ADMINISTRATIVE TREATMENT OF MINORITIES IN THE
UNITED STATES DURING WORLD WAR II

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my honourable tutors of the Faculty of Arts and the Fulbright Foundation who lectured me at the American Studies Program in the University of Jordan. I thank them for two fruitful and wonderful academic years that have enriched and furthered my education and knowledge.
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ABSTRACT

During the Second World War the majority of the American ethnic minorities were American citizens who were born in the country and carried its nationality. They were subjected to different kinds of restrictive treatment that included controlling their freedom of movement and prohibiting them from living nearby or entering strategic areas. They were also interned in special detention camps for several years without any distinction between the innocent and the suspect elements among them.

The reasons that had led to such treatment were not spontaneous. They were well-entrenched elements that had developed over a long period of time since the early immigrants set foot on the American soil. They were causes that were nurtured by certain human inhibitions, greed and false accusations that were augmented and overblown by the media and the politicians.
The study examines the evolution of these ethnic minorities, their settlement and contribution to their newly-acquired homeland and their assimilation in the American society. It examines the above-mentioned factors that had led to the creation of apprehension and social animosity between them and the nativist Americans and it studies the development of certain concepts among the American political hierarchy starting with state governors and ending with the President of the United States.

The treatment of the above ethnic minorities was not equal. Some, like Italian Americans, had suffered the least of the hardships, both in magnitude and duration; German Americans came next. Japanese Americans were the ones who had borne the full impact of detention and all of its later consequences. Their loss was total in each and every respect. The study shall explain the reasons behind such discriminatory treatment that had emanated from political and economic opportunism rather than any other reason.

The study concludes with a general analysis of the incident and its reverberations on the equally-serious incident of 9/11 and whether there were any lessons learned from this sad occurrence.
Introduction

The seeds of the Second World War were sown at the moment the guns of the First World War fell silent and the Paris peace conference of 1919 was convened. The famous hall of mirrors at the historic Versailles palace witnessed the signing of a most-humiliating treaty that was known by the palace's name and in which the victors imposed their indisputable will upon the losers and vied among themselves to share the spoils of the bloodiest war known to humankind during which millions were slaughtered.

In the very wise and futuristic words of Field Marshall Archibald Wavell, the brilliant British general who was to participate in the forthcoming war, "after the 'war to end war' they seem to have been pretty successful in Paris at making a 'Peace to end Peace'" (Fromkin: 5). The victorious attended the conference alongside the defeated. Among the former were the "super powers" who had emerged to dictate their will to others. If we wish to understand the consequences that followed the Paris conference twenty years later then we must understand the incidents that took place before and after the war.

Japan had emerged as a fully-fledged nation during the end of the 19th century. Ironically, the United States, in 1853, had wrested her from its middle ages feudal system when it sent Commodore Matthew Perry with a modern military fleet to "request" the Emperor to open his country for American trade. With this move the genie was unleashed from his bottle of past, dark centuries. Britain, France and Russia
followed suit in the hope for more commercial opportunities but little did they know that the reluctant people who abhorred Perry's interference in their internal affairs were now avidly sending hundreds of their young students to the west in order to study, learn and return home to build their new modern homeland while, at the same time, they received hundreds of foreign experts. They were choosy and got the best there was. They opted for Britain to emulate its navy, Prussia for the army and constitution and the U.S for the banking system and economy (Macmillan: 309).

During the short span of fifty years, the insignificant collection of islands in the Pacific was transformed to a major world power. In 1914 it produced 1/4 of the world's cotton textiles; its economy in 1919 rivalled that of France; its modern infrastructure matched the best in Europe, and its navy was in the 3rd or 4th place among the world's navies. The new Asian giant started flexing its muscles by the end of the 19th century. A country with a few natural resources and a constant worry about being denied the import of such sources upon which its industries depended, Japan began casting its sights overseas. It chose China and in 1895 it invaded and acquired Taiwan. In 1904-1905 it defeated Russia in Manchuria and occupied it. Korea followed and was annexed by Japan in 1910 (ibid: 306-311).

When the First World War was still raging, Leo Amery, the undersecretary in Britain's Lloyd George's cabinet and, later on, the Colonial Secretary, suggested in a report to the cabinet that both Japan and the United States ought to be "invited" to get involved in the war and occupy the Urals-to-Siberia line in order to take off some of the pressure from the Allied armies on the European front (Fromkin: 359; Williams: 39-40). The United States was not interested, but Japan did not decline such a generous and lucrative invitation. At the end of the war it had expanded to Siberia in war-torn Russia after the Bolshevik revolution. This prompted Robert Borden,
Canada's Prime Minister, to say that at the end of the First World War there were "only three major powers left in the world: the United States, Britain and Japan" (Macmillan: 306, 315).

But even with such political, military and economic powers, Japan was not treated as its stature entitled it to be. It was invited to the Paris conference among the victorious parties but was not treated as a "super power." It was subjected to some indirect scoffing by France's Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau who made some rather silly derogatory jokes about the "ugly Japanese delegation" (ibid: 306-307).

The Japanese delegation chose to take a "watching" posture throughout the conference. It had three major demands. The first was "Racial Equality". It demanded that the proposed covenant of the League of Nations include a principle that would put the states of the world on an equal footing, regardless of race or nationality. Its second demand was the control of the north Pacific islands of Marshalls, Marianas and Carolines which it had wrested from occupying Germany during the war. The third demand was the keeping of the former German colony of Shantung in China that was acquired during the war as well (ibid: 313).

U.S President Woodrow Wilson was under pressure from Congress and politicians to act tough with the Japanese. The U.S was worried about Japan's keeping of the islands and the possibility of turning them to military bases and airfields, a prediction that proved to be correct later on. The United States had the islands of Hawaii, Guam and the Philippines under its control and was apprehensive of Japan's envisaged role in the Pacific area with these islands in its sights and grand designs. Both of the two "Pacific Powers" claimed self-protection of their territories, markets and sources of raw materials for whatever deeds of expansion they practiced. Such claims created an
uneasy atmosphere of mistrust between them that prevailed until the outburst of hostilities in 1941 (ibid: 313, 315).

Such demands were carefully welcomed (with some apprehension) by Clemenceau. Britain was also careful but did not welcome Japan's territorial claims. The second and third demands were granted to Japan in May 1919 but the first demand, in spite of its fairness, was rejected due to the political pressures that were exercised by Britain which had dominions it wanted to protect. The U.S, which was under domestic political pressures in the South and the West Coast because of Japanese immigrants, also opposed the proposal. Australia and New Zealand refused too but did not want to anger Japan, while France and Greece showed no concern. Ironically, this principle is among the main principles upon which the Charter of the United Nations was based twenty six years later. There was bitterness manifested in the Japanese press about the "civilized world's" treatment of the Japanese as "inferiors". The non-acceptance of the "racial equality" clause led to Japan's non-cooperation with the League of Nations and, consequently, its withdrawal from it in 1933 and the adoption of more aggressive nationalist policies (ibid: 320-321).

Japan, throughout the inter-World Wars period began to "seriously" feel that it had a "historic mission" to lead Asia (ibid: 311; Williams: 50). Among the lessons learned from the 1930's era was the failure of the decades-old American dream of depending on Japan for an "open door policy" in Asia, a dream which Theodore Roosevelt had tried to consolidate by siding with Japan in its 1904-1905 Manchurian war with Russia (ibid: 131; Lafeber: 405). The media in both countries contributed their criticism to exacerbate the bilateral racial tensions. The American Hearst newspaper chain often used its favourite derogatory term of "the yellow peril" to describe the Japanese citizens and Japanese Americans alike without any distinction
between them. The Japanese newspapers, on the other hand, used the derogatory nomenclature of "the white peril" to return the "racial favour" and fantasized about invading the Pacific islands. Caught between the two states were the Japanese Americans who had to pay for their contention (ibid: 311, 314; Williams: 50, 131; Lafeber: 405).

America has been, and will always be, a nation of immigrants. During the 19th century, thousands of East Asian immigrants flocked to the nascent nation in search of their dreams. The Chinese and the Japanese were in the forefront of these immigrants. The Japanese settled in Hawaii and moved, later on, to the West Coast. Many simple and tiresome occupations such as farming and simple trading beckoned at them. There was also a multitude of European immigrants who had preceded them during the 17th and 18th centuries. German and Italian ethnicities had made their presence felt and were well-established in East Coast cities and dwellings. They worked hard and were fairly-rewarded for their toil and labour. German immigrants were the much-coveted workers and labourers from Europe who had brought their industrial revolution skills and techniques with them and benefited the American nation with their hard work and discipline. Italian immigrants were city-dwellers and worked in trade, industry and services. Ethnic communities of the said nationalities and origins flourished during the 19th and early 20th centuries. They were needed for hard and demanding work as much as they, themselves, needed to realize their sought aspirations. This *quid pro quo* deal was disrupted in many instances, but the most important one was the attack on Pearl Harbour on December 7th, 1941 by the Japanese fleet which marked the formal entrance of the United States, alongside the Allies, into the world war inferno against Axis powers.
There was no fair and equal treatment of Japanese Americans during the pre-Second World War period. The first generation of Japanese immigrants was denied the right of vote, owning land and (later on) leasing it, bringing wives from Japan and their children were segregated in isolated schools \((\text{ibid: 316})\). After the outbreak of hostilities the members of the two-generations-old ethnicity, who were well-established in the American society, were promptly sent to internment camps without any distinction between the old, the young, men, women, children, the loyal and the disloyal. They remained there in harsh climatic and human conditions for more than two and a half years until the war neared its victorious end for the Allies in 1945. They came out of internment camps to find all of their possessions gone and had to start from scratch once again. They were not compensated for their lost and expropriated properties for many decades until the end of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century when they were granted the paltry sum of 20,000 $ per person as a nominal recompense for their losses. There were also formal presidential letters of apology signed by Presidents George Bush and Bill Clinton.

German and Italian minorities had a different fate. Some were interned, others were deported to their countries of origin, and some were exchanged with American citizens who were detained by Nazi German authorities when the state of hostility was declared between the two countries. Although many Americans couldn't tell the difference between the Japanese and the Chinese, war brought good fortune for the un-welcome Chinese minority because their country of origin chose to side with the Allies, which was positively reflected in the relaxation of the stringent immigration measures that were imposed by the U.S government since the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1924.
It is important to understand and analyze why the administration, at that time, acted in such manner with Japanese Americans while their German and Italian counterparts had a different treatment and less suffering. The attack on Pearl Harbour was certainly a vicious and cowardly behaviour. Nothing in the U.S-Japanese relations prior to it prompted or justified such an act, even with the existence of a strategic struggle to control the Pacific area. Notable historian Howard Zinn regards it as "an attack on a link in the American Pacific Empire" (Zinn: 410). It had deeply hit and hurt national pride. The administration was as baffled and shocked as it was 60 years later when the tragic events of 9/11 took place and the American nation suffered its second Pearl Harbour on the home soil and hard measures were taken in the aftermath.

Pearl Harbour, *per se*, was not the sole factor that led to the harsh treatment of Japanese Americans. Other economic and ethnic factors played indirect roles in the alienation of Japanese American community and the rendering of its wrong image. Consequently, no loud voices of protest were raised when the community was put behind the barbed-wire fences of the camps. Even the media which were supposed to be the major means of exercising the most cherished of American civil rights, freedom of expression, played a negative role or stayed quiet.

A plethora of books, essays and articles were written about the subject by those who were detained or by other historians and scholars from different generations. Howard Zinn describes the internment act as follows: "In one of its policies, the United States came close to direct duplication of Fascism. This was in its treatment of the Japanese-Americans living on the West Coast." He continues, in a bitter note, wondering: "was it a 'mistake'-or was it an action to be expected from a nation with a long history of racism and which was fighting a war, not to end racism, but to retain the fundamental elements of the American system?" (Zinn: 416). No matter how critical Zinn may
sound, the subject ought to be reviewed extensively in order to render a just and neutral judgement about the elements and factors that led to the internment decision for all of the above ethnicities.

The First World War bred many tragic consequences, no doubt. Each and every victorious "super power", at that time, thought that it was eligible for its "fair" share of the spoils. The prevailing logic and mentality was such as to permit others' territories to be torn and divided among the stronger nations in accordance with the law of conquest. This is what led to the Second World War when the defeated wanted to erase the stigma that was attached to them. Racism was there and everyone believed his race to be the best. This led to nationalism in its most extreme and biased form in Europe and Asia. Pure-blood race theories were very much in vogue during the 1920's and 1930's and helped to fuel the fires of hatred that scorched innocent bystanders.

The case of German and Italian Americans' internment, as previously mentioned, was different. There is an astounding similarity in the factors that had led to their detention (especially the Germans) and those of Japanese Americans, but the intensity of the applied measures and the number of detainees differed greatly. Only a few thousand Europeans were interned as opposed to more than a hundred and twenty thousand of men, women, youth and children with no differentiation. An internment is an internment, even for a single person who is incarcerated for mere suspicion. But such bias that was influenced by special political and economic considerations cannot be tolerated.

Other important questions which this treatise shall attempt to answer are: Should this sad historical incident be forgotten? Did humanity learn a precious lesson from it? Would it be repeated? Such a sensitive issue must be logically treated with much


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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GermanAmericans
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ItalianAmerican
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USAPatriotAct


معاملة الحكومة للأقليات في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية خلال الحرب العالمية الثانية

إعداد
مناف خالد عبد الله الدموجي

المشرف
الأستاذ الدكتور توفيق يوسف

الملخص
خلال الحرب العالمية الثانية كانت أغلبية الأقليات العرقية في أمريكا هي من المواطنين الأمريكيين المولدودين في البلاد والحاملين لجنسيتها. وقد تعرضوا لمختلف أنواع المعاملة التقييدية التي شملت التحكم بحريتهم في التحرك ومنعهم من الإقامة قرب المناطق الإستراتيجية أو دخولها. كما جرى أيضا حجزهم في معسكرات اعتقال خاصه لعدة سنوات دونما أي تفرقة مابين النازحين البرين والمشبوه فيهم.

إن الأسباب التي أدت لهذا النوع من المعاملة لم تكن تصرفا إرجاعيا وإنما كانت عناصر تطورت وسمعت عبر فترة طويلة من الزمن مرت وسائت أقدام المهاجرين الأوائل الأرض الأمريكية. فقد كانت أسبابا تعررت جراء مخاوف إنسانية معينة وأطماع وادعاءات باطلة جرى تعزيزها وتضخيمها من قبل وسائل الإعلام والسياسة.

تبحث الدراسة تطور هذه الأقليات العرقية واستقرارها ومساهمتها في وطنها الجديد واستيعابها في المجتمع الأمريكي. كما تبحث أيضا في العوامل المذكورة أعلاها والتي أدت إلى خلق المخاوف والعدوان الاجتماعية بينهم وبين المواطنين الأمريكيين الأصليين. كما تدرس تطور مفاهيم معينة لدى السلطة السياسية الأمريكية بداها بحكام الولايات وانتهاء برئيس الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية.
Minorities have also become more diverse socioeconomically. The number of minorities in the highest income brackets has more than doubled since 1980, for example, yet minorities still account for a disproportionate share of the poor. More minority politicians are being elected to public office, but minorities are more likely than non-Hispanic whites to serve time in prison. More minorities are earning graduate and professional degrees, yet a disproportionately large percentage never finish high school. If the United States can avoid a violent clash of cultures, the country can benefit from its growing diversity. A multicultural, multiethnic America has a competitive advantage in the global economy. The following passage from pages 187-190 of Selective Service and Victory: The 4th Report of the Director of Selective Service (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1948) represents the best statistical information available to the United States Army Center of Military History to answer questions about the participation of various minority groups in the armed forces of the United States during the Second World War. Note carefully which of these statistics cover those minorities drafted into the United States during World War II. How did the Second World War affect life in the United States? War mobilization, war bonds, rationing, role of women and minorities, ethnic problems. How to prepare for the war and deal with racial issues. Chapter 25: World War II Section 2: The Home Front. Woodrow the White House Mouse. World War II had a huge impact on the United States. Home Front During WWII Learning Goal: Students will be able to explain how Americans supported the war effort from home. - Supporting the war effort (war. Woodrow the White House Mouse. World War II stimulated massive African American migration to the North and West and encouraged black demands for greater equality. True. A majority of women who worked in wartime factories stayed in the labor force after the war ended. False, didn't stay in the labor force. In the first years of the war in Europe, Britain and the United States bore the heaviest burden of Allied ground fighting against Hitler's armies. False. Britain was reluctant to attack Germany because of its memory of World War I's heavy losses. A U.S. minority that was forced into concentration camps during World War II: Japanese-Americans. A federal agency that coordinated U.S. industry and successfully mobilized the economy to produce vast quantities of military supplies: War Production Board.