and with their resourcefulness and diligence in the postwar society. As is the

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[31] Ibid.
[32] Albert Q. Maisel, "The Japanese among Us," *Reader's Digest*, January, 1956.

case for the previously-cited article in the *Saturday Evening Post*, Maisel lists the names of successful Japanese Americans in the postwar West Coast. He also points out the change in Westerners' attitude toward Japanese Americans in the 1950s. "Attempts to renew old hatreds were repudiated," he writes, "by the vast majority of Westerners."[33]

The printed press continued to publish similar Japanese American success stories well into the 1960s. The August 11, 1961 issue of *Time* magazine, for example, describes "the World War II evacuation and internment of more than 110,000 West Coast Japanese" as "an ugly footnote to American history." The article blasts that the War Relocation Center, the U.S. government's official term for the Japanese American camps, is merely "a euphemism for concentration camps," and the Tule Lake War Relocation Center, where the Military Police took over the camp, was in the end transformed into "Nazi-type stalags." Internees were "effectively imprisoned by the hostility" during the war years. Even though they returned to the West Coast after the war and now enjoy the prosperity, the article warns, "there is a stark reminder of past injustice" in "the happy ending" of their story. It quotes a scholar as saying: "The evacuation was our worst wartime mistake. ... Our hundred thousand persons were sent to concentration camps on a record which wouldn't support a conviction for stealing a dog."[34]

A similar story line shows up repeatedly in the printed press. In 1966 the *New York Times Magazine* carries an article headlined "Success Story, Japanese-American Style." The article asserts that, among the ethnic minorities alive today in the United States, Japanese Americans "[have] been subjected to the most discrimination and the

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[33] Ibid.
[34] "20 Years After," *Time*, August 11, 1961.

worst injustice." "Like the Negroes [sic]," it reasons, "the Japanese have been the object of color prejudice. Like the Jews, they have been feared and hated as hyperefficient competitors. And, more than any other group, they have been seen as the agents of an overseas enemy." The wartime internment was, of course, the most notorious mistreatment of this ethnic minority group. The article writes that "America's concentration camps," built and defended by "the conservative-liberal-radical coalition," were "the highest barriers our racists were able to fashion" in American history. According to the article, Japanese Americans were able to successfully "climb over" the barriers once the war ended.[35]

As the magazine articles cited above clearly show, the discussion of Japanese American internment constantly appeared in the printed press throughout the 1950s and 1960s.[36] Furthermore, these articles are highly critical of the internment policy. They largely denounce the internment and many are aware of the longstanding anti-Japanese racism on the West Coast. They often use highly critical terms such as "concentration camps" and "prison camps" to refer to the War Relocation Centers, and describe the internment as an "injustice" and "error." They do not obscure, let alone ignore, the internment and the racism that shaped it. Thus, Japanese American internment was not

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[35] William Petersen, "Success Story, Japanese-American Style," *New York Times Magazine*, January 9, 1966.

[36] Indeed, these articles quoted here are only the tip of the iceberg; there are so many articles referring to the internment that this chapter cannot list them all. For instance, the following magazine articles are not included in this chapter but convey critical attitudes toward the internment: "Beauty Behind Wire," *Newsweek*, March 3, 1952; "Disguised Blessing," *Newsweek*, December 29, 1958; "Closing the Books," *Newsweek*, October 18, 1965; "A Wrong Partially Righted," *Time*, April 21, 1967; "Epilogue to A Sorry Drama," *Life*, April 28, 1967; "Americans from Asia: The East Came to the West," *Senior Scholastic*, April 25, 1969.

necessarily the "absent presence" in the 1950s and 1960s in the popular media, as Caroline Chung Simpson claims.

In analyzing the mass media's presentation of Japanese war brides who immigrated to the U.S., Simpson contends the media's praise for their upward mobility adroitly concealed the uncomfortable aspects of their Japanese heritage. However, as far as the media coverage of Japanese Americans' success stories goes, it tends to emphasize their negative ethnic legacy in order to highlight their postwar upward mobility and resilience. Without avoiding the discomfiting aspects of their ethnic heritage, it praises them for having moved into a middle-class stratum.

To be sure, some magazine articles do support Simpson's argument. For instance, the March 1956 issue of *Farm Journal* reports on Japanese American farmers who hosted a group of farmers from Japan. While completely ignoring the internment, the article describes these Japanese Americans as "[o]ur own loyal California farmers of Japanese ancestry," who offered their "friends" from Japan training on American farming as well as on American democracy. It claims that these Japanese American farmers are "transplanting freedom to Japan" and thus protecting the Japanese from Communist influence.[37] Within the context of the Cold War, the article effaces the internment experience while giving a positive spin to the Japanese American image. However, at least in the printed sources examined in this chapter, this type of article is outnumbered by those that directly mention the internment. While Simpson's argument seems credible to some extent, discussion of the internment was actually "present" in the mass media in the 1950s and 1960s.

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[37] Bob Fowler, "They're Transplanting Freedom to Japan," *Farm Journal*, March, 1956.

The 1970s and 1980s

Perhaps not surprisingly, the press continued printing critical pieces on the issue of Japanese American internment over the next two decades. The image of Japanese Americans as wronged citizens remained pervasive in the print media during this period, while the image as despised enemies completely disappeared.

There are ample examples of such magazine articles in these recent decades, but quoting a few is sufficient to prove these points. *Newsweek*, for instance, conveys another Japanese American success story in 1971. "Success Story: Outwhiting the Whites" reports Japanese Americans' achievements in business and politics, and praises them for their "drive for middle-class status." It describes Japanese Americans as "one of the country's most resourceful and least publicized minority groups," which not only have outshined other minority groups but have "outwhited the whites." "By any criterion of good citizenship," the article says, "Japanese Americans are better than any other group...including native-born whites."[38]

This article traces a history of anti-Japanese American discrimination on the West Coast and claims that the internment was the worst discrimination against racial minorities in U.S. history, except for slavery. It refers to the intense prejudice and discrimination the Issei and Nisei had encountered on the U.S. soil since the mid 1880s. "Many newcomers to the U.S. can claim to have faced similar hardship," the article writes, "but, except for the Negros [sic], no minority group has had to endure anything like what 110,000 Japanese Americans on the West Coast were forced to go through during World War II – mass roundup and internment for three years in a series of bleak

[38] "Success Story: Outwhiting the Whites," *Newsweek*, June 21, 1971.

detention camps." The term "relocation centers" is merely a euphemism, the article claims, and the internment is "now universally regarded as a wholly unnecessary and shameful act by the government," which was caused by "hysteria over Pearl Harbor, racism and greed for the rich farmland the Japanese owned in California."[39]

An article in the September 11, 1988 issue of the *New York Times Magazine* provides a detailed account of the internment and the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which President Ronald Reagan signed into law a month earlier. Predictably, the article also conveys the negative image of the internment. It describes the internment as "the wartime incarceration of ... Japanese-American citizens and Japanese resident aliens in concentration camps," "a grievous lapse in this country's cherished standards of liberty," and an "injustice." "Racism," "hysteria," and "false evidence" caused the internment. "It was a sorry time," the article laments. The 1988 legislation is significant, the article reads, because it provides monetary compensation and "an unprecedented apology by the United States Government."[40]

Summary

As discussed above, the image of Japanese Americans was transformed from one of despised enemies into one of wronged citizens. In the print media, this transition started before the end of the war. Although the former was prevalent in the wartime media, liberal journalists presented the latter even in the midst of war. The transition was completed by the end of the 1940s. From then on, the mainstream print media have

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[39] Ibid.
[40] John Hersey, "Behind Barbed Wire," *New York Times Magazine*, September 11, 1988.

conveyed exclusively the image of Japanese Americans as wronged citizens and the internment as a grave injustice.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

A careful investigation of the description of Japanese Americans and their wartime internment in high school history textbooks helps us understand their popular images in postwar American society. Not many scholars have analyzed the textbook's description of internment. For instance, James W. Loewen's *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong,* arguably the best-known monograph on American history textbooks, does not touch upon the issue of the internment. In *America Revised: History Schoolbooks in the Twentieth Century*, another well-known monograph on history textbooks, Frances FitzGerald provides an extended discussion of how textbooks examine oppressed minority groups. Studying textbooks' descriptions of racial/ethnic minorities such as Native Americans and African Americans, FitzGerald concludes that the "history texts now hint at a certain level of unpleasantness in American history." However, she touches on the internment of Japanese Americans very briefly – in only two sentences.[41]

Another monograph that provides a brief argument on the textbook's description of the internment is *Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany, and*

[41] Each of these sentences appears in a different part of the book. In her introductory chapter, FitzGerald writes that "[a]lmost all the present-day history textbooks note that the United States interned Japanese-Americans in detention camps during the Second World War." The other sentence appears in a chapter on the textbook description of the immigrants, where she points out that the textbooks of the day "describe certain of the 'problems' that minorities have faced in the United States," such as the internment. Frances FitzGerald, *America Revised: History Schoolbooks in the Twentieth Century* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), 9-10, 98.

the United States. In this book, Laura Hein and Mark Selden devote four paragraphs to the internment. According to them, early postwar textbooks presented the internment as "a military necessity conducted without bloodshed," whereas later ones depict it as "'shameful,' 'tragic,' 'war hysteria,' 'a grave injustice,' and 'disgraceful.'" More importantly, they argue this dramatic change in textbooks occurred in the 1970s and 1980s.[42] Departing from Hein and Selden's view, this chapter argues that the change actually occurred as early as the late 1950s. Furthermore, my own research does not find any evidence that suggests postwar history textbooks defend the internment.

To analyze the description of the internment in textbooks, the following pages especially focus on the terminology describing the relocation camps. Even though the official name for the Japanese American relocation camps was "the War Relocation Center," textbook references vary. Some textbooks refer to "relocation camps" or "relocation centers," both of which are neutral terms, while others refer to "internment camps," "concentration camps," or "prison camps," all of which are highly critical terms. The term a textbook chooses to employ often suggests the textbook's attitude toward the internment.

The chapter also focuses upon: the length of the textbook description; the textbook's explanation as to who was responsible for the internment policy, and what caused the internment. These points help us understand the trends in textbook depictions of the internment.

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[42] Laura Hein and Mark Selden, eds., *Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany, and the United States* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 36-37.

After analyzing textbook description of the internment, this chapter also briefly examines that of America's atomic bombing – another action by the U.S. government during the war against the Japanese, which caused controversy in American society. A comparison between these two descriptions reveals the uniqueness of history textbooks' discussion of the internment.

The 1950s and 1960s

Discussion about Japanese American wartime internment first appeared in high school history textbooks as early as 1956. Among sixty history textbooks under review here,[43] the earliest one that mentions the internment is the first edition of Thomas A. Bailey's *The American Pageant: A History of the Republic*, which was published in 1956 by D. C. Heath and Company. As one of the leading history textbooks for high school students, *The American Pageant* has long been used for United States History courses.

Bailey's textbook briefly, but critically, writes about the internment. In the section entitled "America in World War II," the Stanford University professor first touches on American national unity during the war. He portrayed the nation as united "thanks to the electrifying blow of the Japanese at Pearl Harbor," and therefore the United States did not have to impose strict controls upon civilians. Italian Americans, German Americans, and Communists were all supportive of the country's all-out war.

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[43] In order to discuss the textbook description of the internment in a comprehensive manner, I collected as varied textbooks as possible. I have studied five textbooks that Loewen examined in *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, plus I have scrutinized fifty-five other textbooks that he did not look into. Though incomplete, I think my selection of textbooks is broad enough to give us a general trend of the description. For bibliographical information regarding all of these textbooks, please see Selected Bibliography.

Bailey writes: "National unity was no worry ... There was no witch-hunting persecution of dissenting groups, as in World War I."[44]

Bailey considered the case of Japanese Americans, and deemed their treatment "a painful exception" to the United States' excellent civil rights record of World War II. Devoting an entire paragraph to this issue, he explained how "the Washington authorities" feared the mainland Japanese Americans might engage in sabotage for the Japanese Emperor, and decided to "herd them together in concentration camps" although two-thirds of the "victims" were American citizens. "This brutal precaution turned out to be unnecessary," he writes, because of the admirable loyalty and combat record of the Japanese-Americans.[45]

The American Pageant critically discussed the Japanese American wartime internment. Most importantly of all, Bailey referred to the War Relocation Centers as "concentration camps," a highly critical term for the centers. Although he does not mention Japanese-born Issei internees and therefore his attitudes about non-American citizens are unknown, he does describe Nisei American citizens as "victims" of the U.S. government's policy. Adjectives such as "painful" and "brutal" reinforce the critical tone of his text. Even though he gives "the Washington authorities" the grounds for putting Japanese Americans into the camps (i.e. the possibility of their sabotage), he eventually concludes that such treatments were "unnecessary." To say the least, Bailey does not defend the internment policy in *The American Pageant*.

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[44] Thomas A. Bailey, *The American Pageant: A History of the Republic* (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1956), 881.
[45] Ibid. The third edition of *The American Pageant*, which was published in 1966, states the same thing word for word. The fifth edition published in 1975 also uses the same wordings except for "the Washington top command," which is used instead of "the Washington authorities." For details, see: Thomas A. Bailey, *The American Pageant: A History of the Republic*, 5th ed. (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1975), 919.

Interestingly enough, Bailey treated the wartime internment as an exceptional case in terms of the wartime civil rights regulations in the Second World War. He argues, compared to the First World War, in which the Americans of German descent were harshly discriminated against, all the Americans fared relatively well at the home front and their civilian lives were not strictly restricted in the Second – except for the case of Japanese Americans. As we shall see, this description of the internment as an exception is fairly common among the textbook authors of the 1950s and 1960s. However, in more recent years the textbooks tend to focus more on the hardships many other minority groups suffered in the war, and as their focus shifts, the description of the internment as an exception gradually disappears.

A critical view of the internment also manifested itself in *Story of America*, a high school history textbook written by Yale University history professor Ralph V. Harlow. Published in 1957 by Henry Holt and Company, *Story of America* situates the internment in the context of wartime regulations. Harlow argues that, even though the Justice Department apprehended numerous pro-Nazi and Fascist activists under the wartime espionage and sedition laws, these arrests were "comparatively few in number for a country at war."[46]

However, he continues, "[o]ur record was seriously blotted ... when 110,000 Japanese-Americans (most of them born in the United States) were arrested and put in internment camps." Harlow touches on the interment briefly (he devotes only four sentences), but his depiction is highly critical and, in a sense, cynical. His textbook declares: "confining men and women – not for what they had done, but because their

[46] Ralph V. Harlow, *Story of America* (New York: Henry Holt, 1957), 511.

whole 'race' was under suspicion – looked like the kind of totalitarian practice we were fighting against."[47]

As is the case with Bailey's *The American Pageant*, Harlow's *Story of America* explains that the wartime internment was an exceptional case, or in his words, a "blot," on the United States' wartime civil rights record. Besides using the critical term "internment camps," in his short sentences he includes several accusations against the internment. He implies that the internment was a racist policy, the confinement of American citizens on the ground not of their misdeeds but of their race. In his eyes the internment even looked like a "totalitarian practice," against which the United States was fighting in the war. Here he seems to draw an analogy between the wartime internment and the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. Despite this critical tone, the explanation as to who was responsible for the internment policy is absent.

Another critical look at the internment appeared in Samuel Steinberg's *The United States: Story of a Free People*, which was published by Allyn and Bacon in 1958. In a section entitled "Building Morale and Tracking down the Disloyal," the Stuyvesant High School, New York City teacher first touches on the wartime regulations. He argues that World War II witnessed "less harsh treatment of persons who did not sympathize with the war" when compared with World War I.[48]

As Steinberg observed in his paragraph, the account of internment represented a disturbing aberration in an otherwise fine civil liberties record. He declares: "A serious violation of civil liberties was the treatment of Japanese-Americans. Fearing the

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[47] Ibid.
[48] Samuel Steinberg, *The United States: Story of a Free People* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1958), 568.

concentration of some 110,000 (many of whom were native-born citizens), the War Department herded them into relocation centers in the interior." In the next sentence he touches upon the Supreme Court cases of 1943, presumably *Yasui v. United States* and *Hirabayashi v. United States*, both of which upheld the constitutionality of the internment. He concludes the paragraph stating that, "With the exception of this unfortunate incident, the civil rights record of the government was good. We have a right to be proud of this record, which proved that, 'Our democracy can fight even the greatest of all wars and still maintain the essentials of liberty.'"[49] Again, the internment is presented as an exception to the U.S. government's good civil rights record.

Here Steinberg uses the relatively neutral term "relocation centers" and mentions the legality of the internment policy as of 1943 (interestingly, he does not mention the 1944 *Endo* case, in which the Supreme Court ruled that the War Relocation Authority had no authority to subject to its procedures a citizen whose loyalty was acknowledged). Therefore it is probably fair to conclude that his description of the interment is not as critical as the two previous authors. However, Steinberg admits that the internment was a "serious violation of civil liberties" and an "unfortunate incident."

The 1960s witnessed a growing number of high school history textbooks which referred to the Japanese American wartime internment. In addition to Bailey's *The American Pageant* and Steinberg's *The United States*, both of which kept printing the paragraph about the internment in the 1960s, other textbooks published by various publishers introduced the internment to students. These newer textbooks largely follow the previous textbooks' path, providing the critical views of the internment. Furthermore,

[49] Ibid. The 1964 edition of *The United States* says the same thing word for word.

unlike the 1950s textbooks, many refer to Japanese American troops and their valorous deeds during the Second World War.

One such textbook is Ruth W. Gavian and William A. Hamm's *United States History*, published in 1965 by D.C. Heath and Company. As its predecessors did in the late 1950s, Gavian and Hamm situate the internment within the context of wartime regulations of civilian life. In the section entitled "Preventing Disloyal Activities," the authors touch on Nazi-sympathizers in the United States who were rounded up and imprisoned by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

Their paragraph on the issue of Japanese American internment follows. First they explain the reason why the U.S. government relocated Japanese Americans:

> At the beginning of the war, many Americans in the Far West feared Japanese attacks by air and by sea. They also feared that Japanese-Americans...might be disloyal to the United States. To prevent race riots and as a precaution against possible disloyalty, the War Department persuaded the President to order all Japanese-Americans in the Pacific states removed to internment camps.[50]

They state that nearly two-thirds of those who were removed were American-born citizens.

Gavian and Hamm's explanation grows critical of the internment, insisting "[t]here was no evidence that the Nisei...were disloyal." Quoting "[o]ne authority on constitutional law," they described the internment as "the most drastic invasion of the

[50] Ruth W. Gavian and William A. Hamm, *United States History* (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1965), 733.

rights of citizens of the United States by their own government that has thus far occurred in the history of our nation." They briefly touch upon the Japanese American volunteer soldiers and conclude the paragraph: "Thousands of them fought bravely for the Untied States. After the war all were allowed to return to their homes."[51]

Echoing earlier works, Gavian and Hamm present the internment as an exceptional case to an otherwise exemplary wartime civil rights record. They state that conscientious objectors in World War II were treated more tolerantly than in the earlier wars, and the freedom of the press remained intact although newspapers adopted voluntary censorship and did not print news helpful to the enemy. They write that "[a]part from the internment of the Japanese, there was less interference with civil liberties than in World War I."[52]

The examples of critical attitudes toward the internment in the 1960s history textbooks are abundant. For instance, Boyd C. Shafer, Richard A. McLemore, and Everett Augspurger's *A High School History of Modern America*, the 1967 edition published by Laidlaw Brothers, reads the internment was "one sad case" in which "the country take[s] away the liberty of a large group of people because of their nationality or that of their ancestors. ... This was the greatest single taking away of the rights of people in American history."[53]

In the late 1960s, history textbooks tend to declare even more clearly that the internment was wrong and unjust. For example, Stephen H. Bronz, Glenn W. Moon, and Don C. Cline's *The Challenge of America*, published in 1968 by Holt, Rinehart and

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[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Boyd C. Shafer, Richard A. McLemore, and Everett Augspurger, *A High School History of Modern America* (River Forest: Laidlaw Brothers, 1967), 611.

Winston, calls the internment "a grave injustice" committed by the federal government. "Like the anti-German prejudice during World War I, this treatment of Japanese-Americans showed that fear sometimes strangles democratic ideals." They refer to Japanese-American soldiers who "fought heroically," and also to the large Japanese population in Hawaii who "supported the United States during the war."[54]

Two textbooks published by Houghton Mifflin in 1968 provide another example of this consensus. Howard B. Wilder, Robert P. Ludlum, and Harriett McCune Brown's *This is America's Story* explains the internment was a "great hardship on many loyal Americans of Japanese ancestry." Although "the wrong" was done to their families, "many Japanese-Americans served with honor in the United States armed forces during the war." Similarly, Richard C. Wade, Howard B. Wilder, and Louise C. Wade's *A History of the United States* writes that Japanese Americans were one group of people who suffered "a great injustice." Citing the words from the American Civil Liberties Union, they describe the internment as "the worst single wholesale violation of civil rights of American citizens in our history." Despite "this discrimination" many Japanese Americans served "with honor and courage" in the U.S. army.[55]

Among the history textbooks under review here, there are actually some textbooks published in the 1950s and 1960s that do not mention the internment. More specifically, textbooks published by the California State Department of Education, Harper and Brothers, and Harcourt, Brace and World do not even touch on the issue of the

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[54] Stephen H. Bronz, Glenn W. Moon, and Don C. Cline, *The Challenge of America* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), 711.
[55] Howard B. Wilder, Robert P. Ludlum, and Harriett McCune Brown, *This is America's Story*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968), 628; Richard C. Wade, Howard B. Wilder, and Louise C. Wade, *A History of the United States* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968), 741.

internment. For instance, the description of the internment is totally absent in the 1964, 1966, and 1968 editions of Lewis Paul Todd and Merle Curti's well-known *Rise of the American Nation.*

However, it is also true that, in all the textbooks examined here, there is no single evidence that any of them justify and defend the internment policy. As shown above, all the textbooks from the 1950s and 1960s that discuss the internment do so more or less critically, and as we shall see below, all the textbooks from the 1970s and 1980s do mention the internment, and they view it very critically.

The 1970s and 1980s

Maintaining their critical attitude toward Japanese American wartime internment, American high school history textbooks written in the 1970s and 1980s tend to provide more descriptive and detailed descriptions of the internment than those in the 1950s and 1960s. Instead of devoting only a paragraph to the topic, many textbooks in this period devote one page or more. For instance, Mitchell Okun and Stephen H. Bronz's *The Challenge of America* devotes an entire page to the issue. Published in 1973 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, the high school textbook provides a detailed story of the internment in six paragraphs.

As is the case with the older textbooks, in *The Challenge of America*, racism remained the central reason for the internment of Japanese Americans. In their interpretation, the relocation of Japanese Americans was an imprisonment, and the crime they committed was being Japanese. The entire section on the internment is entitled "An

Image of American Life: American Concentration Camps." In the first paragraph they observe: "Over one hundred thousand men, women, and children – two thirds of whom were American-born citizens of the United States – were imprisoned. The reason for their arrest and confinement was that they were of Japanese ancestry." [56]

Unlike the earlier textbook authors, who provide only vague explanations as to who should be responsible for the internment, Okun and Bronz assign responsibility. Although the U.S. Army claimed Japanese Americans were a threat to American national security, neither the Navy nor the F.B.I. felt confinement was necessary. Japanese Americans committed no acts of sabotage and offered no overt support to Japan. Despite all this, "President [Franklin Delano] Roosevelt ordered all persons of Japanese descent into concentration camps."[57] This interpretation echoes the one offered by Roger Daniels, who in 1971 claimed that President Roosevelt must bear principal responsibility for the internment.[58]

The authors emphasize the impact of half a century of discrimination against Japanese Americans for laying the groundwork for the internment. Japanese Americans were "continually harassed by the government," pointing out California's decision to segregate the Japanese in public schools in 1906; Theodore Roosevelt's Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907, which banned Japanese emigration to the United States; and the Californian law of 1913 that forbade Japanese from owning land. The authors continue: "Then, in 1942, without trials or any legal proceedings, Japanese-Americans, citizens and

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[56] Mitchell Okun and Stephen H. Bronz, *The Challenge of America* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), 691.
[57] Ibid.
[58] See: Roger Daniels, *Concentration Camps USA: Japanese Americans and World War II* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971); Roger Daniels, *Prisoners without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993).

aliens, were rounded up and put into 'detention centers' to wait while ten concentration camps were built."[59] Again, this idea resonates with Roger Daniels, who claims that the internment was merely a link of a long chain of anti-Asian racism on the West Coast.[60]

The Challenge of America devotes the last three paragraphs to the actual relocation and internment of Japanese Americans. Here the authors expose various inhuman treatments of Japanese Americans, such as the fact that one of these detention centers was a racetrack and they were kept in "horse-stalls and tar-paper barracks." Despite this "mistreatment," the authors write, many of the young men volunteered for the American armed forces although they "were not allowed to join regular troops until late in the war." *The Challenge of America* touches on the postwar period, writing that "[t]he Japanese-Americans were kept in the camps until 1945." "After the war was over, the government paid money to many of the prisoners for the loss of their property. But the Japanese received only 10 cents for each dollar they lost. And there were some losses that the government could never repay."[61] Presumably, these last two sentences refer to the Japanese American Claims Act of 1948, by which the U.S. government only partially repaid the financial loss of Japanese American internees.[62]

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[59] Okun and Bronz, *The Challenge of America*, 691.
[60] See: Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962); Daniels, *Concentration Camps USA*; Daniels, *Prisoners without Trial.*
[61] Okun and Bronz, *The Challenge of America*, 691.
[62] Roger Daniels denounces the Claims Act: "The Claims Act, although important symbolically, was palpably inadequate as a financial settlement for losses of real property, which was all that it covered. Congress eventually appropriated just $38 million to satisfy some 23,000 claims totaling $131 million. The Department of Justice moved with almost glacial slowness. Bill Hosokawa reported that the government spent over a thousand dollars in fighting one $450 claim. After seventeen years of litigation, during which most claims were settled for a few cents on the dollar, the financial claim was adjudicated in 1965." See: Daniels, *Prisoners without Trial*, 89.

These paragraphs are followed by three questions that high school students tackle in their classrooms:

> 1. What reasons may have motivated Americans to imprison the Japanese-Americans?
> 2. What were the Japanese-American "losses that the government could never repay." [sic]
> 3. What are the similarities and what are the differences between the concentration policies toward the Japanese-Americans and toward the American-Indians?[63]

These descriptions of the internment are far more detailed than the earlier textbooks, even though a few of Okun and Bronz's explanations are erroneous. For instance, some Japanese Americans were allowed to leave the camps even before 1945, and many of them resettled in the Midwestern states during the war years. However, few misstatements do not detract from their solid account.

Another detailed explanation of the internment manifested itself in *The American Adventure* by Social Science Staff of the Educational Research Council of America, who devote two paragraphs to the issue that are followed by discussion questions. *The American Adventure*, published in 1977 by Allyn and Bacon, writes that Japanese American citizens were "treated shamefully." Because of the "vicious prejudice against the Nisei," they were removed to relocation centers, which indeed were "prison camps set

[63] Okun and Bronz, *The Challenge of America*, 691.

up inland." For discussions, students are asked to ponder: "What civil liberties of Nisei did the government violate? ...Why were not the many Japanese Americans in Hawaii (in the war zone!) treated as the West Coast Nisei were treated? [sic]"[64]

A History of Our American Republic by Glenn M. Linden and others, published by Laidlaw Brothers in 1979, devotes two pages, eight paragraphs, to the issue of the internment. The textbook describes Japanese Americans as one minority group which was "subjected to especially severe discrimination" during World War II. "No other group of Americans suffered this type of imprisonment during the war. ... [A]s a group, Americans of German and Italian descent did not experience the hatred, suspicion, or imprisonment that the Japanese Americans were forced to endure." The textbook is especially descriptive of the camp life: "Living conditions in the internment camps were poor...Their new living quarters were often two small rooms that had once been used as stables. Located in the desert areas...the camps were subject to extreme temperatures. Sandstorms and snowstorms were frequent...[T]he internment camps were little better than prisons."[65]

James A. Banks and Sam L. Sebesta's *We Americans: Our History and People* provides an even longer description of the internment in three pages. Published in 1982 by Allyn and Bacon, *We Americans* speaks quite unreservedly about the American racism that caused the internment:

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[64] Social Science Staff of the Educational Research Council of America, *The American Adventure* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1977), C-34.
[65] Glenn M. Linden and others, *A History of Our American Republic* (River Forest: Laidlaw Brothers, 1979), 608-9.

> Most Japanese Americans were American citizens and loyal to the United States. But different groups called for the removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast. No one suggested that German Americans or Italian Americans be removed because they might be disloyal. Many people on the West Coast disliked the Japanese because they were not white.[66]

Banks and Sebesta continue: "President Roosevelt gave in to the military leaders who said that the Japanese Americans were a threat to the safety of the country." His order to relocate Japanese Americans was "an extreme form of discrimination" against them. They lost their homes, their jobs, their businesses, and most of their belongings, and were "imprisoned" in relocation centers.[67] The authors devote one half-page to a quote from former internee Estelle Ishigo's memoir, and another half-page to a biography of Japanese American Senator Daniel Inouye, who lost his right arm while serving the U.S. Army during World War II. Two pictures are inserted to the texts, one of which is the photo of an old Issei man awaiting the relocation, and the other a portrait of Senator Inouye.[68]

Of course, not all the textbooks in the 1970s and the 1980s manifest this tendency toward long, descriptive and detailed explanations of the internment. Indeed, some history textbooks still explain the internment only briefly, often for only one paragraph. For example, Howard B. Wilder, Robert P. Ludlum, and Harriett McCune Brown's *This is America's Story*, the fifth edition that was published in 1986, spends only five

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[66] James A. Banks and Sam L. Sebesta, *We Americans: Our History and People* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1982), 230.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid., 231-2.

sentences on the internment. Even in this brief paragraph, however, the authors describe the internment as a "great hardship" on Japanese Americans and state that "the wrong" was done to them, while using a somewhat vague term "special camps" to refer to the War Relocation Centers.[69]

However, perhaps more importantly, by the early 1970s even the most reluctant publishers published textbooks that addressed the wartime internment. Indeed, all the textbooks that were published after 1972 mention the internment, with no exception. For instance, Lewis Paul Todd and Merle Curti's *Rise of the American Nation*, which remained silent upon the internment in the 1950s and 1960s, refers to the issue for the first time in 1972. Like many other authors, Todd and Curti cast a critical eye on the internment.

Under the title "The Plight of Japanese-Americans," these two historians start their paragraphs on the internment somewhat apologetically. According to them, Americans were "genuinely fearful of a Japanese attack" on the mainland United States after Pearl Harbor. However, they soon grew critical. They write: "This fear was soon turned against the Nisei. As a result, most Japanese-Americans ... were forced to leave their homes and were taken to detention camps in other states, where they remained as virtual prisoners until the end of the war." There had never been any real proof of their disloyalty, and they indeed remained "loyal, patriotic American citizens" in spite of the

[69] Howard B. Wilder, Robert P. Ludlum, and Harriett McCune Brown, *This is America's Story*, 5th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986), 661-2.

"harsh, unfair treatment." When the war ended, Todd and Curti continue, "Americans regretted their unjustified actions against the Nisei."[70]

The other example of broadening discussion regarding the issue is shown in history textbooks in the State of California, where state review boards determine adoptions of textbooks. I have examined four *California State Series* textbooks. Among them, the earliest two textbooks – *America: Land of Freedom*, which was published in 1956, and *Story of the American Nation*, published in 1963 – do not mention anything about the Japanese American internment. However, the recent two – *We the People: A History of the United States of America*, published in 1972, and *Quest for Liberty*, published in 1973 – do touch on the issue of internment.

In both of the textbooks, the explanation is brief. *We the People*, for instance, outlines the internment in one concise paragraph:

> The war brought great hardship to one minority group, the Japanese-Americans. More than 100,000 Japanese-Americans lived on the West Coast. Most of them were citizens and were born in the United States. When war started with Japan, some people thought that the Japanese-Americans would be a danger to the country if they stayed on the Pacific Coast. The government moved all Japanese-Americans to relocation camps away from the coast. However, the Japanese-Americans stayed loyal to the American government. Some of them were allowed to serve in the armed forces during the war. After the war the

[70] Lewis Paul Todd and Merle Curti, *Rise of the American Nation*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), 735-6.

government made some payment to Japanese-Americans for the homes and other property they had lost.[71]

Except for the word "great hardship," the description is fairly plain. *Quest for Liberty*'s explanation is even briefer. It devotes only one sentence to the internment, describing it as "forceful and unnecessary."[72] Obviously, these descriptions in California textbooks are not as critical as other textbooks. This is predictable given the fact that the State of California was one of the most anti-Japanese states before and during the war. However, even these California textbooks do not defend the internment policy.

Another important change in history textbooks in the 1970s and 1980s is the context within which the internment is placed. Textbooks in the 1950s and 1960s often discussed the internment in the context of wartime regulation of civilian life and presented it as an exceptional case on America's otherwise good wartime civil rights record. While this theme still figures in more recent textbooks, since the 1970s more textbooks have tended to focus on other minorities' fate in the war years and situate the Japanese Americans' story within this context. As Frances FitzGerald suggests, this growing interest in minority issues reflects the rise of racial/ethnic consciousness in American society in the post-Civil Rights Movement period.[73]

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[71] David B. Bidna, Morris S. Greenberg, and Jerold H. Spitz, *We the People: A History of the United States of America* (Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1972), 330-1.

[72] June R. Chapin, Raymond J. McHugh, and Richard E. Gross, *Quest for Liberty* (Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1973), 576-7.

[73] Frances FitzGerald in 1979 points out that history textbooks began to shatter the image of a homogeneous American nation in the late 1960s and early 1970s. She demonstrates how African, Hispanic, and Native Americans entered the history textbooks in this period and changed the textbook's narrative of American history (although she also suggests that this change is not yet completed). She attributes this change to the Civil Rights Movement, which "raised profound questions about the national identity." For details, see: FitzGerald, *America Revised*, 73-105.

Interestingly enough, some textbooks published after the late 1970s present the internment not as the sole exception to the generally good war record, but as one of, indeed, the worst of many other racially discriminatory practices on the home front. One such textbook is Norman K. Risjord and Terry L. Haywoode's *People and Our Country*, published in 1978 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston. In a section entitled "Racial Problems," Risjord and Hywoode touch on African Americans who entered the military services and courageously fought in World War II. Then these authors refer to the plight of African Americans. "Despite the protests of black leaders," Risjord and Hywoode write, "they [black soldiers] were kept in segregated units. The Navy and the Marines used scarcely any blacks."[74]

Within this context of tragic racial problems, the Japanese American internment emerges. The authors write: "[t]he most tragic story of the home front war involved the Japanese Americans. It was a story in which unreasoning fear combined with racial bias to produce one of the sorriest spectacles of the times." Although Japanese Americans remained loyal American citizens and many of them served bravely in the armed forces, they were "put into detention camps," where they "lived like jailed convicts."[75]

Norman K. Risjord's more recent textbook, *History of the American People* published in 1986 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, also places the internment within the context of wartime racial problems. Besides Japanese Americans, Risjord introduces two other racial minority groups: African Americans in Northern cities and Hispanic Americans in the West. He provides a detailed explanation of racial tension between

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[74] Norman K. Risjord and Terry L. Haywoode, *People and Our Country* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978), 643.
[75] Ibid., 644.

African Americans and white Southerners, both of whom migrated north in search of job opportunities within war industry. In Detroit, white Southerners engaged in "wildcat 'hate' strikes" when African American workers were promoted to better paid jobs, while the influx of the black population into previously all-white areas provoked violence. This led to the 1943 race riot, in which twenty-five African Americans were murdered. Meanwhile, in Los Angeles and San Diego, both of which became the main supply bases for the Pacific War, Mexican Americans were "the last to benefit" from the war boom. Frustration of Mexican Americans was "evident in a dramatic rise in juvenile crime," Risjord writes, and Los Angeles became "a symbol of gangland crime."[76]

Again, Japanese Americans' plight is positioned within this context. Risjord described it as "the most tragic story of the home front," and viewed it as "a shameful case of injustice." According to him, the internment policy "originated in fear mixed with prejudice." Although the Supreme Court in 1944 ruled that the relocation policy was constitutional because of the military emergency, Risjord concludes, "it stands as a reminder that American ideals are not always reflected in American actions."[77]

Absent from these depictions of the internment is the impression that all Americans, except for Japanese Americans, fared relatively well at the home front and their civilian lives were not restricted. As discussed above, this type of impression is fairly common in the textbooks of the 1950s and 1960s. It seems that the way of understanding the American home front in the Second World War shifted somehow in the 1970s. However, the way of understanding the Japanese American internment

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[76] Norman K. Risjord, *History of the American People* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1986), 620.
[77] Ibid., 620-1.

remained unchanged; the image of the internment has always been negative in those textbooks since the 1950s.

The 1990s

The consensus regarding the Japanese American internment continued into the 1990s. Textbook descriptions of it in this period are as critical and detailed as earlier textbooks. One significant difference is that they include the discussion of the U.S. government's formal apology and monetary compensation of 1988 to Japanese American survivors.

A couple of examples should be sufficient to make these points. *America: The People and the Dream*, published in 1994 by Scott, Foresman and Company, devotes an entire page to the section "The Imprisonment of Japanese Americans." As with earlier textbooks, it starts with war hysteria which engulfed the West Coast after Pearl Harbor. It refers to the rumors about Japanese Americans' sabotage: "Although completely false, the rumors quickly led to widespread mistreatment of Japanese Americans, who found that banks refused their checks, and insurance companies canceled their policies." It places principal blame on President Roosevelt for the internment: "President Roosevelt gave in to public pressure and issued an executive order allowing the Army to move Japanese Americans to 'relocation camps' inland from the coast." As the result of this order, "many Japanese Americans suffered heavy losses" and had to endure the camp life, which "proved to be little better than prisons." In the last paragraph of the section, the textbook touches on the Civil Liberties Act of 1988:

> Americans now realize that the treatment of Japanese Americans during World War II was unfair and unnecessary. In 1988 the Senate voted to give an apology and a tax-free payment of $20,000 to each of the 60,000 surviving Nisei. While this action could not change the past, it did show a recognition that the past actions had been wrong.[78]

Another example can be found in *America's Story*, a high school history textbook published in 1997 by Harcourt Brace. The textbook referred to the internment as "terrible problems for Japanese Americans," and deemed the War Relocation Centers "prisons...Barbed wire fenced people in. Soldiers with guns guarded the camps to keep people from leaving." Quoting a former internee, it provides the actual voice of a victim: "Can you imagine the despair and utter desolation of all of us? Everybody was weeping, youngsters hanging onto parents, fears and terror all around."[79]

Atomic Bombing in History Textbooks

The sympathetic attitude toward Japanese American internees and the critical view of the internment in these history textbooks stand in sharp contrast with textbook descriptions of America's atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, another controversial legacy of the U.S. government in World War II history. Many textbooks

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[78] Robert A. Divine and others, *America: The People and the Dream* (Glenview: Scott, Foresman, 1994), 738.
[79] Richard G. Boehm and others, *America's Story* (Orlando: Harcourt Brace, 1997), 555-6.

that were critical of the internment often provided interpretations supporting the use of the nuclear bombs in World War II.

The decision to use atomic bombs is one of the most controversial issues surrounding the Second World War. While the prime policymakers in the war period have enthusiastically defended the use of bombs, since the end of the war historians have often argued that the bombs were unnecessary. Henry L. Stimson, who assumed the post of Secretary of War from 1940 to 1945, and James F. Byrnes, Secretary of State from 1945 to 1947, argued that the atomic bombs were necessary in order to end World War II at the earliest possible date and to save the lives of one million American GIs. Many veterans and historians have accepted this position as the correct one. They have argued that Japan was determined to fight against the United States to the end, therefore President Harry S. Truman had only two choices: the invasion of mainland Japan or the use of the atomic bombs. The former had to be avoided since it would cost enormous numbers of American casualties. The latter was the only way to make a quick end of the war. Barton J. Bernstein generically named this position the "orthodox." [80]

The "revisionists" have articulated a far more critical position on the decision to use the atomic bombs and questioned the claims put forth by Stimson and Byrnes. They contend that the nuclear bombs were unnecessary. Historians such as Martin J. Sherwin, Gar Alperovitz, and Ronald Takaki argue that Japan was already incapacitated by the long-running war. The trio argues that Japanese policymakers were eager to surrender before Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and Truman knew it. Revisionists believe that other

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[80] For the orthodox argument, see: Barton J. Bernstein, ed., *The Atomic Bomb: The Critical Issues* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1976).

alternatives, such as continued air-raids with conventional bombs, could have ended the war without the atomic bombs. Also, they conclude that the U.S. government's decision to drop the bombs was unwise since it left a negative legacy behind for future generations; the government should be blamed for its failure to consider postwar politics. Dismissing the orthodox arguments, the revisionists think that the bombs were used not to end the war swiftly and save American lives, but to intimidate the Soviet Union and tame Russians in postwar politics.[81]

While the revisionist view has been embraced by many professional historians since Alperovitz first set the framework in 1965, textbook explanations of atomic bombing have remained more or less orthodox for the entire postwar period.[82] For instance, *Story of America*, published in 1961, claims that the use of the nuclear bombs was "a military necessity." According to the textbook's orthodox view, even in 1945 the Japanese still maintained the strength of its army to continue their "brave and dogged" resistance. The invasion of mainland Japan, which was scheduled for early 1946, "would have cost hundreds of thousands of casualties." Thus, the textbook concludes, "the atom bomb ended the war quickly and undoubtedly saved countless lives, both American and Japanese."[83]

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[81] For the revisionist argument, see: Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam: The Use of the Atomic Bomb and the American Confrontation with Soviet Power* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965); Martin J. Sherwin, *A World Destroyed: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance* (New York: Random House, 1975); and Ronald Takaki, *Hiroshima: Why America Dropped the Atomic Bomb* (Boston: Back Bay, 1996).

[82] A former high school teacher Kathleen Woods Masalski confirms this point. In 2000 she writes "[e]ven today most American and world history textbooks fail to question the decision to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, asserting that the bombs were used solely to save American lives." See: Kathleen Woods Masalski, "Teaching Democracy, Teaching War: American and Japanese Educators Teach the Pacific War," in *Censoring History*, eds. Hein and Selden, 283.

[83] Ralph V. Harlow and Hermon M. Noyes, *Story of America* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961), 722.

The American Adventure, published in 1977, conveys the same story. Even after the island of Okinawa fell into the hands of the Allied Forces, the textbook argues, the Japanese were determined to "make a suicidal effort to defend their homeland and emperor." If this happened, both the Japanese and the Allies would suffer "fearful losses of life." The textbook continues: "President Truman at this point made an important decision that he believed would end the war quickly, thus saving hundreds of thousands of lives."[84] He ordered the use of the newly-invented atomic bombs.

History textbooks continue to assume the orthodox stance well into the 1980s and 1990s. Pauline Maier's *The American People: A History*, published in 1986 by D.C. Heath, claims that the use of atomic bombs was necessary. Referring to kamikaze, the volunteer suicides of the Empire of Japan, she argues: "The main effect of the kamikaze was to convince the Americans that if they invaded Japan itself, they would face fierce resistance." The invasion of Japanese mainland would cost "thousands of American lives," and obviously the United States should avoid it. The use of atomic bombs made that possible. Even though "thoughtful people have asked whether it was necessary to drop the atom bomb" since August 1945, Maier writes, "President Truman wanted above all to avoid the terrible cost in American lives that a land invasion would probably have entailed."[85] The 1994 textbook *America: The People and the Dream* also explains that the bomb saved lives and hastened Japan's surrender. The authors write: "Convinced that

[84] Social Science Staff of the Educational Research Council of America, *The American Adventure*, C-28.
[85] Pauline Maier, *The American People: A History* (Lexington: D.C. Heath, 1986), 636-7.

the use of the bomb would save American lives and force the Japanese to surrender, Truman ordered the atomic bomb to be dropped on Japan."[86]

Given the fact that all of these textbooks criticize the internment of Japanese Americans while defending the use of the atomic bombs, these textbooks' willingness to admit that the internment was unjustifiable and Japanese Americans were wronged is remarkable – or even surprising. Even in the 1990s, over forty years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, there seemed to be a wide gap between professional historians' revisionist attitudes and textbooks' orthodox explanations in the issue of atomic bombing. In sharp contrast, many textbooks had presented critical views against the internment even before a historian Roger Daniels first denounced the internment in his 1972 book *Concentration Camps USA: Japanese Americans and World War II.* There is no gap between historians' critical attitude toward the internment and textbooks' explanations of it. While the textbook descriptions of the atomic bombing show the long-lasting defensive posture of the American public on the issue, they underscore the radically contrasting fact that the image of Japanese Americans as wronged citizens quickly emerged after the war.

Summary

As shown above, American high school history textbooks almost always provide critical views of the Japanese American wartime internment. They often describe the internment as a grave injustice or a serious mistake, and Japanese Americans as wronged loyal citizens of the United States. Many textbooks use the highly critical terms such as

[86] Divine and others, *America*, 744.

"concentration camps" or "prison camps," suggesting that the internment was an unjustifiable action. Many textbooks explain that the combination of racism and the fear of Japanese Americans' disloyal activity caused the internment, but in the end they conclude that it was unnecessary. This critical attitude first appeared in some of these textbooks as early as the mid 1950s, and had become conventional by the end of the 1960s. Interestingly, none of the textbooks examined in this chapter has defended the internment, while the majority of them have defended the use of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Textbook description of the internment has changed over time. Recent textbooks tend to provide longer, more detailed explanations of the internment. They also tend to specify who was responsible for the internment policy; they often ascribe it to President Roosevelt, who in many textbooks' words "gave in" to the demanding army or the public pressure. In addition, the context within which these textbooks situate the internment has changed over time. However, these textbooks' critical stance toward the internment has always been the same.

While the close examination of these textbooks explains what textbooks said about the internment, and when they said it, it brings up two other important questions: whether a textbook was adopted or rejected for use, and how it was used in the classroom. Even if a textbook criticized the internment and sympathized with Japanese Americans, if a state/local school board disagreed with its stance and did not adopt it, that is a whole different story. Similarly, even if a school board adopted it, if a teacher did not spend time with his/her students going through the discussion of the internment, its words might not have a significant effect on the popular image of the internment.

Unfortunately this chapter is not able to answer these questions. Additional research needs to be done.

CHAPTER III

FILMS

In order to analyze the popular images of Japanese Americans and their wartime internment in postwar American society, this chapter focuses on the film representation of the internment. It examines five popular films, which were produced between 1951 and 1990. As we shall see in the following pages, all the films examined here present Japanese Americans positively; they are always portrayed as loyal, innocent people who are mistreated by the U.S. government. These films also present highly critical views against the internment; it is often depicted as a human tragedy, an injustice, and a grave mistake. These films do not adduce evidence that suggests the defense of the internment, nor do they show the image of Japanese Americans as a potentially dangerous enemy.

The 1950s

One of the two key films produced in the 1950s that represent a positive turning point in the image of Japanese Americans is *Go for Broke!*, the 1951 film produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM). The film deals with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT) of the United States Army, a unit composed of Japanese Americans who fought in Europe during the Second World War. Starring Van Johnson and Henry Nakamura, as well as actual 442nd veterans such as Lane Nakano and George Miki, it tells the heroic story of Japanese American Nisei enlisted men and their bravery.

Written and directed by Robert Pirosh, *Go for Broke!* begins with a scene of Camp Shelby, Mississippi in 1943, where the Japanese American unit is first formed and trained. Lieutenant Michael Grayson (Johnson), a white officer from the Texas 36th Infantry Division who just received a commission, is assigned to the 442nd RCT. Reluctant to command those soldiers with Japanese faces, Grayson asks for a transfer back to the Texas Division but his request is immediately turned down.

In April 1944, the 442nd RCT is sent to Italy. The Nisei enlisted men, clearly under-trained and ineffective at the beginning of the movie, have developed as real soldiers by the time they are dispatched. The unit fights courageously in Italy, losing some of its men, before it moves and joins the invasion of southern France. Upon the team's arrival in France, Grayson's request is finally accepted and he is transferred to the Texas Division, joining his old comrades. However, these Texans are soon trapped in France's Vosges Mountains, surrounded by enemy troops. Then the 442nd RCT is assigned one of the most difficult missions in the war – the rescue of the "Lost Battalion." These Japanese American soldiers again courageously fought and successfully accomplished the mission, making costly sacrifices in their own unit. The film ends with a scene in which the 442nd comes back to the United States and is awarded medals and decorations by the U.S. government for its deeds of valor.

At the core of this straightforward war drama is how the Caucasian officers' attitude toward their Japanese American men transformed through the combat experience. In the first half of the film, Grayson is constantly portrayed as a young lieutenant who has negative feelings toward his Japanese American men. His distrust of them is apparent, and he is clearly disappointed at his assignment in the 442nd RCT.

When he requests a transfer back to the Texas Division in Camp Shelby, he calls Japanese American soldiers "Japs." Answering Grayson, his superior officer at Shelby warns him: "They are not Japs. They are Japanese Americans, Nisei. ... They're all American citizens, and they're all volunteers. Remember that." Even after his initial request is rejected, Grayson keeps requesting a transfer again and again.

However, after seeing these Japanese American soldiers fighting in Italy, Grayson's attitude toward them has visibly changed. When his superior officer tells him about his transfer to the Texas Division, he does not look happy at all: with a frown on his face, the lieutenant looks surprised as well as saddened by his belated transfer. He tells his superior that he wanted to "visit" his old friends in the Texas Division but did not mean to transfer to it.

As intimacy between Grayson and his Japanese American men grows, he even starts to support them vocally. When Sergeant Wilson Culley (Don Haggerty), Grayson's anti-Japanese buddy from the Texas Division, curses at Japanese American soldiers and calls them "Japs" in a bar in France, Grayson is infuriated and tells him: "They are not Japs! They are Japanese Americans, Nisei." Culley, infuriated by Grayson's remarks, yells at Grayson and calls him "a Jap-sympathizer." Grayson punches Culley in the nose and knocks him out.

Somewhat ironically, Culley is later rescued, along with his fellow Texans, by the 442nd RCT in Vosges Mountains. Despite his strong hatred of Japanese Americans, once they find and rescue him, Culley instantly becomes very friendly to his lifesavers. These scenes clearly show Caucasians' sympathetic attitude toward Japanese Americans, and convey the film's overarching message that Japanese Americans are loyal American

citizens who have contributed to their country in the face of racial prejudice. Needless to say, their bravery and sacrifice have elicited their Caucasian fellows' sympathetic attitude.

Another important feature of the film is that it humanizes Japanese American soldiers in a very positive way. For instance, the 442nd RCT soldiers are always portrayed as very friendly and merry people. Hawaiian Nisei soldiers' lively dance and Hula music is repeatedly inserted into the film, with their somewhat exaggerated smiles. In a different scene in which those soldiers are taking a break in an Italian town, they generously give food and water to hungry local children. Italian civilians in the town first look surprised by the presence of these American soldiers with Japanese faces, but soon open up to them. By the time the unit leaves the town, these Japanese Americans and Italians are in a very friendly, party-like mood.

Another example of the film's efforts to humanize Japanese Americans is Tommy, a diminutive but courageous Nisei soldier played by Henry Nakamura. After his very first combat experience in Italy, he happens to adopt a pig, which appears unexpectedly from rubble. Tommy pets the pig and takes it along with him, from one battlefield to another, all the way to France. However, he eventually gives it away to a needy French family in order for them to eat it and survive the war. Tommy's soft expression as he is petting the pig, as well as his sad expression as he is giving it up, are touching. As these scenes show, the director's attempts to present Japanese American soldiers as amiable persons are everywhere in this ninety-minute film. The image of them as despised enemy is totally absent.

The internment camps are totally unseen in this film. However, the audience indirectly learns about the film's critical stance on the internment through Japanese American soldiers talking about the camp life. A conversation between the Japanese American soldier Sam (Lane Nakano) and Tommy at Camp Shelby is a good example. Sam, a Nisei from the West Coast, is preparing a package for his family living in the War Relocation Center in Arizona. Tommy, also a Nisei, apparently does not know much about the internment because he is from Hawaii, where the mass relocation is not implemented. Seeing Sam packing packets of salts in a box, Tommy is surprised and asks: "They [people in the camp] can't even get salts!?" Sam, who volunteered directly from the camp, explains the camp life for Tommy: "There is only one block in barracks that has toilets and showers." Tommy is upset and replies: "Barracks!? Is everybody all dwelling together?" Sam answers: "They've got partitions, separate for each family. My folks are lucky; only five families are inside there [in their barracks]."

These two young Japanese American men's conversation goes on, as if they are explaining to the audience what they are actually fighting for:

> Tommy: "[Does the U.S. government] treat you like that [in the camp]? It's hard to figure out why you've volunteered for the army."
>
> Sam: "We have to do something, so that we won't get a deal like that again."
>
> Tommy: "We'll show that Buddha-heads [Japanese Americans] are good soldiers, good Americans."
>
> Sam: "That's the idea. I hope it'll work. All we need is a casualty list."

These lines certainly present a negative image of the internment camps, Japanese Americans' anger toward the internment, and their determination to fight against the injustice not only in the European theater but also at home.

The movie reviews for *Go for Broke!* show that it received favorable notices from the mainstream media when it was first released in 1951. The *New York Times*, for example, reports that the film is "more than a tribute to the Nisei...this picture presents a forceful lesson in racial tolerance and friendliness." Without "an over-expense of preachy words," the article reads, the film aptly reveals and demonstrates "the loyalty and courage of a racial minority group, along with the normal human qualities of decency and humor inherent in these men."[87] Similarly, *Newsweek* praises the film as "a belated tribute to the Nisei who formed the 442 Regimental Combat Team," "another first-rate war film with an emotional appeal." The magazine especially welcomes the actual 442nd veterans' acting in the film because they "give this film a solid basis in honesty."[88] Any criticism or negative comments on the film are largely absent from these articles.

The other key film produced in the 1950s is *Bad Day at Black Rock*, starring Spencer Tracy, Robert Ryan, and Walter Brennan. Released in 1955 by MGM, this film was nominated for three Academy Awards in 1956 for Best Actor in a Leading Role (Tracy), Best Director (John Sturges), and Best Writing, Screenplay (Millard Kaufman). Although none of them won an Oscar for the film, Tracy won the Best Actor award at the Cannes Film Festival in 1955. Casting a critical eye on blatant racism and xenophobia in

[87] Bosley Crowther, review of *Go for Broke!*, directed by Robert Pirosh, *New York Times*, May 25, 1951.
[88] Unsigned review of *Go for Broke!*, directed by Robert Pirosh, *Newsweek*, May 28, 1951.

the rural American West, this suspense movie presents a favorable image of, and sympathetic attitudes toward, Japanese Americans.

The story mainly evolves around two privileged figures: a protagonist named John J. Macreedy (Tracy) and an antagonist Reno Smith (Ryan). On a day in 1945, only "a couple of months" after the end of World War II, Macreedy steps off the Southern Pacific train at Black Rock, a tiny desert town in the Southwest, on his way to Los Angeles. Macreedy, a World War II veteran who lost his left arm in combat in Italy, immediately notices the hostile atmosphere of this dusty town as people there greet this unwelcome stranger with cold glances and needling questions. They are not accustomed to a newcomer: it is indeed the first time the train has stopped at Black Rock in four years. Not only that, however; there is a dark secret in Black Rock that has made the townspeople xenophobic.

Macreedy has come to Black Rock looking for a man named Komako. Komako is a Japanese farmer who came to the town with his son Joe in 1941, just before the Empire of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. Spending the whole day searching for the Japanese farmer, Macreedy finds out that Komako no longer lives in the town. Even worse, he learns from townsmen Doc Velie (Walter Brennan) and Pete (John Ericson) that Komako was actually murdered. Smith, a cowboy and the boss in the little town, killed the Japanese farmer on the day after Pearl Harbor. The whole town covered up the murder case – the townspeople made up a story that Komako was sent off to an internment camp – and has kept it secret for four years.

Having discovered the town's secret, Macreedy is now in danger: Smith is seeking to take his life. Doc Velie and Pete help Macreedy escape from the town in the

night, but he is betrayed by Pete's sister Liz (Anne Francis), who tries to hand over Macreedy to Smith (Liz is later betrayed by Smith and killed). Macreedy, with his masterly judo skill, fights back against Smith and successfully captures him. The next morning, Smith and his cohorts are all arrested by the state police for the murder, and Macreedy leaves Black Rock for Los Angeles.

This psycho-drama conveys the favorable image of the Japanese/Japanese Americans, as well as the sympathetic attitudes toward them. For instance, it depicts Komako as a diligent Japanese farmer who was victimized by parochial, racist Westerners. Komako came to Black Rock looking to lease some farmland. Smith owned Adobe Flat, an arid piece of land located a few miles away from Black Rock. He leased the land to Komako, knowing that it was worthless for farming because there had never been any water on it. Aware that he was cheated by Smith, Komako kept digging a well on the waterless land – going down as deep as sixty feet – and struck a water vein. That only aggravated Smith, driving him to the rampage.

Similarly, the film portrays Komako's son Joe as a patriotic, brave American hero. After Macreedy found himself unable to get out of the town, he finally discloses his reason for visiting Black Rock. He tells Doc Velie and Pete that Joe was dead and buried in Italy: he fought as an American serviceman and died trying to save Macreedy's life. The U.S. Army awarded Joe a medal posthumously, and Macreedy came to the town in order to hand the medal to Joe's father Komako. Even though Komako and Joe are totally unseen in *Bad Day at Black Rock*, the audience learns these stories from Macreedy and others remembering these two persons of Japanese ancestry whose lives ended tragically.

Interestingly, the film constantly shows the dichotomy between righteous modernity in big cities and sinful backwardness in rural towns. Macreedy is always patient, rational and knowledgeable, symbolizing a force of enlightenment brought from a big city – Los Angeles. He arrives in Black Rock via streamliner, a symbol of modernity. Contrastingly, Smith is powerful but impatient, dictatorial and treacherous, symbolizing corruption and backwardness in the rural West. The old, dusty town of Black Rock itself, along with its wrecked cars and junk-like gas station, is also a constant reminder of backwardness in the area.

What is even more interesting is that Macreedy, the absolute good figure in the film, is always understanding and sympathetic to Japanese Americans while Smith, the ultimate villain, is always racist and therefore antagonistic and merciless to them. For instance, while Smith frequently calls Japanese Americans "Japs," Macreedy always refers to them as "the Japanese."

A conversation between these two leading characters at the gas station is very suggestive. After calling Komako "the lousy Jap farmer," Smith, in an irritable voice, mentions the Japanese Empire's "sneak attack" on Pearl Harbor and the Bataan Death March, and how these events inflamed him. Macreedy replies in an unemotional manner: "Did Komako make you mad?" Smith answers, "It's the same thing." He continues: "Loyal Japanese Americans. That's a laugh. They are all mad dogs. What about Corregidor, the Death March?" Macreedy looks a little annoyed, but he asks with a calm voice: "What did Komako have to do with Corregidor?" Smith immediately answers: "He was a Jap, wasn't he?" These lines convey the film's message that a rational person like Macreedy can, and should, rightfully distinguish innocent Japanese Americans in the

United States from the aggressive Japanese Empire. Moreover, this short dialogue implies that it was parochial rural Westerners like Smith who racially discriminated against Japanese Americans.

Smith's racism is even tainted by some other moral impurities: his own unproductiveness, inadequacy, and lack of self-control. For instance, in the dialogue scene with Macreedy, Smith laments that his town does not even have enough water. The audience, however, later realizes that Smith's Adobe Flat does have water. Smith simply was not diligent enough to find the groundwater vein, which Komako did successfully. In the same scene, Smith confesses that he tried to enlist in the Army the morning after Pearl Harbor, only to find himself turned down for physical reasons. Bitter and sore, he came back to Black Rock and immediately started drinking with his cohorts. After drinking for the entire day, they were, in Pete's words, "patriotic drunk," and ended up setting fire to Komako's house and shooting him to death. Smith's unproductiveness, symbolized by the story of water in Adobe Flat, and his inadequacy and lack of self-control, symbolized by his failure to enlist and the drinking episode, make a sharp contrast with the two Japanese Americans' moral purities – Komako's diligence as a farmer and Joe's bravery and patriotism as an enlisted man.

The very last scene in the film – Macreedy's departure – presents another positive image of Japanese Americans. Doc Velie sees Macreedy off at the train station, telling him that Black Rock was dying as a town but he hopes it can survive now. The doc asks Macreedy if he can have the medal that should have been given to Komako, saying "it might help the town come back." Macreedy, who in the previous scene describes the return of the medal to Komako as "one last duty to perform before I [Macreedy] resigned

from the human race," handed the medal to the doc. Here the medal becomes a sign of hope for Black Rock's rebirth: the town will be rebuilt on the memory of a Japanese American soldier who sacrificed himself for the United States. Furthermore, from Macreedy's words, the audience again learns how much he cares about his Japanese American comrade-in-arms.

The film won favorable coverage in the mainstream media for the actors' good performances and its interesting screenplay. The *New York Times*, for instance, describes the film as "a fine piece of ensemble acting." The article continues: "Its strength derives from its assembly of a whole group of vivid characters, each contributing an important measure to the development of a stark idea."[89] *Newsweek* magazine also praises the film for its screenplay and direction, reporting that Sturges's "drama is as cool as a knife blade." The magazine sums it up as "[t]hat rare but rewarding thing, an 'intelligent' Western."[90] Critical or skeptical comments on the portrayal of Japanese Americans in the film are totally absent from those reviews.

The 1970s

To the best of my knowledge, no popular films in the 1960s deal with Japanese Americans or their wartime internment. However, the 1970s witnessed two popular television movies addressing the issue. As in the case of *Go for Broke!* and *Bad Day and Black Rock*, these newer movies convey the positive image of Japanese Americans and

[89] Bosley Crowther, "Minor Characters: Some of the Lesser Performers Stand Out in a Couple of New Films," review of *Bad Day at Black Rock*, directed by John Sturges, *New York Times*, February 6, 1955.
[90] Unsigned review of *Bad Day at Black Rock*, directed by John Sturges, *Newsweek*, February 21, 1955.

the negative image of the internment. However, unlike these older movies, in which Japanese American internees and their camps are invisible, the newer ones tackle the issue more directly than their predecessors of the 1950s, putting the internees and camps on the screen.

If Tomorrow Comes, a television movie produced in 1971 by Aaron Spelling Productions, is one of the two movies. Written by Lew Hunter and directed by George McCowan, *If Tomorrow Comes* is a tragic love story between a young Caucasian American woman and a Japanese American man in California in the eve of the Pacific War and the internment. Despite its simple, straightforward story line, the movie tackles the delicate problems of Californian's local prejudice against people of Japanese ancestry as well as Japanese Americans' allegiance to the United States. Starring Patty Duke and Frank Liu, the movie offers a harsh criticism of the internment, while demonstrating the importance of mutual tolerance of other racial groups.

The movie starts when the heroine Eileen Philips (Duke), the daughter of the local stationmaster, has moved to California from Oklahoma with her family in 1941. While Eileen explores her new town, the white American teenager wanders off into a nearby Japanese community, where she meets a young Nisei man named David Tayaneka (Liu), a son of a farmer. David instantly falls in love with Eileen, who is first afraid of having a relationship with a Japanese American man but soon begins to love David. They decide to get married after dating a couple of months, even though they have been fully aware that their parents will never be willing to accept their interracial marriage.

It is the morning of the Day of Infamy when Eileen and David secretly hold a wedding ceremony, without their parents knowing about it. A priest at the wedding

discourages Eileen from becoming a wife of Japanese American man, saying that "it is especially difficult when you have a burden of other people's prejudice." However, Eileen adheres to her resolution.

Immediately after their marriage, however, the entire town is caught up in a strong anti-Japanese atmosphere. The outbreak of the war and the subsequent decision of the U.S. government to relocate all the people of Japanese ancestry cause a serious break between the two families. Eileen's anti-Japanese father injures David's father, and her brother kills David's cousin. David retaliates against Eileen's brother, ending up killing him accidentally. Although Eileen and David still keep an intimate relationship, they gradually lose hope for keeping their marriage. Eileen attempts suicide, but her father saves her. David, erroneously believing that Eileen has died, follows her and commits suicide. The movie ends right before the mass relocation starts.

This Romeo-and-Juliet type of tragic love story harshly criticizes the wartime internment, presenting the images of Japanese Americans as wronged American citizens who are innocent and loyal to the United States. Needless to say, the story line itself is a harsh criticism of racism and the internment. The wartime relocation of Japanese Americans is the determining factor to bring the lovers to destruction (Eileen, indeed, attempts suicide the day after she sees the notice of relocation). If Japanese Americans had not been forced to relocate, Eileen and David probably would not have committed suicide.

Another example of the image is the movie representation of David's father and his cohorts. David's father, an Issei farmer and a World War I decorated veteran fighting for the United States, is arrested for no other reason than being Japanese. As he is being

relocated to a detention center with other Japanese arrestees on a military truck, one of them stands up and raises his voice: "Mr. Sherriff, you listen. My son voted for you. I gave money for fight to Russia. Russia, not to the United States of America. We are loyal; we are all loyal to America." Then the man starts singing God Bless America. The other arrestees soon join him.

The movie's portrayal of David's mother reinforces the image of the internees as wronged innocent people, and conveys a harsh criticism of the internment. Completely traumatized by her husband's arrest and then the relocation notice, she is suffering considerable psychological damage when Eileen visits her on Mother's Day. David's mother looks stunned and her eyes are wandering as if she cannot see Eileen, who is sitting right in front her. Out of her mind, she mumbles: "My life, my home, my children, and me... We've made it since years back. First, my man [was taken away from me]... Who would tell us the next one? I'm so afraid." Clearly shocked and upset, Eileen harshly criticizes the U.S. government's internment policy when she gets back home. She shouts at her father: "Hitler is doing exactly the same thing to Jews!"

Interestingly enough, while *If Tomorrow Comes* critically portrays the internment as a human tragedy, the movie appears to pose the possibility of racial tolerance and mutual forgiveness between Caucasians and Japanese Americans. For instance, when Eileen's father raids David's home with other local Caucasian males after Pearl Harbor, David's father is stoned and seriously injured. However, David forgives Eileen and her father because he was not the leader of the mob. Hate crimes targeting Japanese Americans continue. After David's cousin's livestock is killed by local people, the cousin himself is murdered by Eileen's brother. David, finally enraged, avenges his

cousin on Eileen's brother, only to kill him accidentally. However, this time Eileen forgives David for it was an accident. Moreover, when David is accused of the murder, a local court judge acquits David. The judge declares in his statement: "Those close to the deceased will not find revenge in my decision. They must take soreness in the unfortunate truth, and seek whatever forgiveness can be found in their hearts."

Then how did the mainstream media evaluate this television movie? Although the movie did not attract a lot of national attention, it did receive regional notice in California when it was first aired on the ABC network on December 7, 1971, on the 30th anniversary of Pearl Harbor. For instance, the *Los Angeles Times* welcomes the movie as "a worthy, painful reminder of the fate of the Japanese-Americans during World War II." The newspaper article admits the tragic nature of the internment, reporting that "[t]he mistreatment of the Japanese-Americans...remains the prime example of how very rapidly the constitutional rights of minority group citizens can be stripped away and how with equal speed racism can infect even 'decent' people."[91]

Interestingly enough, the positive image of Japanese Americans as well as the negative image of the internment even manifest themselves in the review article. Kevin Thomas, a staff writer of the *Los Angeles Times*, praises not only Frank Liu for his acting as David, but also Japanese Americans as a whole for their resilience in the postwar society. Thomas writes: "David speaks of the self-discipline and patience that

[91] Kevin Thomas, "TV Review: World War II Drama Retold," review of *If Tomorrow Comes*, directed by George McCowan, *Los Angeles Times*, December 7, 1971.

characterize his people [Japanese Americans], and truly they have triumphed over grave injustice. But the lesson of their plight must never be forgotten."[92]

The 1976 television movie *Farewell to Manzanar* goes even further than *If Tomorrow Comes*. Produced by Korty Films and Universal Studios, *Farewell to Manzanar* becomes the very first popular movie that actually shows the life inside the barbed-wire. Based on Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston's identically titled novel, director John Korty focuses exclusively on the Wakatsuki family's three year internment at the Manzanar War Relocation Center, one of the ten camps that was located in inland California. The movie is highly critical of the internment, projecting the image of the internees as wronged innocent people whose life has been destroyed by the U.S. government.

The movie begins in a scene with adult Jeanne Wakatsuki (Nobu MacCarthy) visiting the Manzanar War Relocation Center site three decades after the end of the war. Looking at the remnants of the camp with her Caucasian husband and her children, she recalls her girlhood in the camp. Then, the movie goes back to pre-Pearl Harbor days.

In the early 1940s, Jeanne's Issei father Ko Wakatsuki (Yuki Shimoda) is a successful fisherman. He lives in Santa Monica, California with his Issei wife Misa (Nobu MacCarthy, double role), his Japanese mother "Granny" (Mitsu Yashima), and his children Teddy (Clyde Kusatsu), Richard (James Saito), Chiyoko (Akemi Kikumura), Alice (Momo Yashima), Calvin (Vernon Kato), and young Jeanne (Dori Takeshita), all of whom are American-born Nisei. The Wakatsukis maintain a close relationship not only

[92] Ibid.

within the family but also with other Caucasians – only until the Japanese Empire's attack on Pearl Harbor ruins their life.

Soon after Pearl Harbor, Ko burns all the Japanese-made products he owns, including a Japanese flag, in order not to be suspected of being a Japanese sympathizer. Despite all his trouble, Ko is soon arrested by the FBI. The Wakatsuki family now must relocate to an inland camp without Ko. They have to give away the fortune they have accumulated because they are allowed to bring only what they can carry in the camp. Not knowing where they are being transported, the family spends an uneasy day in a bus – and arrives in Manzanar, a newly-built barbed-wired community in the Mojave Desert.

The camp life in Manzanar is a disaster when they first arrive. Dust, wind, cold, and the lack of privacy and adequate sanitary accommodation make the life there difficult. All the internees get sick during the first week of Manzanar. However, the internees work hard to improve their lives in the camp, and the material standard of living indeed gets better as time goes by. Meanwhile, their mental lives seem only to deteriorate. The camp community is soon divided into factions, often along the generational line but sometimes within the same generation as well. A pro-Japan Nisei group riots against camp administration and pro-American Nisei leaders, only to bring chaos to the camp community.

The Wakatsukis are no exception to this internal division. Their Nisei children soon leave their Issei mother and grandmother in order to live with their Nisei friends in a different barracks within the same camp. Teddy and Richard often argue with each other over their political stance on the United States government. Even after their father Ko returns from an FBI detention center and rejoins his family, their family ties cannot be

easily restored. Both Teddy and Richard eventually declare the allegiance to the United States and volunteer for the U.S. army; Richard is later killed in battle. However, all other family members survive the camp. The movie ends with the scene with the Wakatsukis leaving the camp immediately after the end of the war.

Through Japanese American characters accusing the U.S. government of its decision to relocate all the people of Japanese ancestry, *Farewell to Manzanar* frequently presents highly critical views of the internment and racism that caused it. For example, when the Wakatsuki family first hears the rumor that they may be removed from the western states, Misa, Chiyoko, Teddy, and Richard discuss the anti-Japanese sentiment surrounding them, fully aware of the unjustifiable racist nature of the relocation:

> Chiyoko: "Maybe it'll be safer, Teddy. People hate us this much. We might be better off going inland, like the government says."
>
> Richard: "But why just us? What about Italian Americans? What about German Americans? Why don't they have to move?"
>
> Teddy: "Because it's not the same thing, Richie."
>
> Richard: "Why? Isn't it the same thing?"
>
> Misa: "Look at the mirror, Richie. We can change our names, but we can never change our faces."

Contrary to the Wakatsukis, who apparently accept the injustice with the feelings of frustration, resignation, and despair, some Nisei figures remain enraged with the government throughout the movie. For instance, on a bus heading to Manzanar, a

decorated Nisei World War I veteran named Joe Takahashi (Seth Sakai) angrily states that he is a loyal American citizen: "I was born here [in the United States]. I fought for this country. I've paid taxes." Teddy, who happened to ride in the same bus with Takahashi, teasingly replies: "Well, you don't look like an 'American' to me!" Takahashi blasts: "What's the matter with you, people? Don't you realize what they're doing to us is outrageous?"

Similarly, a Japanese American man named Fukimoto (Mako) harshly criticizes the U.S. government. In his speech at the Manzanar auditorium, he appeals to his fellow internees, with his eyes full of tears:

> I've been a citizen of this country, all my life. I used to love this country. I tried very hard to be a good American. But I see now that this country doesn't want me, it doesn't want any of us. They used Pearl Harbor as an excuse to take our land, our home, and then they put us here in prison. And before this prison, my mother, my father, and I was [sic] thrown in horse stalls. Horse stalls... My mother came out of there, paralyzed from a stroke. She can no longer talk. We carry her now. How can we deal with the government that does that to our people?

Along with the accusations against the U.S. government, the image of the internment as inhuman treatment toward innocent people constantly emerges throughout the movie. The movie, for instance, repeatedly likens the Japanese American internees to domesticated animals in order to emphasize the inhumane condition of Manzanar. For

example, when Misa first arrives in Manzanar and sees unsanitary bathrooms, she laments: "We can't live like this. Animals live like this." Similarly, outraged by the government demanding allegiance to the United States from the internees, Joe Takahashi states: "[the loyalty oath is] the final insult. They penned us up like cattle, and then ask us declare the loyalty."

In *Farewell to Manzanar*, evacuation tags are also used as a symbol of the inhuman treatment that the internees went through during internment. Throughout the movie, the camera often zooms in on the number tags, which all the internees are forced to wear. When the Wakatsuki family abandons their home and waits for the bus to Manzanar, for instance, the narrator, adult Jeanne, tells us that all the people are tagged just like their "suitcases." An internee named Zenihiro is always wearing the tag for the entire period of his life in Manzanar. In the scene with him leaving the camp in 1945, the narrator once again refers to the tag. She states: "For three years, Mr. Zenihiro had worn his evacuation tag as a kind of badge, a symbol of our imprisonment. Finally, he was able to leave it behind."

The story of Ko Wakatsuki is just another example of the image of the inhuman treatment in the camp. Ko, a wealthy fisherman before the internment, is portrayed as a dignified and confident man when he is arrested by the FBI for being Japanese. When the FBI agents come to his house soon after Pearl Harbor, Ko shakes off their hands and does not allow them to touch his body, as he refuses to be treated like a criminal. When a young interrogator in the detention center asks him which country – the United States or the Empire of Japan – he wants to win the war, he fearlessly answers: "When your

mother and your father are having a fight, do you want one to kill the other? Or do you just want them to stop fighting?" The interrogator cannot reply even a word.

However, after going through all the interrogations and then the camp life in Manzanar, his grand, mature character totally disappears and a hysterical, explosive one replaces it. He develops alcoholism and becomes violent as he fights back against the sense of outrage and humiliation he feels in the camp. The camp experience literally breaks him. Toward the end of the movie, Ko confesses to Takahashi, who visited him after his son Richard died in combat: "I no longer know what it feels like to be angry. I feel nothing...I am dead too...I can no longer pretend. I have no control over my life, or my family's lives. I wish I could go crazy, out of this world." Adult Jeanne's narration sadly states that her father's life "is really ended in Manzanar," even though he actually lived for ten more years after the end of the war. This change in Ko's character symbolically indicates the harm internment can do to a man's life.

The movie suggests that the camp's dehumanizing force hit the elderly Issei generation more seriously than it did the younger Nisei generation. Ko's mother dies soon after she relocates to the camp. Adult Jeanne narrates: "Granny died in the camp, not from particular illness, not even from old age, but from a sense of loss that we all felt and constantly fought." The Nisei generation's resilience appears in contrast. In the movie it is these younger Japanese Americans who manage the sense of loss and humiliation, reconstruct their community, and make the camp life at least bearable. The movie occasionally depicts their life in Manzanar even as apparently fun and happy, throwing in scenes with Nisei dancing and singing energetically in the camp auditorium.

However, the narration once again reminds the audience that the camp experience also casts a long-standing shadow on the Nisei generation. The narrator adult Jeanne, who was a little girl when interned in Manzanar, looks back on her own life and says: "[while my father Ko's life is ended in the camp,] in a strange way, my own began there, shaped by the barbed-wire of those fences and scarred by the sense of guilt over a crime I've never committed." She confesses she had been afraid of remembering her girlhood in the camp and her old feelings. She had avoided talking about her camp life and remained silent for decades, just like many other Japanese Americans in her generation. Now finally being able to face the dark past, at the very end of the movie Jeanne narrates: "It took me thirty years to reach the point where I could face all that had happened to us at Manzanar; to find pride, when there seems to be only shame and humiliation; to say what you can only say when you finally come to know a place – 'Farewell.'"

Contrary to *If Tomorrow Comes*, which received little attention but obtained a good review from the media, *Farewell to Manzanar* drew a great deal of media attention but also received considerable numbers of bad reviews. Not only the mainstream media but also Japanese American communities in the West Coast saw the movie with mixed feelings. While some Japanese Americans embraced the movie,[93] others lambasted it. Interestingly, those who criticized the movie thought that it did not deal with racism deeply enough.

For instance, the *San Francisco Examiner* published an opinion article by Raymond Okamura, a former internee and a Japanese American writer who was highly

[93] For example, Edison Uno, a Japanese American community activist in the San Francisco bay area, welcomes *Farewell to Manzanar* as "a step forward not only for Japanese Americans, but for the entire nation" because "15 to 20 million people will be exposed to the Japanese-American wartime experience." For details, see: Susan Yim, "Manzanar Remembered," *Star-Bulletin*, March 11, 1976.

critical of the movie. He argues that the movie distorts the historical reality. According to Okamura, for example, the movie's opening scene of a joyous racially-integrated party at the Wakatsuki home implies Japanese Americans were well accepted by Caucasians before Pearl Harbor. However, "that was generally not the case," as Japanese Americans were largely excluded from the mainstream of American society well before the start of the war. The issue of white racism is "conspicuously absent from the film," and "this omission is as dishonest as removing anti-Semitism from a movie about the Nazi extermination camp."[94] The *New York Times* similarly criticizes the movie, quoting the Chinese American playwright Frank Chin's words that director John Korty "lovingly removed white racism from the issue of concentration camps and the everyday mind of Japanese-America."[95]

However, no one criticized the fact that the movie does not defend the internment or does not show Japanese Americans as potentially dangerous enemy aliens. The movie was targeted by critics because it didn't portray Caucasians as racists, or because its accusation against white racism was too mild. Even for those critics, the movie's critical stance on the internment is appropriate. Therefore, by this time there seems to be a consensus that the internment was an injustice and a tragedy, and Japanese Americans were mistreated by the U.S. government.

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[94] Raymond Okamura, letter to the editor, *San Francisco Examiner*, March 11, 1976.
[95] John J. O'Connor, review of *Farewell to Manzanar*, directed by John Korty, *New York Times*, March 11, 1976.

The 1990s

Not surprisingly, films released in the last decade of the 20th century follow their predecessors' path. The films in the 1990s also convey the negative image of the internment and sympathetic attitudes about Japanese Americans. Their portrayal of the camp life becomes more detailed.

Come See the Paradise, released in 1990 by the 20th Century Fox, is arguably the best example of such films. Director Alan Parker, whose previous work, *Mississippi Burning* (1988), tackles the problem of racial discrimination against African Americans during the Civil Rights Movement, has cinematized the issue of Japanese American internment through a love story of a white American male and a Japanese American female. Starring Dennis Quaid and Tamlyn Tomita, the film also conveys a critical image of the internment, providing detailed descriptions of Japanese Americans' camp life.

The first half of the film deals with a Japanese American community in the prewar period. In the Little Tokyo section of Los Angeles in 1936, Jack McGurn (Quaid), an Irish American labor unionist who fled from New York, instantly falls in love with a Nisei woman named Lily Kawamura (Tomita). Lily, born and raised in the United States, is thoroughly American, just like her brothers and sisters. Jack and Lily immediately choose to marry, but a state law of California forbids marriage between Americans and persons of Japanese descent. Over Lily's parents' objections, they run away and get married in Seattle, Washington, where intermarriage is legally accepted.

The latter half of the film is mostly devoted to the Kawamura family's life in one of the War Relocation Centers. When the Empire of Japan attacks Pearl Harbor, Lily is

in Los Angeles with her family, away from her husband Jack, who is at the time imprisoned in Seattle for his involvement in a local union movement. Upon President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's approval of Executive Order 9066, Lily and her family members are forced to leave their home in Little Tokyo. They head first for the Assembly Center, which is indeed a racetrack where they are forced to dwell in a horse barn for two months, and then for the War Relocation Center, a remote habitation of wooden barracks in a dusty desert. Jack, who was drafted into the army, somehow locates his wife and family-in-law, visiting them in the camp several times during the war years before he gets into a different type of trouble – this time with the army for his absence without leave. Shortly before the end of the war, the Kawamura family leaves the camp for Florin, California. The film ends when Lily is reunited with her husband at a train station in Florin.

Even though the story line is very simple and straightforward – an interracial couple nurtures their love in the face of great difficulties – the description of Japanese Americans' life in the internment camp is very detailed and nuanced in the film. For instance, when the Kawamura family is ordered to report to a train station, Mrs. Kawamura (Shizuko Hoshi), the Issei mother of Lily, burns her letters and her children's school reports, so that no one else will have the mementoes she cannot take along. On the other hand, the Kawamura sisters angrily smash Japanese records. There is no simple-minded sentimentality in these scenes, but a mix of anger, resignation and desperate hope.

The film especially focuses on the dehumanizing nature of the camp life. Among others, the story of Mr. Kawamura (Sab Shimono), the Issei father of Lily, offers keen

historical insight. Just like Ko Wakatsuki in *Farewell to Manzanar*, Mr. Kawamura is arrested by the FBI on suspicion of fifth column activities immediately after Pearl Harbor. He is brought back to his family at the Relocation Center after months, but then the Japanese Americans in the camp regard him with suspicion because they mistakenly believe that he leaked inside information to the FBI. The loss of his dignity and isolation from the entire camp community seriously crush his spirit, leaving him fatally ill in bed. Looking back on the war years, later in the film Lily refers to her father's death in the camp: "He had lost his shirt so many times, [but] it never mattered to him. 'Shikataganai [I cannot help it],' he'd always said. But once you lose your self-respect... only then do you truly have nothing."

The incarceration affected not only the Issei but also the Nisei, and the film eloquently points that out. One of Lily's brothers refuses to sign a loyalty oath and begins wearing a headband with the Rising Sun on it. He bitterly declares: "We stopped being Americans the moment they put up the barbed wire." Becoming a Japanese sympathizer, he later chooses to be repatriated to Japan – in exchange for American POWs – even though he has never been to Japan and barely speaks Japanese. Contrastingly, another of Lily's brothers joins a Japanese American unit of the U.S. Army, only to die in the European theater. The portrayal of these internal divisions in a Japanese American camp community is historically accurate.

Many scenes from the film very explicitly present an image of Japanese Americans as wronged American citizens and the internment as a grave mistake and injustice. For instance, in a scene with Lily and her sisters arguing with camp officers over the law that prohibits Issei from working in the camp, Lily, clearly enraged with the

law, yells at the officers: "Don't talk about the law. What law protects innocent citizens from being locked up for no crime?" In response to the officers who still try to enforce the "camp rule" upon her Issei mother, Lily once again roared at them: "Camp? You call this a camp? This is a goddamn outdoor jail!"

Just as Eileen does in *If Tomorrow Comes*, Caucasian character Jack also presents the image of the internment as a grave mistake. In a scene in which he is cross-examined by an army officer about his absence without leave, he calmly states that he thinks the internment of Japanese Americans is wrong. In his words, the internment is "a God-awful mistake" and "unconstitutional." Jack, who is conversant with American laws and the Constitution through his experience as a union activist, continues: "They [Japanese Americans] had their rights taken away from them. The Nisei who were born here are American citizens." He goes so far as saying that he has "pro-Japanese sympathies."

These words from Jack are noteworthy in that the character does use the word "mistake" and "unconstitutional." As discussed above, the older films do take, and explicitly voice, their highly critical stance on the internment, but they do not go so far as to actually say the internment was a "mistake" and "unconstitutional." Given the fact that *Come See the Paradise* was produced in 1990, two years later than the passage of the redress bill, the political atmosphere of the time probably allowed the film to do that.

In the film, the camp life is sometimes portrayed as an apparently pleasant time. Typical is the scene of a dance party or beauty pageant in the camp, filled up with lively Jazz music and beaming smiles of internees. However, Lily's narration sadly resonates, as if she is warning the audience not to be too optimistic: "Our lives had changed completely [in the camp], and we spent our whole time pretending they hadn't. ... We all

wanted so badly to have a life here. It's a beautiful country, if only you have eyes to see it. But suddenly we all felt like a blind man, peeping through a fence." Another narration of hers states: "We had gone through the worst. We had lost everything we owned and everything we loved. It wasn't possible to lose anything more."

It seems that the film was received favorably by the media. In her review for the *New York Times*, Caryn James praises the film for its powerful screenplay written by Allan Parker. The article reads: "Mr. Parker has attached his themes so securely to the lives of these individuals that they carry the weight of a horrifying period in American history without suggesting any pretension on the film maker's side...The deep sorrow and controlled anger of '*Come See the Paradise*' make its attack on bigotry all the more forceful. The heavily ironic title is the single overdone element in this restrained and moving work." James points out that adding Jack's political activism to the plot "emphasizes the idea that social injustice is part of the country's fabric." She gives the actors and actresses a high mark for their strong, determined presence in the film. She concludes: "The rage that burns just beneath the surface of '*Come See the Paradise*' speaks eloquently to dreams of freedom that were lost and to love that survived."[96]

Summary

As discussed above, all the films examined in this chapter project the image of Japanese Americans as wronged innocent Americans who are loyal to the United States, and the image of the wartime internment as a grave injustice. These images appeared in

[96] Caryn James, "When a Population Was Victimized at Home," review of *Come See the Paradise*, directed by Alan Parker, *New York Times*, December 23, 1990.

these films as early as 1951. Even though actual scenes of the internment and internees are unseen in the films of the 1950s, this chapter shows that these images are still presented in those early films, only indirectly but very clearly. There are some recurring patterns in these films: Issei men being arrested by the FBI for being Japanese, and their wives being worn out; evacuation tags; dust, wind, cold, the lack of privacy, and poor living condition in the camps; and the prevailing sense of loss, humiliation, despair, and bitterness that the internees all felt. All of those scenes reinforce the negative image of the internment and develop the sympathetic attitudes about the internees.

By contrast, the images of Japanese Americans as a despised enemy and of the internment as a justifiable military necessity are totally absent from those films. Some of the characters do sometimes refer to Japanese Americans as "Japs," but they are usually villains, who in the end willingly mend their unfriendly attitudes toward Japanese Americans, or are otherwise defeated by protagonists.

According to the movie reviews, almost all of these films are favorably accepted by the American mainstream media of the time. These reviews do not afford any evidence that suggests these films were blamed for their historical perception of the internment and their sympathetic attitudes about the internees. It seems that, even in the 1950s, the negative image of the internment and the positive image of Japanese Americans were not contested by the public – at least in the national/regional level.

CONCLUSION

The 1950s and 1960s were the formative years of the popular image of Japanese American internment. Comprehensive analysis of three major sources – national newspapers and magazines, high school history textbooks, and motion pictures – suggests that Japanese Americans' popular image has always been one of wronged American citizens since the 1950s. Their image as despised enemies did exist during the war years, but it never became prevalent in the postwar print media, history textbooks, and popular films.

As discussed in the first chapter, Japanese Americans' image as despised enemies was prevalent in the print media during World War II, but it dissipated quickly after the end of the war. A couple of liberal magazines presented the image of them as wronged citizens even in the midst of the war, and this image thrived in the postwar print press. As demonstrated in the second chapter, high school textbooks have provided critical views of the internment and promoted the image of the internees as wronged Americans throughout the postwar years. Critical attitudes toward the internment first appeared in textbooks as early as the mid 1950s, and became conventional by the end of the 1960s. All the films examined in the third chapter project the image of Japanese Americans as wronged innocent citizens, and the image of the internment as a grave injustice. Even though there are only a handful of films that deal with the internment, all of them are highly critical of the wartime misdeed. Except for the printed sources of the war years,

the image of Japanese Americans as despised enemies and of the internment as a justifiable military necessity are largely absent from these three sources.

Judging from the evidence cited in these chapters, the image of Japanese Americans as wronged American citizens emerged in the early 1950s and became dominant in the mid 1950s and early 1960s. At least at the level of the popular image, Americans' critical attitude toward the wartime internment and their sympathy for the ex-internees were obvious even three decades earlier than the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. Therefore, Americans seemed to start their self-examination of their wartime injustice within a decade after the end of the war, and by the early 1960s, they built a consensus that the internment was a grave mistake and Japanese Americans were mistreated by the U.S. government. This partly explains why the Civil Liberties Act was enacted into law relatively easily and accepted by the American public in 1988.

Given this national consensus, the columnist and Fox News contributor Michelle Malkin's advocacy for the internment totally deviates from common decency in post-World War II American society. In her recently-published book *In Defense of Internment: The Case for 'Racial Profiling' in World War II and the War on Terror*, Malkin argues that the internment was the right thing to do. She contends that it was a sound military judgment that President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his top war advisers made based on solid intelligence that Japan had organized the Issei and the Nisei into a vast spy network. Based on the "MAGIC decrypts" – Japanese diplomatic cables that American military intelligence intercepted and decoded – that reveals what she considers to be Japanese Americans' espionage efforts to undermine the national security in Hawaii and on the West Coast before and after the Pearl Harbor, she claims that it was this

intelligence, rather than racism or wartime hysteria, that led these top officials to approve and implement the internment. Therefore, she argues, the idea that the internment was racist and unjustified is a mere myth. [97]

Furthermore, Malkin draws a parallel between World War II and the ongoing War on Terror, and argues in favor of the right of government to use national origin, racial, and religious profiling for the purpose of national security. Although she makes it clear that she does not advocate rounding up Muslims and sending them *en masse* to internment camps, her contentions are certainly confrontational.[98]

Even though it is beyond this thesis's scope to assess the authenticity of Malkin's evidence, given my findings presented in preceding chapters, I do not echo her contentions at all. As discussed above, the popular image of Japanese American internment has always been sympathetic to the internees and highly critical of the internment since the end of the Second World War. None of the print press, high school history textbooks, and popular films in the postwar period defended, let alone justified, the internment. Therefore, Malkin's work is an aberration. It is at least fair to conclude that her work completely ignores, and even contradicts, the postwar trend of the American public's attitude toward the internment. This is exactly why her argument sounds provocative, but readers should seriously question the basis of her arguments before accepting them uncritically.

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[97] Michelle Malkin, *In Defense of Internment: The Case for 'Racial Profiling' in World War II and the War on Terror* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2004).
[98] Ibid.

Why Did This Transition Occur When It Did?

One question still remains unanswered: why did this transition – the transition of Japanese Americans' image from despised enemies to wronged citizens – occur in the 1950s and the early 1960s? In other words, why did the image of wronged Americans become predominant only a decade after the war's end? Although further research is necessary in order to fully answer this question, it is possible here to form some deductions.

First of all, it is very probable that a series of reversals of longstanding legal discrimination in the late 1940s and early 1950s put a positive spin on the matter of Japanese American image. On the federal level, Asians including the Japanese had long been excluded from those who could be naturalized since the enactment of the 1870 Page Act, which allowed the naturalization of aliens of African birth and persons of African descent but which was deliberately silent about other races. However, in 1943 the U.S. Congress made Chinese nationals eligible for naturalization as well as gave the Chinese an immigration quota. In 1946, Filipinos and natives of India became eligible for immigration and naturalization under the Filipino Naturalization Act. Then the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act lifted the final ethnic and racial restrictions on immigration and naturalization, so that other Asians including the Japanese could become naturalized citizens. This legislation was controversial, for it enabled the government to impose strict controls upon political dissidents, that is, Communists, but it was a blessing for the Issei, who had been ineligible for naturalization.

Legal discrimination against Japanese Americans also disappeared on the state level. In California, for instance, many notorious state laws were nullified in the late

1940s. Such laws included anti-miscegenation statutes, which had prohibited interracial marriage, and the Alien Land Laws, which had barred non-U.S. citizens (e.g. the Issei) from owning land in the state of California. These federal and state legal reversals probably served as important driving forces in improving the image of Japanese Americans.

Secondly, it is highly likely that another important federal legislation, the Japanese American Claims Act of 1948, raised the image of the ex-internees. The Claims Act was the federal government's first step toward redress for the losses suffered by Japanese Americans, and it received considerable media attention. On the one hand, the very fact that the government admitted there should have been compensation for their losses probably promoted the image of them as wronged citizens. On the other hand, the inadequacy of the Act conceivably highlighted the harsh reality of the internment. Despite the fact that the government made partial monetary compensation, the sum of money the Congress eventually appropriated – $38 million – was far too small to satisfy approximately 23,000 Japanese Americans' claims totaling $131 million. The loss of real property was the all that the Act covered; the loss of any other personal assets was excluded. The government settled these claims slowly and grudgingly; the last suit was concluded as late as 1967. Furthermore, the government sidestepped the problem of the legality of the internment, and did not pass judgment on whether the internment itself was justified. The insincere manner in which the government handled the problem probably

accentuated the sufferings of the ex-internees, and disseminated the image of them as wronged Americans.[99]

The last, and probably the most obvious, factor that contributed to the development of Japanese Americans' image as wronged citizens is Japanese Americans' wartime good behavior. As discussed already, the legal grounds for the relocation and internment of the Japanese Americans were possible disloyalty among them and their possible sabotage on the West Coast. The majority of the postwar print media and history textbooks take up the insufficiency of these legal grounds and use it as their own grounds for criticizing the internment policy. In other words, they demonstrated that the internment was unnecessary and Japanese Americans were wronged because, as things turned out, there was not a single case of their sabotage or any other interference to the U.S. war efforts during the war years. If there had been any serious cases of their disloyal deeds in wartime, the postwar image of the internment could have been very different.

Similarly, Japanese American soldiers' outstanding war record and their collective efforts to prove their loyalty to the United States surely helped the American public embrace the image of Japanese Americans as wronged citizens and of the internment as an injustice. Nisei soldiers' fortitude and sacrifice received the public's attention and acclaim immediately after the end of the war. In fact, their heroic stories have constantly showed up in the postwar print media and history textbooks, and it is also one of the recurring themes in popular films. Their casualty list must have been long

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[99] Indeed, several magazine articles and history textbooks of the 1960s criticize the insufficiency of the Claim Act and warn that the legislation did not end the injustice. See: "A Wrong Partially Righted," *Time*, April 21, 1967; "Epilogue to A Sorry Drama," *Life*, April 28, 1967; Bronz, Moon, and Cline, *The Challenge of America*, 711.

enough to convince postwar American society that Japanese Americans were loyal and therefore the internment was an unnecessary injustice. Even if their war record had not been superb, the postwar image of the internment might not have been very different, but that would have certainly delayed the emergence of Japanese Americans' image as wronged citizens.

Needless to say, we should avoid any kind of generalizations. Not all the Japanese American internees were loyal to their country and supportive of the war efforts. There were an undeniable number of internees who refused to pronounce a loyalty oath. Not all the Nisei men were brave soldiers. There were a substantial number of Japanese American draft resisters. There were various reasons for their loyalty rejections and draft resistances, just as there were various reasons for their professions of loyalty and volunteer spirits. Furthermore, there was a population of Japanese Americans who were not interned during the war years. Japanese Americans were not a monolithic group, although the print press, history textbooks, and popular films tend to project such an image.

However, at least at the level of the popular image, Japanese Americans have often been described as a group of loyal citizens, who obediently moved to the Relocation Centers, patiently endured the suffering of the internment, and courageously supported the American war effort. Whether or not these images reflect the historical reality is a moot point. However, we should still give Japanese American internees credit for their postwar positive image and the negative image of the internment. Japanese Americans themselves were one of the driving forces in transforming their own image from despised enemies into wronged citizens.

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