

New Left concentration camps-

ELLIOT M. GOLD

Ever since I've been involved in the movement I've heard of the detention camps which the government is setting up for Black Militants, White Leftists and the rest of us "Com Symps". I heard conflicting reports that some people had seen Tule Lake and found a camp while others had proof that the camp was no longer in existence. In order to clarify the question in my mind, my wife and I drove up to Tule Lake to find out. Well, it's there, in all its sparkling barbed wire. The reason for the conflicting reports, I think, is the fact that the Tule Lake Camp is not in the City of Tule Lake; it is in Newell which is north of Tule Lake. When using the directions given by the residents of Newell, you will find small run down houses surrounded by trees (couldn't be the place).

The first structures are not surrounded by any fences or barbed wire. The reason is simple, these were the residences of the operators of the Camp. The fact is, the main office of the Camp is now the general store of Newell. Imagine my

wife and I up there with a little spy camera, a 35mm camera and lenses hidden in my car. We saw the trees and felt like we had taken this ride to make fools of ourselves. We took some pictures and got in the car and started to drive home.

All of a sudden there it was, the Camp which held the Japanese families. It is a scene which could only be reproduced by a movie crew recreating the German Camps or by the United States of America. The barbed wire on the front of the camp is indeed old, like it hasn't been kept up in twenty-five years. The area between the outside fence and the inner fence, some fifty yards or more, is now used by the cities in the area for the storage of drain pipes and other items. Once inside the inner fence, you are confronted by a sight which is confusing. There are some barracks which are rotting away, some that are painted bright colors and one

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Fact or fancy?

that looks brand new. There is one which is filled with building materials. There is a new nine foot fence with the provision for barbed wire on one side of the camp.

After experiencing the camp and getting some comment from the residents, we decided to do some research on the camps and find out just why this camp is still standing. Some of the people who live there said that 1) the camp has been sold by the government, and that 2) the new fence did not exist.

WORLD WAR II HISTORY OF THE CAMPS

According to Anne Reeploeg Fisher in her 1965 book EXILE OF A RACE, President Roosevelt was interested in getting us involved in a war with Japan. Mrs. Fisher lists evidence which shows that the code which Japan was using to send "secret" messages to their American ambassador was broken months before the attack on Pearl Harbor. She

also casts doubt on the fact that the attack was a surprise, since war games in Hawaii had previously concluded with one army (in the game) knocking out the whole fleet at Pearl Harbor (strategically only). In other words, they knew ahead of time that the Harbor was vulnerable to complete destruction and yet they acted surprised. You can't convince me of that.

After the Harbor was attacked, we declared war. Then the rumors of the Fifth Column started. This rumor connected the Japanese and Japanese Americans in Hawaii, and those on the west coast of the States to non-existent espionage which was going to lead to the Japanese forces taking over the west coast from within. Believe it or not, the person who led the fear campaign in California to "get rid of the Japs" was Earl Warren, who was Secretary of State and later governor of this state. When it was pointed out that there was no evidence that the Japanese were preparing for espionage, Mr. Warren stated that the lack of evidence was further evidence that they were plan-

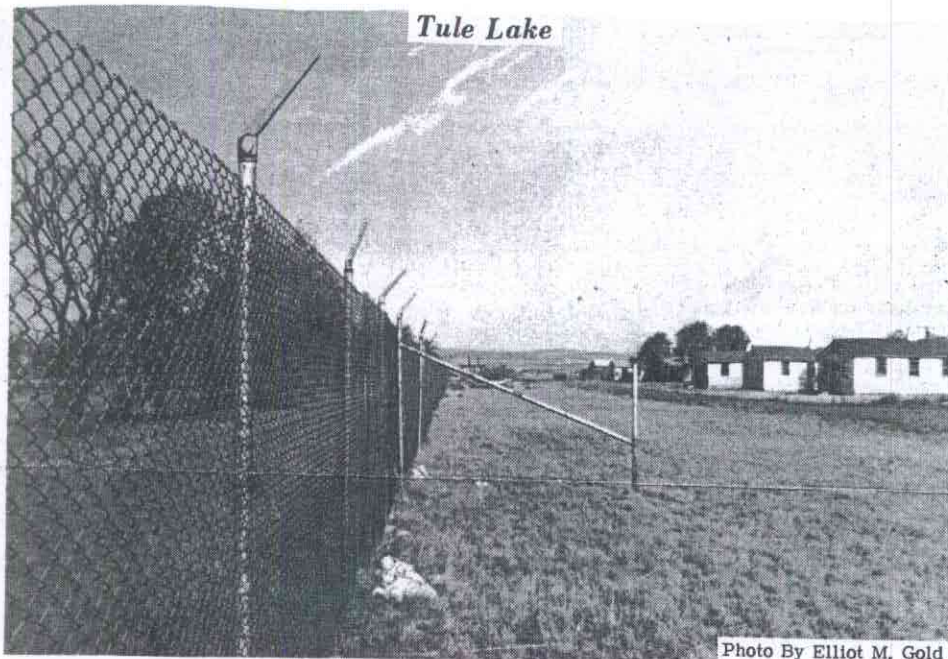


Photo By Elliot M. Gold

ning to overthrow the government. Maybe the John Birch Society was right (no pun intended).

As you may know the "lock them up campaign" was only initiated against the Japanese. There were no round-ups of Germans or Italians. There were suspected people rounded-up by the FBI on the night of December 7, 1941 who were held for hearings. The breakdown was: 2,192 Japanese, 1,393 Germans and 284 Italians. These people were given hearings. When the 116,000 Japanese were rounded-up, they were given as little as 48 hours warning and no hearing. To compare how different governments handled this problem: Great Britain arrested 74,000 enemy aliens and set up civilian hearing boards which quickly processed all and released 87 percent of the aliens unconditionally. Of the 116,000 Japanese the United States dealt with, 75,000 were American citizens of which a majority were children.

HOW THEY WERE ROUNDED UP

A terror campaign lead by some land speculators and Earl Warren was used to convince the people on the coast that they had to fear and hate the Japanese. It is interesting that some of those Japanese who had to be rounded up were those who had toiled for years to build up some of the finest farm land in the nation. A fake air raid was staged in Los Angeles in which large amounts of anti-aircraft shells were fired from the ground. A press re-

lease stated that the planes which were fired at were commercial planes flown by the aliens. There was a retraction three weeks later when it was revealed that there were no planes in the air at the time of the shelling. The retraction was not printed. On December 15, 1941 the President gave a speech supporting the Bill of Rights on its 150th Anniversary. On February 19, 1942,

(some 66 days later) President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066. The main intent of Executive Order 9066 was as follows: "... I hereby authorize and direct the Secretary of War... to prescribe military areas in such place... from which any or all persons may be excluded...". "The Secretary of War is authorized to provide for residence of any such area... food, shelter and other accommodations... until other arrangements are made to accomplish the purpose of this order."

"Designation of military areas in any region or locality... shall supersede the responsibility and authority of the Attorney General in respect of such prohibited and restricted areas..."

(Signed)

Franklin D. Roosevelt

The essence of the order was to set up areas of the country within which people of a certain background could not live. These people were to be housed by personnel of the military until they could be moved or after they were moved from that area. The juris-

dition of the military was to supersede the jurisdiction of the Justice Department and other civilian agencies. The military had control over the civilians.

The stage was set and in spite of the protests of the clergy and concerned people, ten centers were constructed. The largest which was at Newell contained 18,789 people. The other camps were at Poston and Gila, Arizona; Heart Mountain, Wyoming; Minidoka, Idaho; Manzanar, California; Granada, Colorado; Topaz, Utah and Rohwer, Arkansas. The Western Defense Commander General John L. DeWitt, on March 2, 1942 issued the proclamation establishing the areas to be evacuated, also declared, "A Jap's a Jap. It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen or not. I don't want any of them here. They are a dangerous element."

The rest is history. 116,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans were rounded-up and held in the camps. Some were released before the end of the war, while others spent the entire war in the camps. The estimated loss to the Japanese and Japanese Americans in farm land was 65 million dollars.

THE AFTERMATH

After the war was over in 1946 those held in the camps tried to readjust to life. Four years later in 1950 the camps were once again considered for reopening, according to Charles R. Allen, Jr., author of CONCENTRATION

CAMPS USA. During that year the Internal Security Act of 1950 (McCarran Act) was passed over the veto of President Truman. Title II of the act authorized the Attorney General to establish detention camps to detain "...all persons as to whom there is reasonable ground to believe that such person probably will engage in or probably will conspire with

others to engage in acts of espionage and sabotage." Ever heard of anything so vague?

On January 1, 1952, the Attorney General of the United States, a man who thought the McCarran Act was a result of "...national hysteria over Communism", named the six permanent camp locations. The camps that were set up on a "stand by basis" were Wichenburg and Florence, Arizona; El Reno, Oklahoma; Allenwood, Pennsylvania; Avon Park, Florida; and Tule Lake, California. Mr. Allen has visited all sites as late as 1966. The ownership of some of the camps is questionable including Tule Lake. Mr. Allen claims that the camp at Newell is leased by the Tule Lake Growers Association. The right to reentry by the government is also questionable. One of the buildings, the

new one in the picture could be a hunting lodge leased out by the Association. Some of the camp sites are now used as prisons while other sites are occupied by non government personnel.

Don't let this doubt relieve your anxiety; the law is still on the books. The government still has the right to pick out a race or class or any group, using a vague law and build detention centers for them. The law is the Internal Security Act of 1950 Title II. There has been opposition to the law just as there was opposition to the internment of the Japanese and Japanese Americans. The German people sat by in apathy and ignorance. You no longer have that ignorance but your apathy may get you sent away to a very special summer camp some day.