

Internment of Japanese Americans in World War II Essay

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On December 7, 1941, the Empire of Japan attacked the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor, bringing the United States into World War II (Prange et al., 1981: p.174). On February 19, 1942, United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 authorizing the Secretary of War and Military Commanders to prescribe areas of land as excludable military zones (Roosevelt, 1942). Effectively, this order sanctioned the identification, deportation, and internment of innocent Japanese Americans in War Relocation Camps across the western half of the United States. During the spring and summer of 1942, it is estimated that almost 120,000 Japanese Americans were relocated from their homes along the West Coast and in Hawaii and detained in U.S. government-run concentration camps (Daniels, 2004: p.3). Approximately two-thirds of these men and women were either nisei—second generation Japanese—or sansei—third generation—Japanese Americans, the other third were issei—first generation—Japanese immigrants living in the United States at the time. While issei generation Japanese people were born in Japan and were not eligible for United States citizenship, members of the nisei and sanei generations were born in the United States, and therefore, were legal American citizens. Regardless of this distinction in citizenship, however, American powers

perceived all of these men and women to be an imposing threat to the security of the United States. Although the term “revolution from above” is often used to explain the GHQ’s method of postwar reform in Japan (Dower, 1999: p.69), I argue that a similar motivation was in effect in the U.S.’s efforts to isolate all Japanese descendants in America and subject them to coerced American soci..... middle of paper States: CMH Publications, 2006. Print. Our Job in Japan. Wri. Theodor S. Geisel. Ed. Elmo Williams. 1945. Film. Prange, Gordon W., Donald M. Goldstein, and Katherine V. Dillon. At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor. New York: Penguin Books, 1981. Print. Roosevelt, Franklin D. “Executive Order: Authorizing the Secretary of War to Prescribe Military Areas.” General Records of the United States Government: Record Group 11, National Archives (19 February 1942). Web. 9 January 2014. . Stanley, Jerry. I Am An American: A True Story of Japanese Internment. New York: Crown Publishers, 1996. Print. Wu, Hui. “Writing and Teaching behind Barbed Wire: An Exiled Composition Class in a Japanese-American Internment Camp.” College Composition and Communication 59.2 (2007): 237-262. Web. 10 January 2014.

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