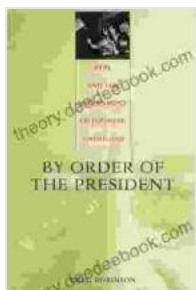


FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans: A Legacy of Injustice and Resilience

The internment of Japanese Americans during World War II stands as a dark chapter in American history. This episode of mass incarceration and forced removal, authorized by President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, uprooted over 120,000 individuals of Japanese ancestry, including American citizens, from their homes and communities.

This article delves into the complex motivations and events leading to the internment, the devastating impact it had on the lives of those affected, and the ongoing efforts to address the injustices committed.



By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans by Greg Robinson

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Motivations for Internment

The internment of Japanese Americans was driven by a confluence of factors:

- **Anti-Japanese Sentiment:** Pre-existing prejudice and xenophobia towards Japanese immigrants and their descendants fueled fears about their loyalty during the war.
- **Wartime Hysteria:** The attack on Pearl Harbor and the ensuing war with Japan created a climate of heightened fear and suspicion.
- **Military Pressure:** Military commanders in the Pacific argued for the removal of Japanese Americans from areas considered vulnerable to attack.
- **Economic Competition:** Some Americans, including farmers and businessmen, viewed Japanese Americans as economic rivals.

Executive Order 9066

On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the Secretary of War and the Army to designate military areas from which "any or all persons may be excluded."

The order targeted individuals of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast, including Washington, Oregon, California, and parts of Arizona. Army officials established ten internment camps in remote areas of the country, where Japanese Americans were forced to live in barracks-like conditions.

Devastating Impact

The internment had a profound and lasting impact on the lives of those affected:

- **Loss of Homes and Property:** Internees were forced to abandon their homes, businesses, and belongings, many of which were sold or damaged.
- **Deprivation and Hardship:** Conditions in the camps were often unsanitary and overcrowded, leading to hunger, disease, and emotional trauma.
- **Loss of Liberty and Dignity:** Internees were subjected to arbitrary arrests, detention without due process, and a loss of basic rights and freedoms.
- **Intergenerational Trauma:** The experiences of internment left deep emotional scars not only on the individuals who were incarcerated but also on subsequent generations.

Resistance and Resilience

Despite the hardships they faced, Japanese Americans showed remarkable resilience:

- **Legal Challenges:** Internees launched legal battles against the government's actions, ultimately leading to the Supreme Court case *Korematsu v. United States*.
- **Community Support:** Individuals and organizations provided support and assistance to internees, both within and outside the camps.
- **Military Service:** Over 33,000 Japanese Americans served in the U.S. military during the war, including the famous 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

Postwar Reconciliation

After the war, there was a growing recognition of the injustices committed against Japanese Americans:

- **Presidential Apology:** In 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act, which formally apologized for internment and provided reparations to survivors.
- **Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians:** A commission established by Congress in 1980 investigated the internment and concluded that it was a "grave injustice." It recommended reparations and the creation of educational programs.
- **Redress and Reparations:** In 1992, Congress passed the Japanese American Internment Redress Bill, providing \$20,000 in reparations to each surviving internee.

Legacy and Lessons Learned

The internment of Japanese Americans serves as a reminder of the dangers of prejudice, hysteria, and the erosion of civil liberties during times of war.

It also highlights the importance of:

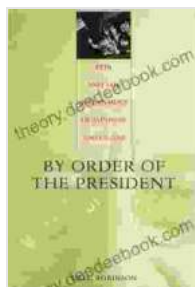
- **Upholding Constitutional Rights:** Protecting the rights of all Americans, regardless of race or origin, is essential.
- **Challenging Injustice:** Speaking out against discrimination and upholding the rule of law is crucial.
- **Learning from History:** Studying past injustices can help prevent them from being repeated in the future.

- **Promoting Understanding and Reconciliation:** Education and dialogue can foster understanding and reconciliation between different communities.

The internment of Japanese Americans during World War II was a shameful chapter in American history. It left a lasting scar on the lives of the individuals and families who were incarcerated, as well as on the nation's moral fabric.

While reparations and apologies have been made, the legacy of internment continues to serve as a reminder of the fragility of civil liberties and the importance of vigilance against prejudice and injustice.

By studying the history of internment, we can learn from the mistakes of the past and work towards a more just and equitable society for all Americans.



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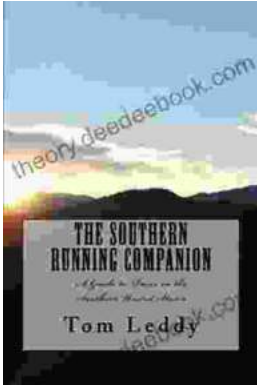
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