

Requested information on YEARS OF INFAMY
Submitted by Michi Weglyn September 11, 1975

- . . If Roosevelt were alive today, the Japanese American internment -- based on lies and coverups -- would be his WATERGATE. Owing to this national scandal, receptivity of the public to YEARS OF INFAMY has been immeasurably enhanced. The reader is sure to acknowledge that never before has the public been exposed to as much stark truth on this subject matter backed by revelatory documentation.
- . . A January 27 NEWSWEEK article reported that \$12 million in damages were awarded to approximately 1,200 anti-war protestors illegally arrested in May, 1971. Though the National JACL has, sometime back, mandated that a reparation bill be pursued, the years have seen little progress in this area. But now that John W. Dean III (a person possessing easy access to the media) has taken up the cudgel in behalf of the Japanese American community, the drive may begin to gain some momentum. Dean claims that the project requires, first off, educating the American public with the seriousness of the injustices perpetrated.
- . . There is a strange illogic and irony in President Ford and the Congress of the United States restoring full citizenship to General Robert E. Lee, (after all, he took up arms against the U.S., and, oh yes, let's not forget the Nixon pardon) while, to this day, there are Japanese Americans whose citizenships^{which} were taken away under duress in a fear-crazed concentration camp, have not been restored. Perhaps President Ford could wisely use the occasion of the Bicentennial to right this wrong ignored by other administrations. (Might be alluded to in the letter to accompany his copy.)

- . . For nearly a decade before Pearl, spying on Americans had been encouraged by various counterintelligence groups which involved neighbors, business associates, paid informers, local police, etc. Well over 100,000 different dossiers were collected by war's end by the State Department, alone, not to mention the FBI, Naval and Military Intelligence and the WRA. I believe that once the facts in my book are made known, the Japanese American community will insist on a destruction of much of ~~WRA~~ such material, some of it slanderous. It should also be noted that 1) the WRA, in cooperation with the Army, Naval Intelligence and the FBI, carried on a program of intercepting and opening personal mail at times of crisis. These were copied or photographed and were sent on to various Intelligence Headquarters. 2) Forced break-ins on homes of U.S. citizens were commonplace and so were wiretaps. (Wayne Collins was, of course, a prime target of Justice Department snoopers and such actions were repudiated by the ACLU NEWS, though I didn't mention ^{it} in the book.)
- . . Nixon, as we now know, had deliberately exaggerated the threat to national security to engage in official lawlessness and in circumventing the system of "checks and balances" -- in consulting with the representatives of the electorate. Exposure after exposure of the system's lawlessness is commonplace today but, during the war years, the "imperial" Presidency, the FBI and the lofty judiciary were sacrosanct and, as happened in the Nixon years, there was collusion at almost every level when it came to Japanese Americans.
- . . Despite the high-minded official rhetoric, of late, against political kidnappings and international terrorist activities, State Department

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Apropos to

- . . ~~XX~~/all the current talk about the CIA budget being hidden in appropriations for other agencies, it is interesting to note that the funding of the concentration camp built in Panama (as a staging area for mainland-bound deportees) was, as requested by Hull, included in the Caribbean Defense Command budget. In so "hiding" such expenditures, the Congress was kept completely in the dark regarding such activities.
- . . For those who wondered during the massive intake of Vietnamese refugees why the U.S. could not have similarly waved the usual rigid immigration legalities and have sheltered the victims of Nazi brutalities, the book is especially relevant. ^{we} ~~THEY~~ were too busy running our own camps. Moreover, the full extent of the "Gulag" is only beginning to emerge; the Department of Justice, to date, has made it extremely difficult to go through its files and has failed to provide me with a full accounting of the camps. They have sent me information as to the existing files on the few well known ones. Unknown to most people is the fact that the War Relocation Authority opened the one and only camp which finally -- in late 1944 -- gave asylum to 916 European Jews and a few other refugees from Nazi tyranny.
- . . The book relates, in a ~~very interesting~~ way, to the growing feeling among certain right-wing groups (especially as ^{the} drug and crime rate escalates, unemployment soars, and as the racial issue heats up under court-ordered busing) that "we should have a Hitler here to get rid of the scum the way they did the Jews." If one listens to talk-in shows, one can sense a growing pressure for arbitrary group detention -- certainly vigilantism -- in the public's mass paranoia over blacks, Puerto Ricans, etc., who, today, are in certain respects the scapegoats that the "Japs" once were.

- . . It has been said that "race prejudice is seldom acute until it is fanned by economic competition." Since the onset of the economic recession, there has been an ominous revival of anti-Asian stereotypes and "don't buy Japanese" agitation in the land. Native-born Japanese Americans are, once again, reminded that they still are not recognized as Americans when they find themselves objects of these taunts. The JACL anti-defamation division recognizes that an all-out educational program must be undertaken to help counteract public misconceptions. (At the same time, the national organization is suffering a \$30,000 deficit. The question is: Could the aggressive push and sale of this book by JACL chapters contribute in any substantial way towards ameliorating the situation in both areas?)
- . . The Manzanar Plaque was officially dedicated by the JACL and the state of California on April 14, 1973, to remind a nation that more than 110,000 had been unjustly incarcerated in concentration camps --a term offensive to certain Californians, especially a news columnist in Gardena. This crusader for "Historical Accuracy," Lillian Baker, is instituting a class action suit against the state of California, all of it based on the Korematsu decision. The Asian American community may finally be goaded into a counter-offensive which, of course, would help sales tremendously.
- . . Korematsu vs U.S., considered by some scholars to be the "most oppressive" decision ever handed down by the Supreme Court (sanctioning the arbitrary removal of citizens on the basis of military necessity) is one which JACL has long sought ways to overturn. The possible end-result of the Baker

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- . . suit based on her supposed sanctity of Korematsu may finally enable the repudiation and overturning of the infamous decision. I believe that YEARS OF INFAMY, with its solid documentation, could play a key role in exposing the fraudulent "military necessity" rationale.

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- . . memos clearly indicate that U.S. embassy attaches abroad (particularly in Latin American countries) had been given broad sanction to engage in covert counterintelligence operations -- to the extent of condoning the use of agent provocateurs and ^{the policy of} arbitrary preventive detention, ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ with emphasis on the Japanese, which the ACLU called "legalized kidnapping" since most victims were spirited to U.S. concentration camps. One cannot help but wonder if such wartime indiscretions ^{not} may have contributed to the catastrophic decline in confidence by these nations in the U.S. (and democracy) with resultant anti-Yankee antagonisms.