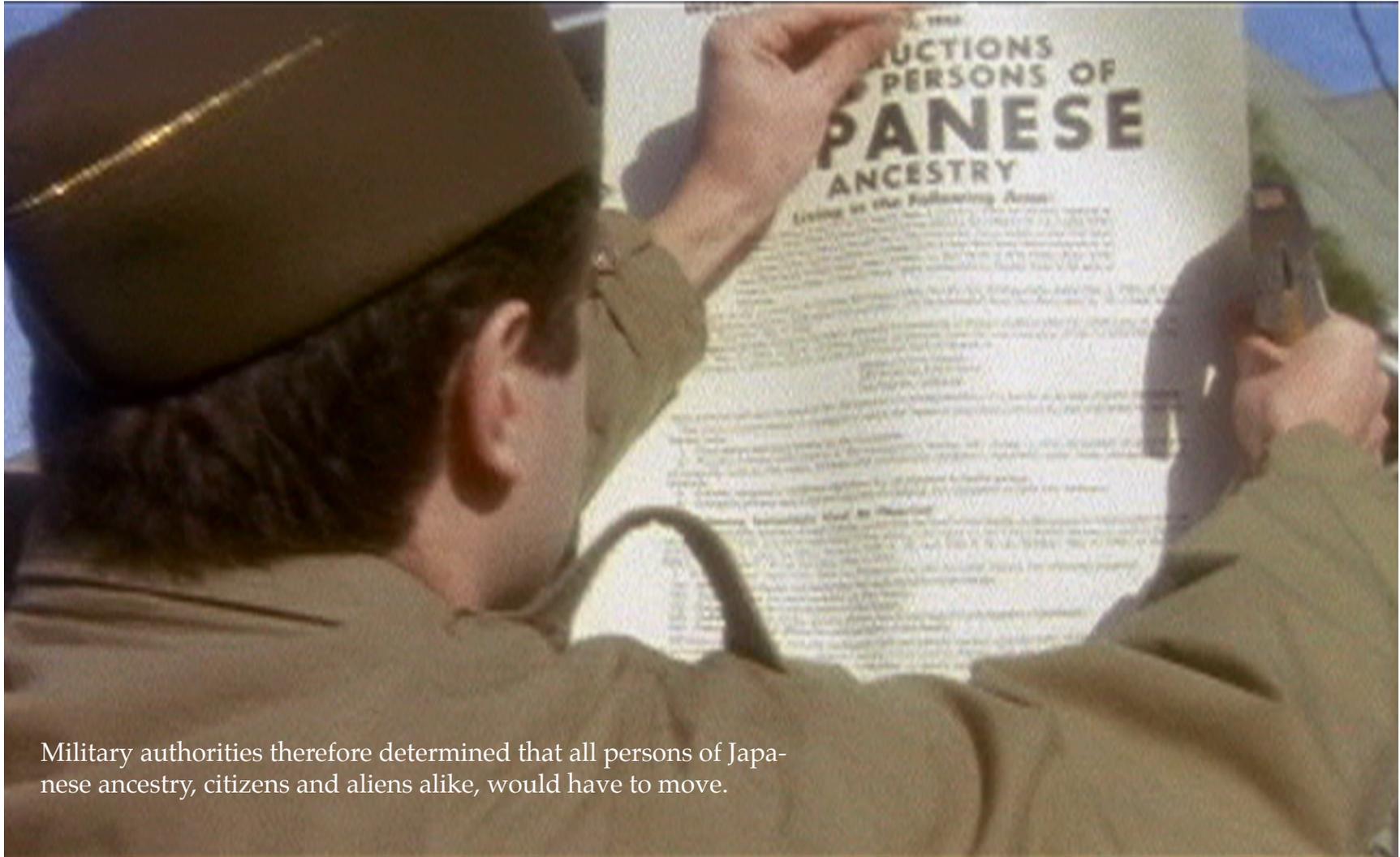


## EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066 AND THE POSTING OF REMOVAL NOTICES

---



Military authorities therefore determined that all persons of Japanese ancestry, citizens and aliens alike, would have to move.

Los Angeles, 1942: A soldier posts a notice that gives instructions for the removal of all Japanese Americans.

## EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066 AND THE POSTING OF REMOVAL NOTICES

**O**n February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066. This order said that the secretary of war and military commanders could remove “any or all persons” from certain parts of the West Coast. The order states that the action was necessary as “protection against espionage and against sabotage to national-defense materials.”

There is no direct mention of Japanese Americans in the order. However, the order was the outcome of discussion by President Roosevelt and his advisors about how to deal with Japanese Americans after the start of the war.

Vocal politicians and anti-Japanese groups pushed for the removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast. Many newspapers and political leaders said that Japanese Americans could not be trusted. They claimed some would commit **espionage** or **sabotage** against the government. Political and military leaders said that Japanese Americans were a threat to national security or safety and might help Japan’s war effort. These leaders said it was too difficult to determine who was “loyal” and who was “disloyal” among Japanese Americans.

However, studies by the Department of State, the Navy, and the FBI concluded that Japanese Americans were consistently loyal to the United States. But President Roosevelt and his advisors disregarded these studies, and the president decided to sign the order. The order was clearly directed at Japanese Americans.

After March 1942, notices (like the one in the film) were posted in Japanese American communities. They ordered Japanese Americans to figure out what to do with their property and businesses in a very short time. Japanese Americans did not know where they would be taken. The notice included the following language:

*The size and number of packages is limited to that which can be carried by the individual or family group ... No pets of any kind will be permitted.*

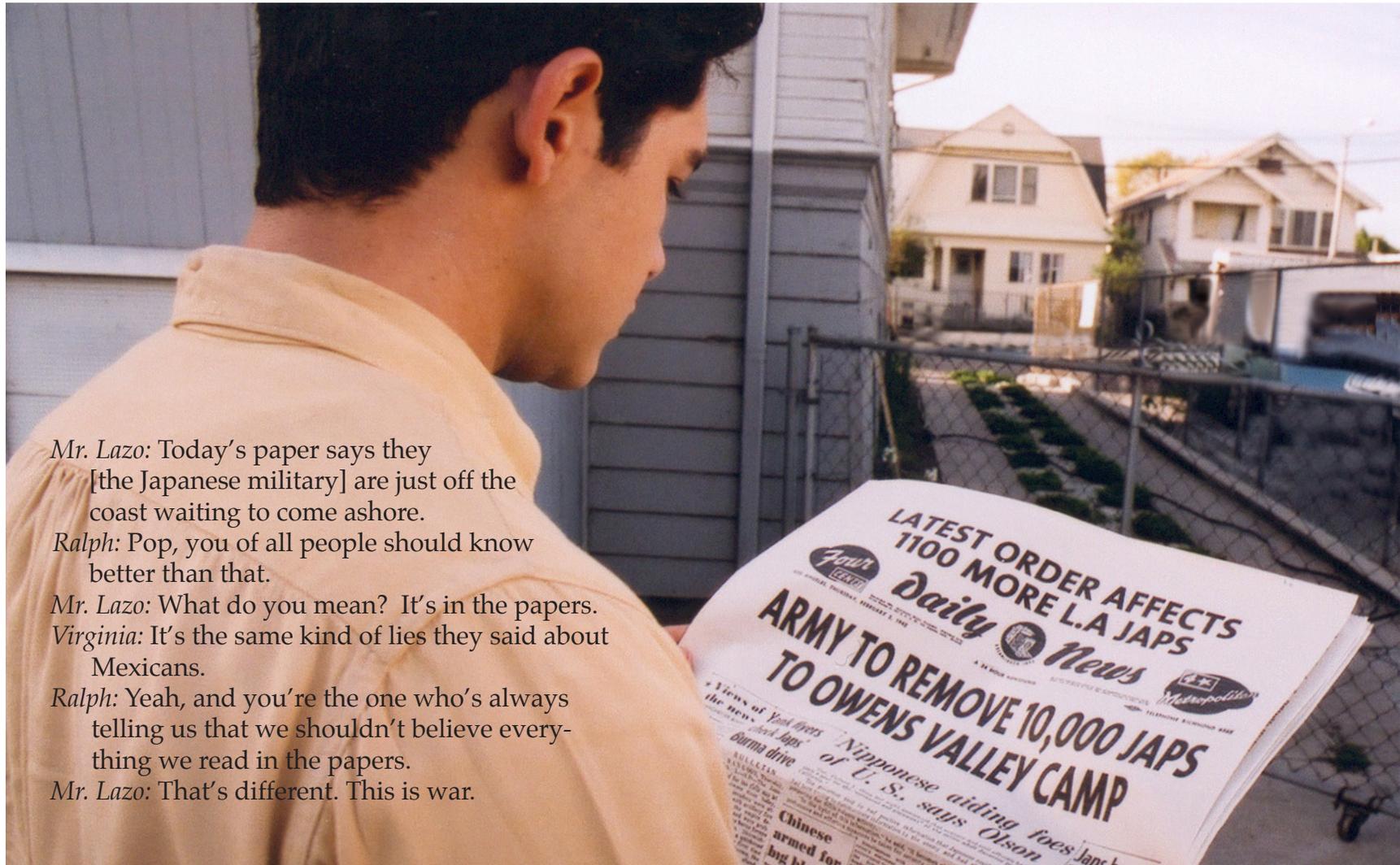
Can you imagine trying to make arrangements for all your belongings (even your beloved pets) within a matter of days? Imagine that all your friends and your whole community were being removed and taken away. You could take with you only what you could carry. It was a time of great fear for everyone in the Japanese American community.

- A. What was Executive Order 9066? How did it affect Japanese Americans?  
B. How would you feel if this happened to you today?

**espionage** — spying in order to learn the military secrets of other nations  
**sabotage** — intentional action carried out to hurt a nation’s war effort



## POWER OF THE MEDIA – NEWSPAPERS AND RADIO



*Mr. Lazo:* Today's paper says they [the Japanese military] are just off the coast waiting to come ashore.

*Ralph:* Pop, you of all people should know better than that.

*Mr. Lazo:* What do you mean? It's in the papers.

*Virginia:* It's the same kind of lies they said about Mexicans.

*Ralph:* Yeah, and you're the one who's always telling us that we shouldn't believe everything we read in the papers.

*Mr. Lazo:* That's different. This is war.

The Lazo home: Ralph reads about the removal of Japanese Americans.

## THE POWER OF THE MEDIA – NEWSPAPERS AND RADIO

Newspapers play an important role in our society. We depend on them for well-researched and truthful information. Throughout history, however, many newspapers have presented false information—even from political leaders and journalists. In the early 1900s, some newspapers and film companies owned by people like William Randolph Hearst spread the term *yellow peril* to falsely claim that the immigration of Japanese and Chinese was like an invasion. They described the yellow peril as hordes of little yellow Asian men who would abduct white women and claim California for their own. These newspapers contributed greatly to the **dehumanizing** of Asian immigrants and the public’s negative attitude.

During World War II, many in the media did not question the government’s actions or the false information against Japanese Americans. Instead, newspaper articles described Japanese as sneaky and dangerous people; political cartoons showed them as animal-like and threatening. John B. Hughes of the Mutual Broadcast Company began a monthlong series from Los Angeles that spread rumors of spying by Japanese Americans.

By the end of January 1942, most newspapers had called for the removal of Japanese Americans. Hearst columnist Henry McLemore wrote:

*I am for the immediate removal of every Japanese on the West Coast to a point deep in the interior. I don’t mean a nice part of the interior either. Herd ’em up, pack ’em off and give ’em the inside room in the badlands. Let ’em be pinched, hurt, hungry, and dead up against it.*

General John DeWitt, the military commander of the Pacific Coast area, made it clear to a congressional committee that Japanese Americans could not be trusted and must be incarcerated:

*A Jap is a Jap ... There is no way to determine their loyalty ... It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen; theoretically he is still a Japanese and you can’t change him.*

However, by April 1943, public opinion began to change, especially on the East Coast. A *Washington Post* editorial responded to General DeWitt’s proclamation that “a Jap is a Jap”:

*The general should be told that American democracy and the Constitution of the United States are too vital to be ignored and flouted by any military zealot. The panic of Pearl Harbor is now past. There has been ample time for the investigation of these people and the determination of their loyalty to this country on an individual basis. Whatever excuse there once was for evacuation and holding them indiscriminately no longer exists.*

- A. How did the media describe Japanese Americans before and during World War II?
- B. Do you know of any groups of people who have been described negatively by media? Do you believe everything you read in the newspapers or hear on TV? How do you decide what is true or not?

**yellow peril** — the threat to Western civilization presented by Asian people, especially Japanese and Chinese

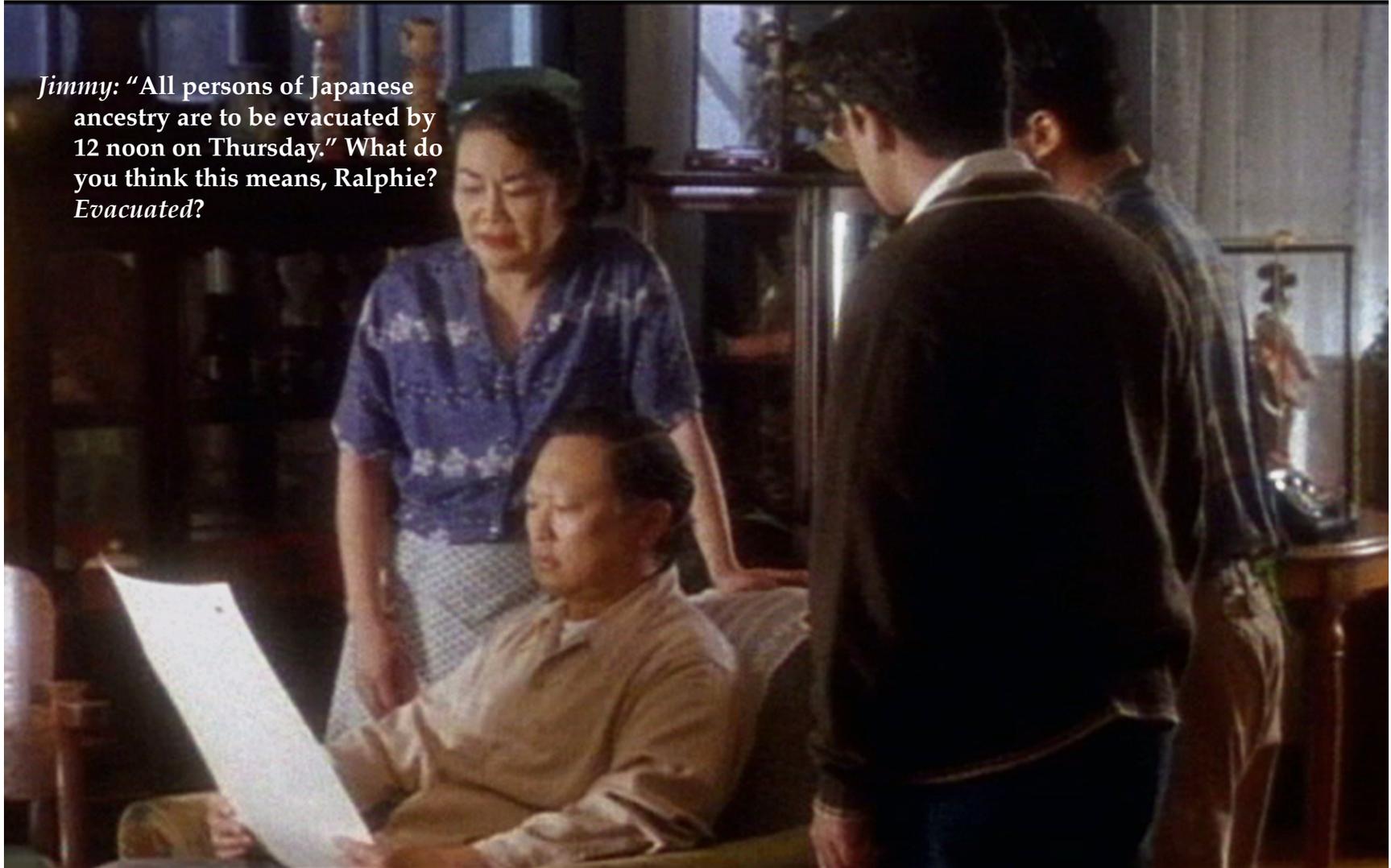
**dehumanizing** — depriving a person of human qualities like kindness, pity, and individuality

**zealot** — a person who is extremely devoted to a purpose, a fanatic



## MANIPULATING LANGUAGE: EUPHEMISMS

*Jimmy: "All persons of Japanese ancestry are to be evacuated by 12 noon on Thursday." What do you think this means, Ralphie? Evacuated?*



The Matsuoka home: Mr. and Mrs. Matsuoka ask Jimmy and Ralph to explain what the notice for removal means.

## MANIPULATING LANGUAGE: EUPHEMISMS

**Euphemism** (yoo' fe miz em) *n.* the use of a word or phrase that is less expressive or direct but considered less distasteful, less offensive than another (Example: "remains" for "corpse") [*Webster's New World College Dictionary*, fourth ed.]

Language, one's choice of words, has a powerful influence on how people understand an event. During World War II, the U.S. government effectively used euphemisms to soften the impact of the forced removal and imprisonment of more than 110,000 Japanese Americans based only on their racial ancestry. Over two-thirds of the prisoners were U.S. citizens by birth; the others were their immigrant parents who were denied citizenship.

Two of the most common euphemisms that are still misused today are *evacuation* and *internment camp* (or *relocation center*). More accurate words are *forced removal* and *concentration camp*. The government's terms give the impression that its actions were gentle and harmless. It did not want the public to know that its own citizens were imprisoned.

For example, an "exclusion poster" of the Western Defense Command read:

*All Japanese persons, both **alien** and **non-alien**, will be evacuated from the above-designated area by 12:00 o'clock noon, Thursday, April 7, 1942.... Each family and individual living alone will be furnished transportation to the Reception Center.*

Even today, the government has used euphemisms such as *casualties* to refer to those killed or wounded in war. Other countries have used *ethnic cleansing* to refer to genocide, the murder of an entire ethnic and/or religious group.

- A. What is a euphemism? What were some of the euphemisms used by the government about the Japanese American incarceration?
- B. Can you think of other euphemisms used today (or in the past)? What is the problem or danger with euphemisms?

**alien** — belonging to another country or people, foreign

**non-alien** — (not in *Webster's New World Dictionary*) If a person is a "non-alien" he/she does not belong to another country. He/she belongs to this country and is a citizen. Two-thirds of the more than 110,000 Japanese Americans were U.S. citizens when they were imprisoned. Their constitutional rights were violated.

**reception center** — suggests a friendly, welcoming place. In reality, it was a temporary jail for the inmates.



## MILITARY NECESSITY



The Lazo home: Ralph, his father, and sister Virginia discuss the forced removal of Japanese Americans.

## MILITARY NECESSITY

The U.S. government called the bombing of Pearl Harbor a sneak attack by Japan. Then the government and many newspapers portrayed Japanese people as sneaky and not to be trusted. Japanese Americans had no connection at all to the bombing of Pearl Harbor. But many political leaders and newspapers began to say Japanese Americans were likely to be loyal to Japan rather than to the United States. They claimed some would commit **espionage** or **sabotage** against the government.

Vocal politicians, newspapers, and anti-Japanese groups on the West Coast used prejudices from the past to create hatred and fear toward Japanese Americans. These anti-Japanese voices became stronger and stronger and called for the removal of all Japanese Americans from the West Coast. Henry Stimson, the secretary of war, and military officials listened to these anti-Japanese voices as they prepared recommendations for President Roosevelt. In his recommendations, Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt said that “along the Pacific Coast over 112,000 potential enemies, of Japanese extraction, are at large today.” DeWitt said that Japanese Americans born in the United States were likely to be as disloyal to the U.S. government as their immigrant parents might be. He later said, “A Jap’s a Jap. There is no way to determine their loyalty.” DeWitt said that there were signs that Japanese Americans would commit sabotage and Japanese Americans were a danger to U.S. military efforts. This idea of danger became known as the “military necessity” to remove

Japanese Americans from military areas on the West Coast.

However, the Department of State, the Navy, and the FBI had studied Japanese Americans and concluded that they were consistently loyal to the United States. But these studies were disregarded by the president and his advisors. Later historians found that DeWitt had lied about sabotage by Japanese Americans to make his argument stronger to persuade Stimson and President Roosevelt to follow his recommendations.

Stimson followed DeWitt’s recommendations and advised President Roosevelt to begin the process of giving the military the power to remove Japanese Americans from military areas. Roosevelt decided to go along with Stimson’s recommendations and signed Executive Order 9066 (EO 9066). Although the order did not directly mention Japanese Americans, it was clearly intended for them.

In 1980, the federal government formed the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) to study the causes of the removal and incarceration. This group listened to former Japanese American inmates, former government officials, and historians who testified about the incarceration experience. The commission concluded that the removal and incarceration were *not* because of military necessity. Instead, it concluded that the reasons for the removal and incarceration were “race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership.”

- A. What reason did the U.S. government give for removing Japanese Americans during World War II? What did the government conclude after its later study about the causes of the removal and incarceration?
- B. What can we learn about how the government decided to remove Japanese Americans from the West Coast?

**espionage** — spying in order to learn the plans and activities of a foreign government



**STAND UP  
FOR JUSTICE**  
*The Ralph Lazo Story*

## LOSSES DUE TO FORCED REMOVAL



The Matsuoka home: Before the forced removal, the Matsuoka family has to quickly sell their belongings to neighbors and profiteers.

## LOSSES DUE TO FORCED REMOVAL

After learning that the U.S. military was going to take them from their homes and communities, Japanese Americans hurriedly sold their belongings, in most cases for next to nothing. A 37-room hotel sold for \$300. Greedy farmers rushed to buy as cheaply as they could productive farmlands long cultivated by Japanese Americans. Whatever couldn't be sold or carried to camp was abandoned. Books, photos, and Japanese antiques were burned. About 3,500 Japanese American students were expelled from colleges and universities on the West Coast. Thousands of high school students did not graduate. The loss of earnings, property, education, and self-respect were blows from which many Japanese Americans never fully recovered (see *The Journey; Personal Justice Denied*).

In 1942, the Federal Reserve Bank estimated that the total Japanese American property loss was about \$400 million (this would amount to billions of dollars today). In 1948, through the Evacuation Claims Act, the government gave some of the former inmates **compensation** of less than ten cents per dollar for property they had given up (for example, for a car valued at \$500, the claimant would receive less than \$50). Japanese American claimants also had to turn in receipts for items lost.

Very few were compensated, and no one was paid for losses due to death, physical or mental hardship, or suffering (see *America's Concentration Camps*).

In 1988, Congress passed and President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act, which gave each former inmate (who was still alive) **reparations** of \$20,000 and an apology for the violation of constitutional rights. This compensation was a very small amount for such a huge injustice, not to mention that the reparations and apology came more than 40 years after the camps closed. It had taken that long for the Japanese American community to rebuild its spirit and strength for a **redress** campaign.

The Civil Liberties Act helped to redress some of the wrongs committed against Japanese Americans. However, many of the former inmates had already passed away and never received redress. As a result of the redress campaign, state and local governments also tried to correct their earlier wrongdoings against Japanese Americans. More recently, hundreds of former inmates (who are now in their 70s and 80s) were given high school diplomas from their original high schools.

- A. What kinds of losses did Japanese Americans suffer due to removal and imprisonment?
- B. Make a list of the losses (for example, property, personal freedoms, friends, pets, etc.) you would suffer if you were to be sent to a concentration camp next week.

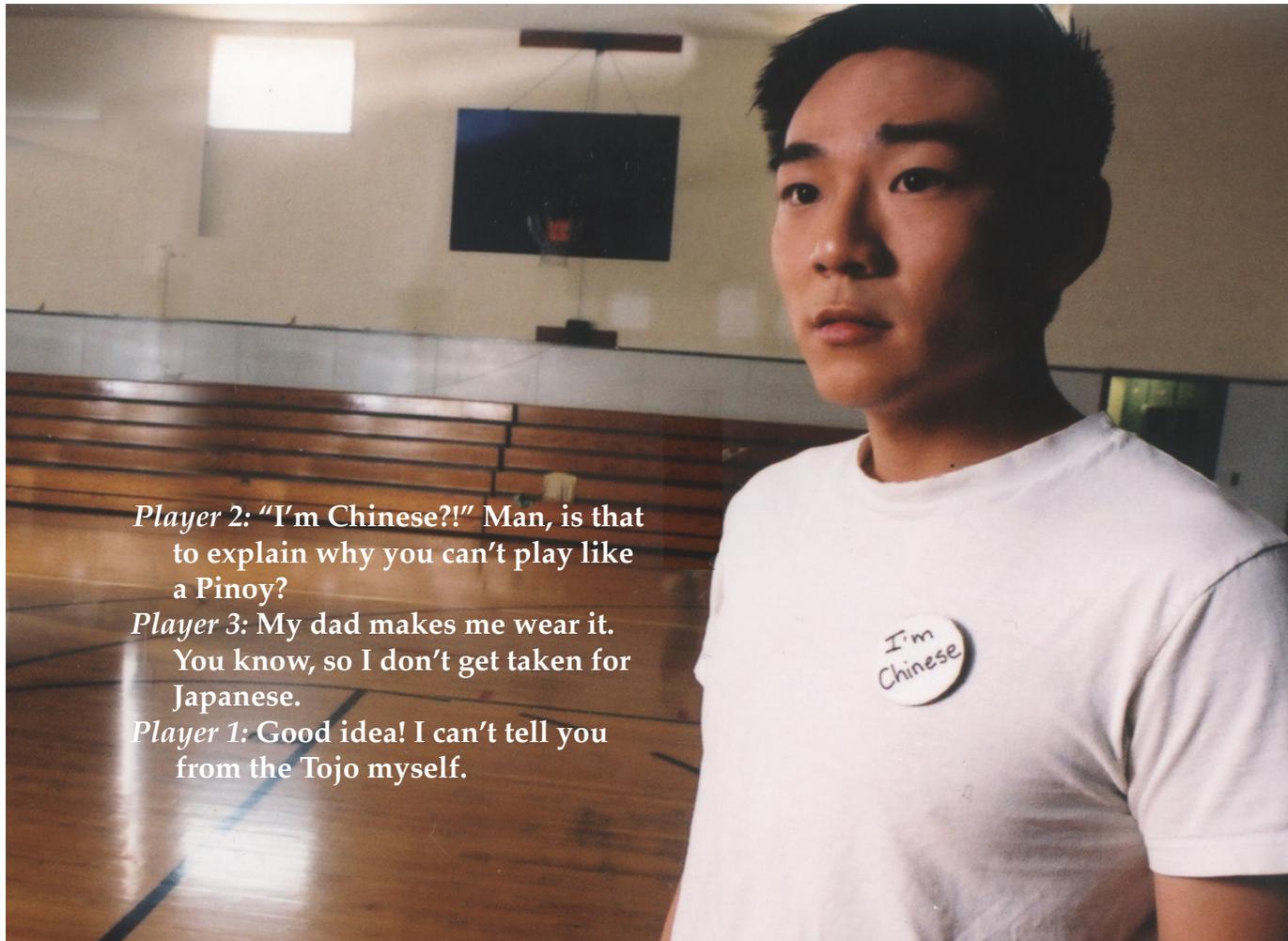
**compensation** — payment for a loss or injury

**reparations** — the paying of compensation for some wrong or injury

**redress** — to set right, rectify, or remedy, often by making compensation for a wrong, grievance, etc.



## RACE PREJUDICE



*Player 2: "I'm Chinese?!"* Man, is that to explain why you can't play like a Pinoy?

*Player 3:* My dad makes me wear it. You know, so I don't get taken for Japanese.

*Player 1:* Good idea! I can't tell you from the Tojo myself.

Los Angeles basketball court: Ralph and Jimmy's Chinese American friend wears a badge so that others won't think that he's Japanese American.

## RACE PREJUDICE

During the late 1880s and early 1900s, many Japanese immigrants came to the United States. They worked on farms, on railroads, and in businesses. Laws kept them from becoming citizens or owning land. Like other immigrants, they faced discrimination and race prejudice. Some store owners posted signs stating, "No Japs Allowed!"

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the United States by bombing Pearl Harbor, Hawai'i. Over 2,400 American soldiers were killed and 21 military ships were destroyed. The fear of, and anger against, Japan were directed toward Japanese Americans by newspapers and government officials.

President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942. This order allowed the military to remove all Japanese Americans from their homes on the West Coast. They were imprisoned in America's concentration camps. The country's leaders said that the forced removal was based on "**military necessity**." However, groups such as the Asiatic Exclusion League and the Native Sons of the Golden West pushed for the forced removal for their own gain. The league's members feared that Asian immigrants were taking jobs from them. They resented the Japanese American farmers' ability to turn undesirable land into productive farms.

Fearing the growing racism, some Asian Americans wore buttons stating, "I am Chinese." They did not want to be mistaken for Japanese. Leaders continued to make prejudicial statements about Japanese Americans that led to **stereotyping** and negative feelings. They called Japanese Americans "Japs," a **derogatory**, hurtful word.

General John L. DeWitt: *A Jap's a Jap.*

Secretary of War Henry Stimson: *Their racial characteristics are such that we cannot understand or trust even the citizen Japanese.*

U.S. Representative John Rankin: *I'm for catching every Japanese in America, Alaska, and Hawaii now and putting them in concentration camps.... Damn them! Let's get rid of them now!*

The United States was also at war with Germany and Italy. In 1942, about 150 U.S. merchant ships positioned off the Gulf of Mexico and the East Coast were attacked and sunk by German vessels. There was, however, no call for the mass imprisonment of German or Italian Americans.

In 1983, a government commission concluded that the wartime removal and imprisonment of Japanese Americans were due to "race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership." This report provided the basis for a presidential apology and reparations to over 82,000 surviving former inmates.

- A. Which groups had strong prejudices against Japanese Americans during the war?  
 B. What do you think about Player 3's button, "I'm Chinese" (see front of card)?  
 Would you have done the same thing? Why or why not?

**military necessity** — a term used by the U.S. government to justify the removal of Japanese Americans during World War II. American military leaders, however, had no proof that Japanese Americans were a threat to the United States.

**stereotyping** — conforming to a fixed or general pattern that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment

**derogatory** — tending to lessen or impair, belittling



## ANTI-ALIEN LEGISLATION



*Ralph:* All along the West Coast, whole neighborhoods were forced to move out on a few days' notice. And nobody knew where they were going. I couldn't believe they would let it happen.

The Matsuoka home: Ralph thinks about the Matsuoka family, which was sent to Manzanar concentration camp by the U.S. government.

## ANTI-ALIEN LEGISLATION

Long before World War II, Asians in California were treated badly. When the first Chinese came to work in the gold mines in 1848, they were often victims of violent crimes, such as **arson** and murder. Laws prevented Chinese immigrants from becoming citizens or voting. Further, California's **anti-miscegenation** law of 1880 prohibited the marriage of a "**negro, mulatto or Mongolian**" to a white person. The California constitution even let cities expel all of their Chinese residents. Finally, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 stopped the flow of Chinese laborers to the United States and was expanded six years later to include all Chinese.

But growers needed cheap labor for the sugar cane fields of Hawai'i and farms in California. The farming industry turned to Japan for workers, who began to come in the 1890s. The Japanese soon faced the same discriminatory laws as the Chinese before them. Groups like the Asiatic Exclusion League, the Japanese Exclusion League of California, and organized labor pushed for laws to restrict immigration and land ownership by Japanese.

The Gentlemen's Agreement with Japan ended the immigration of Japanese workers but allowed those who were already in the United States to travel to Japan and to bring immediate family

members, including prospective brides, to the United States. The California alien land laws of 1913 and 1920 prevented "aliens" (in reality, Asians) from owning land, purchasing land in the name of their citizen children, or from even leasing land for more than three years. Families were forced to move every few years in order to find new land to lease.

Other states, such as Arizona, Texas, Oregon, and Washington, followed with their own alien land laws. Anti-Asian groups were able to pressure the U.S. government to end all immigration from Japan with the Immigration Act of 1924. (An earlier immigration act created an Asiatic Barred Zone, which excluded immigrants from India, Burma, Siam, Afghanistan, Arabia, the Malay Islands, and Polynesia.)

Unlike the Chinese, Japanese men were able to bring their wives to the United States. Until 1920, they could also marry "**picture brides**" and start families. Japanese immigrant parents believed that their U.S.-born children would have better lives than they had. Unfortunately, the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II destroyed this hope. The constitutional rights of Japanese Americans were violated when the government put them into concentration camps.

- A. What were some of the laws passed against Asians in America before World War II?  
 B. What should be the rights of all people, immigrants (documented and undocumented) and citizens? Should the laws be different for some groups of people? Is it ever justified to violate the rights of a whole group of people in order to keep our country safe or for national security? Explain.

**arson** — the criminal act of deliberately setting a fire

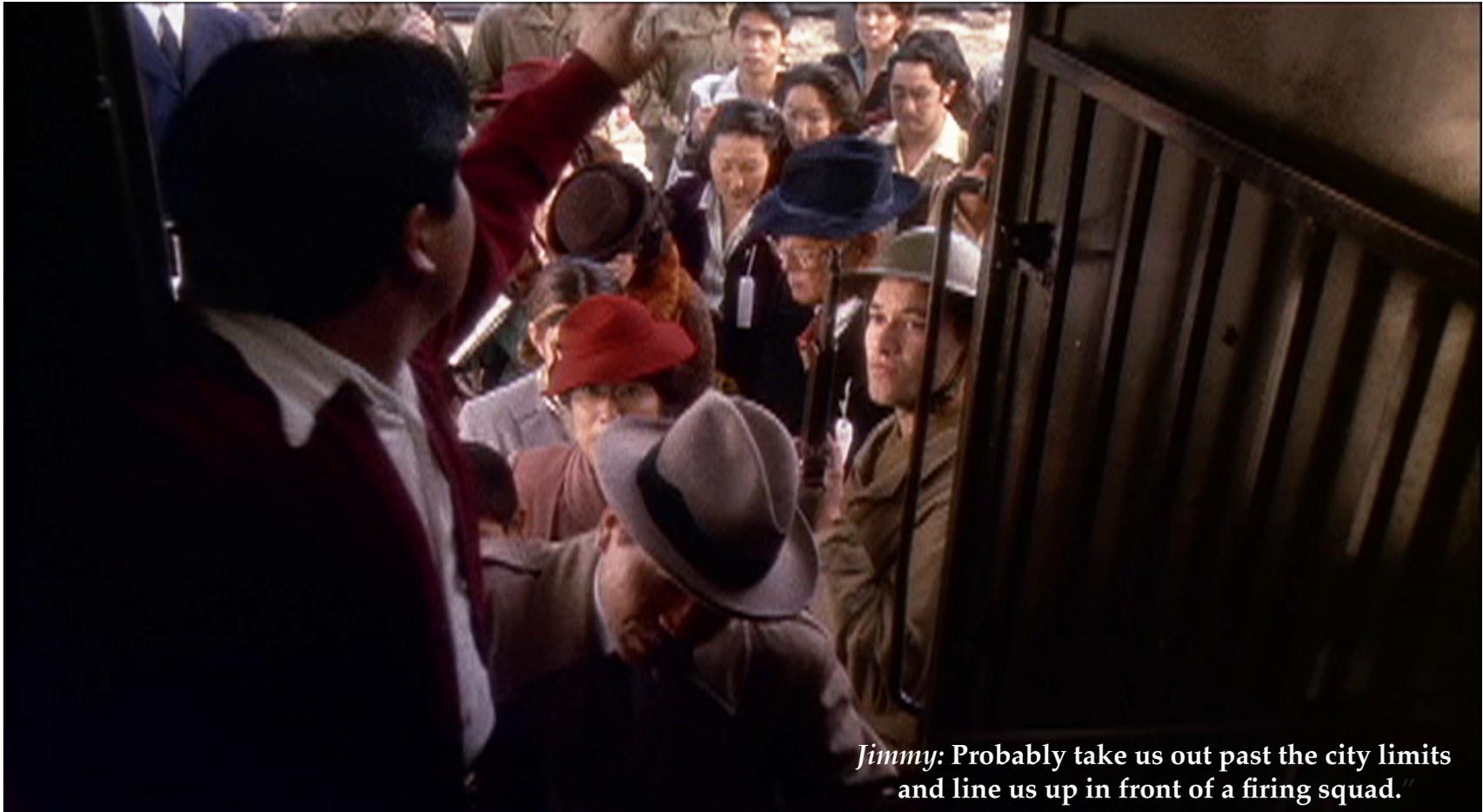
**anti-miscegenation** — against the marriage of different races

**negro, mulatto, and Mongolian** — terms used at the time to describe persons of African, mixed (African/white) or Asian ancestry

**picture brides** — Issei (first-generation immigrant) women who came to the United States to marry men they had seen only in photographs. The family arranged these weddings, and the ceremony was held in Japan without the groom's presence.



## FORCED REMOVAL



Los Angeles train station, 1942: Ralph's friend Art boards the train to Manzanar with other Japanese Americans.

## FORCED REMOVAL

Over 110,000 Japanese Americans were removed from Arizona, Washington, Oregon, and California and placed in ten concentration camps in desolate parts of the United States. Persons with as little as one-sixteenth Japanese ancestry were incarcerated. They were ordered to leave their homes, farms, schools, and businesses within days of receiving notice from the government. Many of the community leaders had already been arrested just hours after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. While concentration camps ringed by barbed wire were being built far inland, Japanese Americans were housed in 16 temporary detention centers. Some of these “assembly centers” were former racetracks, such as the Santa Anita racetrack. The horse stalls, many of which were still coated with manure, became the Japanese Americans’ new living quarters.

Mary Kurihara (from *Repairing America*):

*I remember thinking, Am I a human being? Why are we being treated like this? Santa Anita [racetrack] stunk like hell.*

Grace Nakamura (from *Personal Justice Denied*):

*On May 16, 1942, at 9:30 a.m., we departed ... for an unknown destination. To this day, I can remember vividly the plight of the elderly, some on stretchers, orphans herded onto the train by the caretakers, and especially a young couple with four pre-school*

*children. The mother had two frightened toddlers hanging on to her coat. In her arms, she carried two crying babies. The father had diapers and other baby paraphernalia strapped to his back. In his hands he struggled with duffle bag and suitcase. The shades were drawn on the train for our entire trip. Military police patrolled the aisles.*

William Kochiyama recalled his entry to Tanforan Assembly Center (a racetrack):

*At the entrance ... stood two lines of troops with rifles and fixed bayonets pointed at the evacuees as they walked between the soldiers to the prison compound. Overwhelmed with bitterness and blind with rage, I screamed every obscenity I knew at the armed guards daring them to shoot me.*

The U.S. government also forcibly removed 2,264 Japanese from Latin America and incarcerated them at Crystal City, Texas. Hundreds of Japanese Americans and Japanese Latin Americans were used in the U.S. government’s hostage-exchange program with Japan. Two sailings of the Swedish ship *Gripsholm* transported hundreds of them to Asia. They were exchanged for white Americans who were held captive in Asia after the outbreak of war. Many Japanese Latin Americans were not allowed to return to their homeland after the war.

- A. How did the Japanese Americans feel about being forced from their homes? Where were they taken from, and where were they moved to?
- B. If your government forcibly removed you to a desolate place, what items would you choose if you could only take what you could carry? What would you have to leave behind?

**bayonet** — a detachable, daggerlike blade put on the muzzle end of a rifle, for hand-to-hand fighting



## THOSE WHO STOOD UP FOR JAPANESE AMERICANS

---



Los Angeles train station, 1942: Friends come to say goodbye to their Japanese American neighbors.

## THOSE WHO STOOD UP FOR JAPANESE AMERICANS

While most Americans turned their backs on Japanese Americans, there were some shining examples of kindness and courage.

Clara Breed was a librarian in San Diego during the war and knew many of the Japanese American children who were incarcerated. Miss Breed, as she was known to the children, gave each student a supply of stamped postcards so they could keep in touch while in camp. She mailed books, candy, and clothes to the children. All during their long imprisonment, Miss Breed corresponded with the students. She gave them support and advice. Through her, the student inmates stayed connected with the outside world.

The Society of Friends, or **Quakers**, spoke out against the camps and criticized the living conditions, but to no avail. They helped over 4,000 **Nisei** leave the camps early to finish their college education in the Midwest and on the East Coast and helped Japanese Americans find jobs and housing. The Quakers drove long distances to the camps, bringing them gifts and basic

necessities. To the imprisoned Japanese Americans, their actions showed that there were white Americans who cared.

Individuals such as Fred Okrand and Ernest Besig of the **American Civil Liberties Union** helped some Japanese Americans challenge the constitutionality of the camps in the courts. Because of this, they were attacked as “anti-American” and “unpatriotic.” Okrand called the incarceration “an atrocity ... the greatest single violation of civil rights in our history.” Wayne M. Collins was a heroic supporter of the Japanese Americans. He fought to regain citizenship for Japanese Americans who had gone to Japan during the war. They were used as part of the U.S. government’s hostage-exchange program. He also helped 365 Japanese Latin Americans obtain permanent residency (green card) status in the United States. For more than 20 years, Collins worked on court cases that resulted in the return of U.S. citizenship for 4,978 Nisei who had given up their citizenship for various reasons, including disgust at how they were being treated by the U.S. government.

- A. Who helped the Japanese Americans during these difficult times and how did they help?  
 B. What ethnic, racial, or religious groups are being discriminated against today? What are ways that one can help or support them?

**Nisei** (*nee-say*) — Japanese term for American-born children of Issei, and the second generation of Japanese living in the United States

**Quakers** — a religious group that is committed to peace, racial equality, and humanitarian activities (through the Quaker-affiliated American Friends Service Committee)

**American Civil Liberties Union** — an organization founded in 1920 to preserve the rights and liberties guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights



## A CONCENTRATION CAMP



*Photographer: [It] may be beautiful,  
but it is still a prison.*

Manzanar concentration camp: An inmate looks at the barbed wire and guard tower surrounding the camp.

## A CONCENTRATION CAMP

**A**lthough the War Relocation Authority (WRA) called them “relocation centers,” they were America’s **concentration camps**, “hastily constructed facilities for housing Japanese Americans forcibly removed from their homes and businesses on the West Coast during World War II” (from *Japanese American History*). Surrounded by barbed wire and watchtowers with armed soldiers, each of the ten concentration camps imprisoned 8,000 to 20,000 inmates. The camps were often located in swampland or deserts.

Each had a similar layout—rows of barracks, large plain buildings about 20 feet wide and 120 feet long. Each barrack was divided into six rooms. There were 12 to 14 of these barracks in a block. For each block there was a **mess hall**, **communal** showers, toilets without partitions, a laundry, and a recreational hall. When Japanese Americans first walked into their rooms, they saw a potbellied stove, two Army cots with blankets and little else. During the first night in camp, some families talked about being so cold that they huddled together like dogs to keep warm.

One and sometimes two families shared a 20’x16’ room. The walls were so thin that conversations could be overheard, leaving very little privacy. The inmates tried to improve

their surroundings by making their own furniture, planting gardens, and putting up partitions. It was difficult to keep the family together as a unit because the young people tended to eat separately with their friends in the mess hall. There was a shortage of medical care and basic necessities. Growing children did not have enough milk, meat, or eggs. The endless lines, dust storms, extreme heat, and bitter cold—at times 35 degrees below zero—caused terrible hardship and suffering.

Although the inmates organized schools, churches, clubs, and sports to make life seem more normal, the lack of freedom and the poor conditions led to discontent. Riots occurred and some inmates were even shot at if they wandered too close to the barbed wire fence.

*I cannot help but think of the old men standing with plates in their hands. Residents in America for forty or fifty years, they pursued gigantic dreams and crossed an expansive ocean to America to live.... They were people who had worked with all they had until on their forehead wave-like furrows were harrowed. Every time I see these oldsters with resigned, peaceful expressions meekly eating what is offered them, I feel my eyes become warm. (from *Years of Infamy*)*

- A. What kind of conditions existed in the concentration camps? What did the Japanese Americans do to make living in the camps more bearable or “normal”?
- B. Imagine that you have been forced to leave your home and live in one of these concentration camps based solely on your race. How would this affect the way you see yourself, and what would be some of the lasting effects on you and your family?

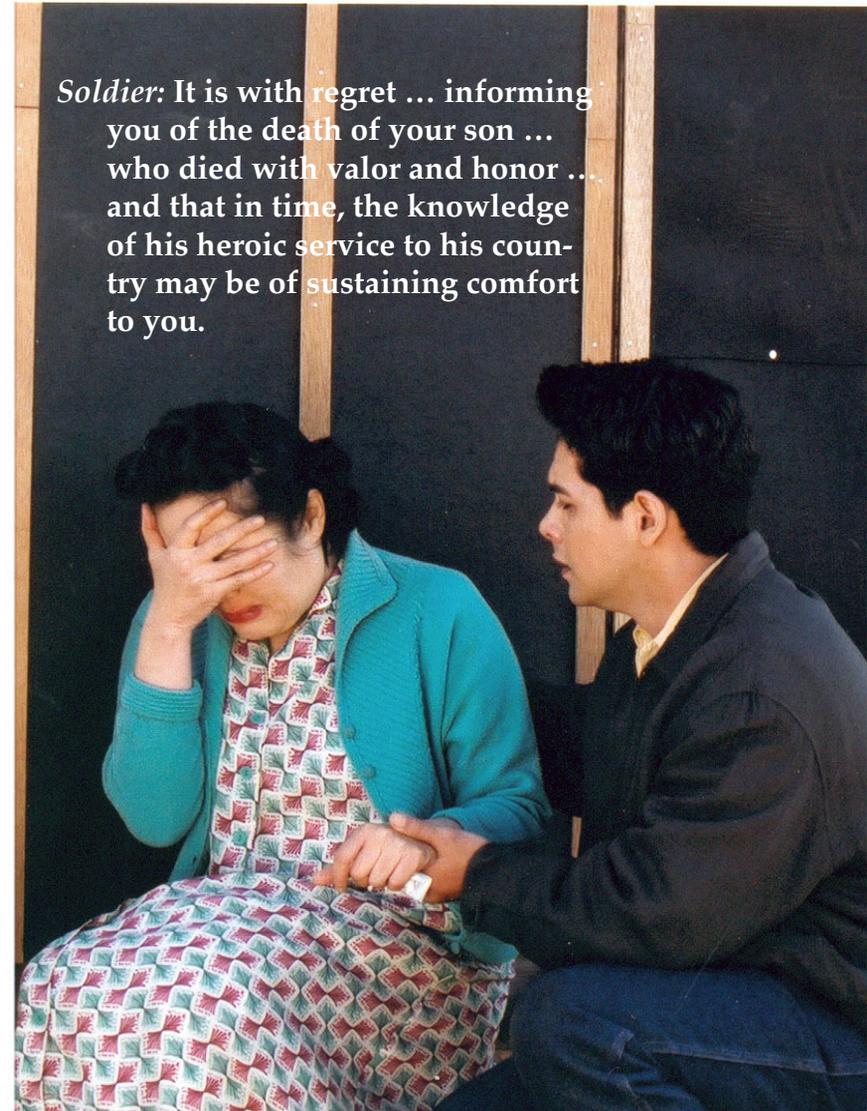
**mess hall** — a place where a group of people eat together regularly, especially such as a place on a military post

**communal** — said of a community; public; used or participated in by all members of a group

**concentration camp** — a camp where prisoners of war, enemy aliens, and political prisoners are confined



## JAPANESE AMERICAN SOLDIERS IN WORLD WAR II



Manzanar concentration camp: A military messenger informs the Matsuokas that their son Harry has been killed while serving in the U.S. military.

## JAPANESE AMERICAN SOLDIERS IN WORLD WAR II

In 1942, Nisei men from Hawai'i volunteered for the U.S. Army's 100th Battalion. The majority of Japanese Americans in Hawai'i were not incarcerated in concentration camps. The 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT) was also made up of Japanese Americans. Unlike the Nisei in the 100th, many of these men had volunteered or were drafted from the concentration camps. The 100th Battalion had already fought many battles in North Africa and in the Battle of Cassino in Italy by the time the 442nd RCT arrived in March 1944. The 100th Battalion became the first battalion of the 442nd and together they helped free towns in France from the Nazis. They saved the Texas "Lost Battalion" of 211 men trapped in eastern France. In the process, 184 Japanese American soldiers lost their lives. These Texans still honor them today as "honorary Texans." The lesser known 522 Field Artillery Battalion of the 442nd RCT helped to free the Jewish prisoners at the Dachau concentration camp in Germany.

More than 33,000 Nisei served in the U.S. military during and immediately after World War II, and many died for their country at places like Anzio and Cassino in Italy while their families were behind barbed wire in concentration camps in America. The men of the 442nd RCT were given over 18,000 medals for bravery. The 442nd RCT was the most highly decorated military unit for its size and length of service in U.S. military history. Yet only one

soldier, Sadao Munemori, received the Medal of Honor at that time. It wasn't until 2000 that 20 Japanese Americans who fought in World War II were awarded this highest military honor by President Bill Clinton, although 13 of the 20 had already died. After the war, President Harry Truman told the Nisei soldiers,

*You fought not only the enemy, but you fought prejudice and you won. (from Japanese American History)*

Nisei soldiers served in the Pacific as part of the Military Intelligence Service (MIS). They could speak both English and Japanese and translated maps and messages sent by Japan. The Nisei questioned Japanese prisoners of war, and they even talked enemy soldiers into giving up. Talking about the MIS, General Douglas MacArthur stated,

*Never in military history did an army know so much about the enemy prior to actual engagement. (from Due Process)*

General Willoughby, an Army intelligence chief, said,

*The Nisei saved countless Allied lives and shortened the war by two years. (from Due Process)*

- What did the Nisei soldiers do to help win/end the war against Germany, Italy, and Japan?
- In *Stand Up for Justice*, Art said, "If we don't prove we're loyal [by serving in the military], they'll think we're just like the enemy. We gotta show them we're American just like everyone else." Do you agree with Art? Does the act of not serving in the military mean you are not loyal? Explain your answer.

**Nisei** (*nee-say*) — Japanese word for a person born in the United States to Japanese immigrant parents



## RIGHTS, CHOICES AND RESISTANCE



*Jimmy:* Rights are just supposed to be there for you. Dammit. Isn't that what they've been teaching us since kindergarten?

Mess hall at Manzanar concentration camp: Jimmy tells Art why he is so angry about being in camp.

## RIGHTS, CHOICES, AND RESISTANCE

The Constitution and Bill of Rights guarantee many rights to citizens of the United States. One of the most important rights is the right to due process. This means that a person has the right to know the charges against him or her and has the right to a speedy and public trial. The U.S. government violated these rights when it removed Japanese Americans from the West Coast. In addition, the FBI entered their homes without search warrants and took away their property. The government put them into concentration camps without charges or trials. On top of this injustice, the government then wanted Japanese Americans to volunteer for military service while they were imprisoned in the camps.

Some Japanese Americans believed that it was important to volunteer and to show loyalty to the United States. Many joined the **442nd Regimental Combat Team** and the **100th Battalion**, newly formed in February 1943. The 442nd lost 700 men and the 100th suffered 900 casualties, including injuries and deaths. Together they earned more than 18,000 medals for bravery (see card 11). Japanese American soldiers also served in the Pacific as part of the Military Intelligence Service (MIS). Able to speak both English and Japanese, these soldiers translated maps and

messages sent by Japan and questioned Japanese prisoners of war.

In January 1944 local Selective Service Boards began to draft eligible Nisei, creating a dilemma for those who believed it was wrong for the government to draft them while incarcerated. Many refused to report for duty. At the Heart Mountain concentration camp, 85 members of the **Fair Play Committee** were tried and sentenced to prison for resisting the draft. The seven leaders faced prison terms of three years, some in solitary confinement. Overall, 315 inmates from the camps and Hawai'i resisted the draft.

Japanese Americans protested in many other ways. They went on strike at Santa Anita Assembly Center and at Heart Mountain over working conditions and wages. They protested the way prisoners were treated in the Tule Lake stockade. Some Japanese Americans refused to work as a way to express their resistance to the mass removal/mass incarceration. Two Japanese Americans, Gordon Hirabayashi and Minoru Yasui, disobeyed the curfew laws, which restricted Japanese Americans to their homes after 8 P.M. Fred Korematsu and Hirabayashi refused the order to leave the West Coast. All three spent time in jail for their decisions, and in the 1980s they filed lawsuits against the U.S. government.

- A. What constitutional rights did the government violate when it removed Japanese Americans from the West Coast and held them in concentration camps? How did the Japanese American inmates respond to the military draft?
- B. What did Japanese Americans do to stand up for their rights? What kind of person is able to resist and stand up to the government? What would you do if you or your family were in a similar situation (curfews, evacuation, camps, draft, etc.) as the Japanese Americans during World War II?

**442nd Regimental Combat Team** — Japanese American soldiers, many of whom were drafted or recruited from the camps, to fight in the military during World War II

**100th Battalion** — Japanese American men from Hawai'i who volunteered to fight for the U.S. Army during World War II

**Fair Play Committee** — Japanese American men who resisted the draft while incarcerated at the Heart Mountain concentration camp



## RALPH'S CHOICE



Outside the mess hall at Manzanar concentration camp: Ruby comforts Ralph just after Jimmy lashes out at him.

## RALPH'S CHOICE

Ralph identified himself as a Mexican American although he was of Mexican and Irish ancestry. Ralph lived in downtown Los Angeles with his father and older sister in a multicultural neighborhood of Japanese, Jews, Basques, Filipinos and African Americans. When his Japanese American friends were sent to the Manzanar concentration camp during World War II, he decided to go with them. He spent two and a half years at Manzanar. After graduation from Manzanar High School in 1944, he was drafted into the Army. Ralph served in the South Pacific, where he participated in the campaign to **liberate** the Philippines and earned a Bronze Star for heroism in combat.

After the war he graduated from UCLA, earned a master's degree from California State University at Northridge, and taught in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Ralph eventually became a counselor at Los Angeles Valley College. During the **redress** movement of the 1980s, Lazo spoke out for redress for the former Japanese American inmates.

When asked why he decided to join his friends at Manzanar and live behind barbed wire in a concentration camp, Ralph said that he sensed the injustice of what was happening to his friends. He

also felt that he had to share their experiences. Ralph explained:

*I knew their loyalty; they hadn't done anything I hadn't done, and time has proven this. It was wrong. I come from a long line of humanitarians; the most important thing for us is a human being, a human life, a human dignity. (from *Rafu Shimpo* reprinted pp. 63-64 in the appendix)*

Ralph won undying love and gratitude from the Japanese American community for his actions. Sue Kunitomi Embrey, former chairperson of the Manzanar Committee, which organizes an annual **pilgrimage** to the Manzanar camp, remembers Ralph:

*On one thing he was consistent and strong — the evacuation and internment were utterly unjustified, and he would never keep quiet about how he felt. Few of his friends knew he had been threatened on more than one occasion. He may have been scared, but he wasn't going to be bullied. At the same time, he was kind and considerate of his friends, a loyal comrade whose friends loved him in return. With this strong commitment, Ralph went one step further. He became a "ronin" — one of ten gallant people to put up \$1,000 [each] to initiate a class-action suit for the National Council for Japanese American Redress. (from "50th Anniversary Day of Remembrance" booklet)*

- A. How did Ralph support Japanese Americans during and after World War II?  
 B. What qualities about Ralph made him do what he did? Are these qualities important to you? Why or why not?

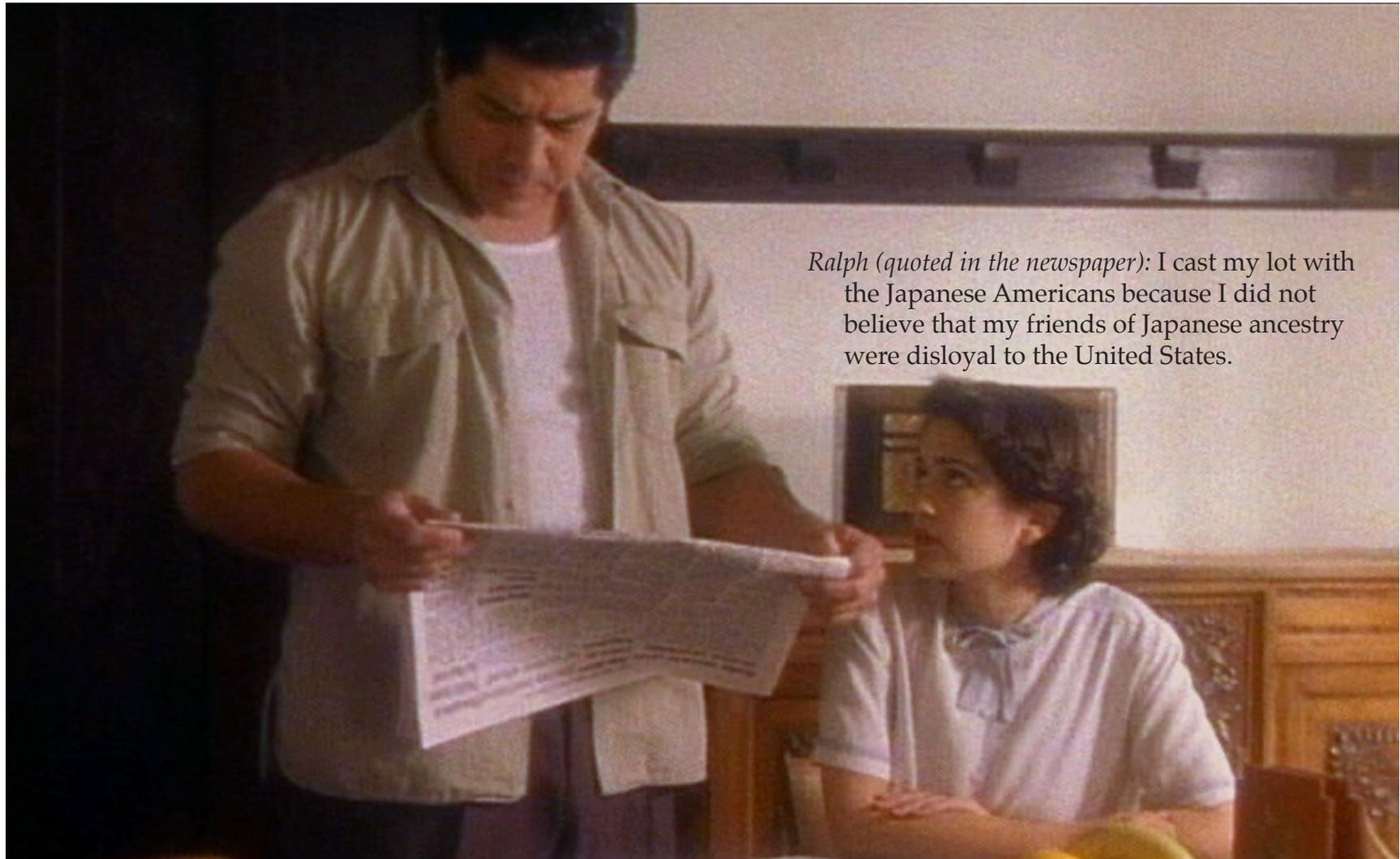
**liberate** — to free a country from the domination or control of a foreign power

**redress** — to set right, rectify, or remedy, often by making compensation for a wrong, grievance, etc.

**pilgrimage** — a journey to a place that has much significance to the person making the journey



## LOYALTY



The Lazo home: Mr. Lazo and daughter Virginia find out that Ralph is in the Manzanar concentration camp.

## LOYALTY

After Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor, the U.S. government said that Japanese Americans could not be trusted to be loyal to the United States. The government said that Japanese Americans might be spies or might commit **sabotage** against our government.

But Japanese Americans were as loyal as any other group of Americans. Two-thirds of them were born and raised in the United States and had no sense of loyalty at all to Japan. Their immigrant parents were treated badly in the United States. However, their lives in Japan had been very difficult. Therefore they decided to stay here to build their families and future in the United States.

So, when World War II started, there was no evidence from the past to show that Japanese Americans would be disloyal to our government. In fact, the FBI and naval **intelligence** had investigated the loyalty of Japanese Americans for more than ten years before World War II. Their studies found Japanese Americans to be consistently loyal. In addition, two months before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt ordered a special investigation into the loyalty of Japanese Americans. Curtis Munson, the investigator, reported:

*For the most part the local Japanese are loyal to the United States ... We do not believe that they would be at the least any*

*more disloyal than any other racial group in the United States with whom we went to war. ... The story was all the same. There is no Japanese "problem" on the Coast.*

However, despite the Munson report, there were military and government leaders who still pushed the idea that Japanese Americans could not be trusted. Earl Warren, who was the attorney general of California and preparing to run for governor, was among the loudest and most influential voices calling for the removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans. He claimed that there was no way of separating the loyal from the disloyal among Japanese Americans. Warren called for the speedy removal of Japanese Americans.

Many West Coast newspapers and anti-Japanese groups joined Warren. They blamed Japanese Americans for the bombing of Pearl Harbor and demanded their removal from the West Coast. Their views were echoed by Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt, who was the military commander in charge of West Coast security. He was a key person to make recommendations to President Roosevelt's advisors on what to do with Japanese Americans. DeWitt claimed that all Japanese Americans might be disloyal to the U.S. government. He later said, "A Jap's a Jap.... There is no way to determine their loyalty.... It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen; theoretically he is still a Japanese and you can't change him."

- A. What did the Munson report say about the loyalty of Japanese Americans during World War II?  
B. How do you think Japanese Americans felt when their loyalty was questioned?

**sabotage** — an action carried out to hurt a nation's war effort

**intelligence** — information concerning an enemy or possible enemy or a government agency that seeks this information



## RESETTLEMENT/RETURNING HOME



*Ruby:* The war ended, and the camps closed down...

The Matsuoka home, 1945: The Matsuokas return home at the end of the war.

## RESETTLEMENT/RETURNING HOME

The War Relocation Authority (WRA) director, Dillon Myer, encouraged Japanese Americans who could pass security clearances to leave the camps to move east or north, away from military zones. **Resettlement**—leaving camp and starting their lives over—was very difficult for most Japanese Americans. By the end of 1943, only 17,000 people had left camp to resettle. By 1945 inmates were allowed to return to the West Coast. The **Issei** had had everything taken away three years earlier and were now in their 60s—too old to start over. Bad as the camps were, many felt resettlement was even more upsetting.

The last 44,000 inmates from the ten major camps—many elderly or poor—were forced to leave the camps. However, with shattered lives and little hope for the future, they did not want to leave the security of the camps. For many Japanese Americans there were no homes or work to return to. They were given \$25 and a bus or train ticket to a destination of their choice. Many moved to Chicago, Denver, Seabrook Farms (New Jersey), and other places where they could find work.

The camps destroyed Japanese American communities, and it would be many years before some were rebuilt. Many were

never rebuilt. Housing was a big problem during resettlement. Many people would not rent to Japanese Americans, so finding decent places was a big problem. Many people moved into temporary shelters, converted army barracks, rundown trailer parks and hotels.

Many camp survivors got tuberculosis. Some suffered nervous breakdowns and others died from heart conditions. Former Japanese American inmates tried to forget the past out of shame and grief. Many became silent about their experiences.

Racism against Japanese Americans was strong, especially on the West Coast. **Nisei** men had difficulty finding jobs. Many went into gardening and janitorial work; women took housework or civil service jobs. Kiku Hori Funabiki said:

*Returnees faced life-threatening situations. A friend informed me that on one occasion, with her family, [she] had to dodge bullets from a drive-by shooting. Then she shared a story of a neighbor who had his house torched. We had no protection from these incidents. (from *Our Side of the Fence*)*

- A. After the war, what difficulties did the Japanese Americans face during resettlement?  
 B. What might be the feelings of those who were just released from camp? Would you have gone back to the West Coast? Where else could you have gone? Explain your answer.

**resettlement** — the movement of inmates out of the permanent detention centers to areas outside the prohibited zones

**Issei** (*ee-say*) — the first generation of Japanese immigrants to settle in the United States

**Nisei** (*nee-say*) — the second generation of Japanese living in the United States

**WRA** (War Relocation Authority) — the government agency in charge of the administration of the concentration camps



## STANDING UP FOR JUSTICE



*Older Ralph:* You asked me why I went. My dad finally understood when I got home from the Army and we talked. Told me he was proud of me. You just have to stand by your friends and stand up for justice.

Manzanar Pilgrimage, 1988: Still friends, Ralph and Ruby visit Manzanar concentration camp with two of Ralph's students.

## STANDING UP FOR JUSTICE

In the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, many Americans were seeking to end racial segregation and promote equal rights for all Americans. There were Japanese Americans who were involved in this civil rights movement and who were inspired to create their own movement. By the early 1980s, many people recognized the serious injustices done to Japanese Americans during World War II and were ready to push the government to make amends with Japanese Americans.

The Japanese American community was determined to seek **redress** from the U.S. government. For many years, it held meetings, wrote letters to Congress, and made hundreds of presentations to churches, schools, and community groups. This **grassroots** campaign gained widespread support throughout the country. Latinos, African Americans, religious groups, and many others gave their support. Together, all of these groups helped Japanese Americans win redress.

The redress campaign resulted in Congress passing the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. This act gave a presidential apology and \$20,000 in **reparations** to each surviving inmate and Japanese American who lost had liberty or property as a result of EO 9066. An education fund was also provided to support projects that

would teach the American public about the forced removal and imprisonment of Japanese Americans.

By 1998, over 82,000 Japanese Americans had received the president's apology and the compensation. The U.S. government admitted it had wronged Japanese Americans — this partially restored some of the dignity and pride that were taken away during the war. However, the compensation was a small amount compared to the injustice and losses that Japanese Americans had suffered.

Ralph Lazo did not have to go to a concentration camp. He volunteered to be there to stand by his Japanese American friends. Later in life he continued to support them in their efforts to win redress. Ralph, in this way, stood up for justice. In 1980, during a conflict with Iran, some in our government suggested that Iranian Americans be incarcerated. At that time, when Ralph Lazo was asked whether he would go again to camp, he replied:

*That's an ideal question to ask if you can. No one should've gone to the camps. I had to go because my friends shouldn't have had to go. So sure, yes, I would. (from Rafu Shimpo, reprinted pp. 63-64 in the appendix)*

- A. What did Japanese Americans do to “right the wrong”? How did the government respond?  
 B. Have you or a family member been faced with an injustice? If so, what did you (or they) do? What are some of the injustices that other ethnic communities are facing today?

**redress** — to set right, rectify, or remedy, often by making compensation for a wrong, grievance, etc.

**grassroots** — operating at the basic level or foundation of a community or society

**reparations** — the paying of compensation for some wrong or injury

