

If white Americans do not desire the transition, they still have a short time to prevent it and to try to salvage what is left of the Old Republic most of them still imagine they live in, and if they do wish to salvage it, they will have to re-

ject, as clearly and firmly as the original Framers did, the universalism and egalitarianism that now threaten to destroy them and their race. Political philosophies and constitutional forms come and go, but nations—peoples and races—re-

main. Yet without the common blood that made us a nation in the first place, there will be no American nation, no matter what abstractions and forms we vainly invoke. **W**

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Unlucky to be White

Arnold Krammer, *Undue Process: The Untold Story of America's German Alien Internees*, Rowman & Littlefield, 1997, \$27.95, 209 pp.

America's forgotten wartime German internees.

reviewed by Joseph E. Fallon

Since 1948, the internment and relocation policies implemented by the Roosevelt Administration during World War II have been presented by Congress, the news media, some historians, and the Japanese-American lobby as an expression of racist war hysteria against Japanese living in the United States.

This distortion of history has been used to justify financial compensation to “victims” of those policies on nine separate occasions between 1948 and 1992. It has now become part of the ideology of “white racism” and a precedent for demands by blacks for reparations because of slavery and by Hispanics because of the Mexican-American War.

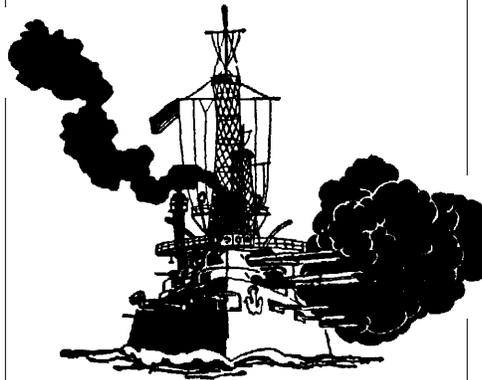
In *Undue Process: The Untold Story of America's German Alien Internees*, Arnold Krammer, professor of history at Texas A&M University, describes the extensive wartime policy of interning *Europeans*—a policy that has disappeared from history books and that gives the lie to the now orthodox view that Japanese relocation was a race-based policy. Using government documents, newspaper accounts, and interviews with former internees, Prof. Krammer has documented the officially-forgotten history of the internment of Germans and German-Americans.

It is important at the outset to distinguish between *internment* and *relocation*. Internment was literal incarceration, and was reserved primarily for enemy aliens. Relocation was the requirement that people considered to be threats to American security—some of whom were U.S. citizens—move out of the Western part of the United States. It is the relocation of Japanese, both citizens

and aliens, that is now represented as a shameful example of “racism,” but Prof. Krammer's book puts this policy in proper perspective.

Internment of Enemy Aliens

According to a 1798 law still on the books, an enemy alien is any citizen of a country at war with the United States. He need not show hostility towards the U.S. to be included in this category. While not all enemy aliens are interned, by law *only* enemy aliens can be interned, and internment often leads to



deportation. U.S. citizens may “voluntarily” join their enemy alien spouses or parents in internment.

Prof. Krammer points out that President Roosevelt's internment policy followed a precedent set by Woodrow Wilson, who interned approximately 6,300 enemy aliens during the First World War. This number included crewmen from German and Austro-Hungarian ships visiting U.S. ports at the time war was declared, and nationals of Germany and Austria-Hungary living in the United States. Approximately one third of the World War I internees were repatriated to Europe, and the last internees were not released until April 1920—seventeen months after the war ended. German nationals not interned were required to

register at post offices and carry a government registration card at all times. They were also forbidden to, among other things, “own guns, radios, or explosives” or “live within a half-mile of munitions factories, aircraft stations, forts, arsenals, or naval vessels.”

President Roosevelt's internment policy during World War II was vastly greater in scope. As early as 1939—well before America entered the war in December, 1941—Roosevelt authorized FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover to collect information on people to be interned if war broke out. Much, if not all, of the information was unsubstantiated allegations from unnamed sources, but once a person's name was on the FBI list only death could remove it.

The United States started to intern German and Italian merchant seamen in U.S. ports in April 1941 while the country was officially neutral—a clear violation of law. By October 1941, it had formal plans for interning Germans and Italians living in the United States, and began implementing them on December 8, 1941—three days before the U.S. was officially at war with Germany and Italy. Some Germans who were naturalized citizens were stripped of U.S. citizenship so they could be interned “legally.”

The total number of enemy aliens interned by the Roosevelt Administration was 31,275. This included 10,905 Germans, 16,849 Japanese, and 3,278 Italians. The rest consisted of Hungarians, Romanians, Bulgarians, and others, with Europeans constituting 46 percent of the total. Among the internees were more than 6,600 Latin Americans—approximately 4,100 Germans, 2,300 Japanese, and 300 Italians—who were rounded up by Latin American governments at the request of the Roosevelt administration and sent to the United States. All Japanese enemy aliens were released from internment by June 1946, but some Ger-

mans and other Europeans were kept until August 1948.

The Roosevelt Administration also deported enemy aliens, and continued shipping German and German-Latin American internees to Germany even after the war in Europe had ended. It took Congressional legislation in 1947 finally to end deportation of Germans.

Prof. Krammer tells the stories of a number of German internees, many of whose careers and reputations were ruined by internment. Alfred Heitmann, for example, was an engineer for Standard Oil. He was interned in 1942 and released on parole in 1945, on condition

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that he not return to his old job at Standard Oil. For the rest of his life, this professionally-trained engineer could get work only as a grave digger, a foundryman, and a maintenance man.

Robert Minner had been a journalist. After his release in 1946, the only job he could get was shoveling coal. Albert Krause was a physics teacher. He was also released in 1946, but never again worked as a physics teacher. His family survived on his wife's income and the part-time and summer earnings of their three daughters.

Arthur D. Jacobs was 11 years old when, on three separate occasions, the FBI ransacked his family's home looking for contraband or Nazi propaganda. Although the FBI found nothing, his father was interned in 1944 on the basis of unsubstantiated accusations from unnamed sources. Left without an income, the family "voluntarily" joined the father in internment. In 1946, the Jacobs were repatriated to Germany. Twenty-two months later, Arthur and Lambert, U.S. citizens by birth, managed to return, but they came alone. Their father could not forgive the U.S. government for the way it treated him, and their mother stayed with their father.

Relocation

Relocation is largely outside the scope of Prof. Krammer's study, but this

is the policy that is so frequently described as "racist." It was not at all the same as internment. Internment was national in scope and involved incarcerating specific individuals for the purpose of deportation, whereas relocation did not begin until February, 1942, and was limited to the West Coast. It authorized the Secretary of War or the appropriate military commander temporarily to exclude any or all persons—U.S. citizens, resident aliens, and enemy aliens, Germans and Italians, as well as Japanese—from all of California, the western halves of Washington and Oregon, and the southern third of Arizona. The government encouraged anyone who was excluded to resettle in the eastern halves of Washington and Oregon or in any of the other unaffected 44 states.

It is widely assumed that people excluded from the West coast were forcibly kept in "concentration camps." This is not true. Exclusion prohibited residence in certain areas—nothing more—and anyone excluded could move anywhere else in the country. The relocation centers, which provided free housing, food, medical care, and education for children, were made available to anyone who would rather live at government expense than find another place on his own. As the U.S. Supreme Court wrote in the 1944 case of *Korematsu v. United States* that found exclusion Constitutional, no Japanese citizen or enemy alien was compelled "either in fact or by law" to go to a relocation center. The Court added, "We deem it unjustifiable to call them concentration camps with all the ugly connotations that term implies." Anyone living in a relocation center was free to leave at any time so long as he did not return to the exclusion zone, and during the war, some 30,000 Japanese moved out of the centers.

It is not well known that Germans and Italians were excluded from the West Coast along with the Japanese. The relocation centers, however, were open only to Japanese. Originally only Japanese excluded from the West Coast could live in them but later, Japanese from other parts of the country were allowed in after petitioning the government.

It is true that far more Japanese than Europeans were forced out of their homes on the West coast—112,000 as opposed to just a few hundred. It is this difference that was presumably "racist," but in *Korematsu*, the Court explained

that "there were disloyal members of that population [the Japanese] whose number and strength could not be precisely and quickly ascertained." The Court also evoked the fear of a Japanese invasion.

Both reasons were legitimate. To begin with, there was a real question about the loyalty of Japanese-Americans even before the war. According to a Japanese government census, 78 percent of Japanese-Americans held dual Japanese citizenship, which indicated a less-than-total attachment to America. Once the war began, unlike German- and Italian-Americans, many Japanese-Americans were openly disloyal. For example, approximately 14,000 filed to renounce U.S. citizenship. The demand for renunciation was so great that in 1944 Congress amended the Nationality Act of 1940 to allow U.S. citizens to renounce citizenship during wartime. Of these 14,000 petitioners, 5,620 followed the process through to full renunciation, and gave up citizenship. They were then interned as enemy aliens, a consequence that probably kept many other disloyal Japanese-Americans from renouncing citizenship. Without this group of 5,620 Japanese—officially known as "renunciants" and, in effect, self-selected internees—the number of European internees would have been greater than the number of Japanese. Researchers are unaware of any case of a U.S. citizen of European origin renouncing citizenship during the war.

What other indications do we have of the Japanese attitude towards the United States? Just five weeks after the West Coast exclusion order, the government offered Japanese resident aliens naturalized U.S. citizenship if they would serve in the U.S. war effort. This was a remarkably generous offer at a time when Japanese were otherwise barred from naturalization. Virtually no one accepted.

Japanese-Americans living in relocation centers were free to join the armed forces but only six percent of those of military age did so. In most cases this was because they would not side with the United States. In fact, many wanted to go back to Japan. By 1945, more than 20,000 U.S. citizens and enemy aliens in relocation centers had filed papers with Washington to return to Japan. Eventually, over 8,000 Japanese, including Japanese-Latin Americans, were repatriated.