

WORLD WAR II ENEMY ALIEN CONTROL PROGRAM CURRICULUM GUIDE AND LESSON PLANS

LESSON PLAN NINE: *“Lista Negra--The Black Lists”*

APPROPRIATE GRADES/COURSES:

8-14, U.S. History; Civics, American Government, Political Science

TOPIC BACKGROUND SUMMARY:

During World War II, the United States went outside its own borders into fifteen Latin American countries and seized 4,058 Germans, 2,264 Japanese, and 288 Italians, all of whom were brought to the United States for internment. “National security” was the U.S. government’s official explanation for the seizures. However, documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act reveal that another purpose of the program was to replace German, Japanese, and Italian economic interests in Latin America with those of the U.S. In the course of the program, a third extraordinary motive for the seizures evolved: to obtain hostages to trade for U.S. citizens stranded in war zones.

Starting in July of 1941, newspapers in nearly every Latin American country published “La Lista Negra” or “The Black List,” which was the informal name for what the United States called “The Proclaimed List of Certain Blocked Nationals.” The German, Italian and Japanese Latin Americans whose names appeared on the list were considered “potential subversives,” and on the day of the Pearl Harbor attack, local police in Latin America began arresting them. The blacklist also affected companies and individuals with no connection to the Axis powers. Teachers, priests, journalists, business owners, or anyone who held a position in a German, Italian, or Japanese ethnic club or cultural organization was targeted. None was ever charged with a crime. There were no search warrants issued, no hearings given. Axis nationals were taken to local jails until they could be transported to the U.S. Among the Germans seized were eighty-one Jews suspected of being Nazi agents, or who were taken simply because they were German businessmen. Wives and children were often left behind to fend for themselves, though some families chose to go into internment with their deported head of household rather than be separated. By November of 1942, U.S. recommendations included deporting the whole family.

In a memo to President Roosevelt in October of 1942, Secretary of State Cordell Hull advised hemispheric removal of Axis nationals in Latin America. He further recommended to President Roosevelt the removal of all Japanese from Latin America, along with the removal of what he described as “dangerous” Germans and Italians. Then on December 18, 1942, Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall issued a secret order to the Caribbean Defense Command stating, “These interned nationals are to be used for exchange” with Americans trapped in Axis countries.

Panamanian officials continued arresting persons of Japanese, German, and Italian ancestry and interning them in an American military facility in the Canal Zone. In Peru, Japanese newspapers and schools were closed, licenses for hunting, fishing and firearms possession revoked, and bank accounts frozen. Gatherings of three or more Japanese Peruvians were forbidden, resulting in arrests for illegal assembly. U.S. officials monitored aliens' mail. Travel was restricted and telephones removed from Japanese homes. The Peruvian government expropriated farms and businesses owned by Axis nationals with little or no compensation. Guatemala froze the assets of all Axis nationals, restricted travel, and outlawed the speaking of German on the telephone. Costa Rica issued orders to intern all Japanese nationals, as well as many Germans and Italians.

Among the Latin American governments, the degree of cooperation or resistance varied greatly. Peru was an enthusiastic participant in the hostage exchange program, with some government officials advocating wholesale removal of its entire Japanese population. Peru sent nearly 1,800 persons of Japanese ancestry to the U.S. In several cases, individual deportees were clearly targeted because of their important economic role in their countries of residence, even when there was no evidence that they had assisted the Axis. Some German nationals who spent the war in internment camps were simply businessmen whose firms competed with American interests. Refugees from Germany were sent to Balboa Detention Center in the Panama Canal Zone for U.S. Army interrogation.

Most of the Latin American hostages were eventually sent to the United States and endured a grueling journey aboard transport ships in the custody of armed guards. While en route, Army and Navy personnel confiscated their identity documents and passports. Once they arrived in New Orleans or San Francisco, the bewildered deportees obviously could no longer produce passports or visas, and Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) officers classified them as "illegal aliens" who had entered the U.S. unlawfully. Often under cover of night, they were loaded onto trains with blinds drawn over the windows, and sent to some fifteen INS facilities scattered throughout the United States. Among the Latin American internees were eighty-one Jews, most from Panama and British Honduras, many of whom were sent to camps run by the Army for Axis POWs and Nazi sympathizers--dangerous places for the Jewish internees.

When the German government learned that some of its overseas citizens had been seized in Latin America and interned in the United States, it ordered the seizure of U.S. and Latin American citizens living in Europe. Complex negotiations followed, resulting in several exchanges of civilian prisoners. From 1942 to 1945, at least 2,000 persons of German ancestry and at least 37 Italians, including women and children, from the U.S. and Latin America were sent to Europe in six exchanges across the Atlantic Ocean at the height of the war.

The U.S. did not want to return any aliens who might aid the Axis war effort, and State Department policy was to exchange only harmless people of German, Japanese, or Italian ancestry. Repatriates to Germany signed an oath not to perform military service. Some died as civilians who were killed by Allied bombs, while others were imprisoned under suspicion of being American spies.

Japan also agreed to prisoner exchanges but did not want to accept reluctant repatriates. There was also difficulty in finding ships. Two exchanges occurred in 1942 and 1943 involving 2,800 persons of Japanese ancestry from the U.S. and Latin America.

Some deportees were drafted into the military service of Japan and died in combat. Others lost their lives in air raids as civilians.

ESTIMATED TIME OF COMPLETION OF LESSON PLAN:

One period, with provisions for additional extra credit study by interested students.

STUDENT OBJECTIVES:

Review the history and political motivation behind the U.S. adoption of the Monroe Doctrine.

Understand how national security measures collide with issues of due process and human rights during times of war.

Understand the human rights issues underlying the government's program of Latin American internment, deportation, and hostage exchange.

Understand how the German, Japanese and Italian communities in Latin America reacted to their arrests, detention, internment, and deportation.

MATERIALS

Printed copies of the **Topic Background Summary**

Printed hand-outs defining **Key Terms/Concepts** (see Lesson Plan One)

Printed handout, **Monroe Doctrine** (see: wikipedia.org/wiki/Monroe_Doctrine)

Printed handout, **1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. This was a declaration of international human rights, adopted by the General Assembly of the United States in December of 1948. The declaration was a response to many of the human rights abuses and injustices perpetrated during World War II. For a copy of the statement, see: <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>, especially article 9.

Printed copies of: **“Unsettled History: Kidnapped and interned during World War II, Japanese brothers intend that their story not fade away”**. The story appeared in the “San Francisco Weekly” and can be accessed online at: http://www.sfweekly.com/Issues/1999-09-29/news/bayview_2.html

TEACHER PREPARATION:

Prepare photocopy package of materials (listed above) for students.

Prepare discussion questions. Suggested questions for discussion:

Were the actions taken by the United States government against Latin American Germans, Italians, and Japanese necessary in terms of military security?

Were the “blacklists” of dangerous Latin Americans a good idea?

Should the U.S. government issue a formal apology to the victims of our Latin

American internment and deportation program?

Are the victims of the program entitled to financial compensation for their suffering and losses?

Is today's generation of citizens and leaders responsible for righting the wrongs, legal and financial, perpetrated by previous generations?

What was the motive for Latin American countries to collaborate with the U.S. against Latin American Germans, Italians, and Japanese?

PERIOD ONE--CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:

For the teacher

Distribute the handouts

For the students: (first half of period)

Read the handouts

For the teacher and students: (second half of period)

Class discussion centered around handouts and suggested discussion questions:

Were the actions taken by the United States government against Latin American Germans, Italians, and Japanese necessary in terms of military security?

Were the "blacklists" of dangerous Latin Americans a good idea?

Should the U.S. government issue a formal apology to the victims of our Latin American internment and deportation program?

Are the victims of the program entitled to financial compensation for their suffering and losses?

Is today's generation of citizens and leaders responsible for righting the wrongs, legal and financial, perpetrated by previous generations?

What was the motive for Latin American countries to collaborate with the U.S. against Latin American Germans, Italians, and Japanese?

Homework:

Assume you are a member of a Commission considering whether or not to offer financial compensation to Art Shibayama, subject of the story "Unsettled History." What amount, if any, would you award him? What are your arguments for and against awarding him any money? Would you issue him a formal apology on behalf of the U.S. government? If not, why not? If you would, how would the apology read? If you think the government's World War II policy was wrong, what should the government do to make sure it never happens again?

KEY TERMS/CONCEPTS:

See Lesson Plan One for a glossary of **Key Terms/Concepts**.

ONLINE/MEDIA RESOURCES:

German American Internee Coalition: www.gaic.info

This organization and its Web site present detailed information and case histories on the German, German American, and German Latin American chapter of the Enemy Alien Control Program.

The Freedom of Information Times: www.foitimes.com

This Web site, kept by former internee Art Jacobs, presents case histories, resources, and documents relating to the German and German American chapter of the Alien Enemy Control Program.

www.fear-itself.com Also: <http://www.ebookmall.com/ebook/180396-ebook.htm>

This is the Web site of author Steve Fox, who has written extensively on the Latin American chapter of World War II internment.

TRACES: www.traces.org

Traces is an educational organization and history museum in St. Paul, Minnesota that focuses in part on the Alien Enemy Control Program. Its Buseum-2 has traveled throughout the Midwest and has been viewed by tens of thousands of guests. The Buseum-2 presents a rolling exhibit of enemy alien case histories and background.

Japanese Peruvian Oral History Project:

www.campaignforjusticejla.org/AWRIC/awric
www.campaignforjusticejla.org/history/index.html

This organization provides an informational Web site on the internment of Japanese Latin Americans during World War II. "The Art Shibayama Story," by Casey Peek productions, is available online from this organization. Students/teachers interested in pursuing this controversial World War II issue further should visit the site.

SUPPLEMENTAL READING:

(for students interested in extra credit study on the issues)

Donald, Heidi; *We Were Not the Enemy*, iUniverse.com, 2006

Fox, Stephen: "The Deportation of Latin American Germans, 1941-47: Fresh Legs for Mr. Monroe's Doctrine," published in the *Yearbook of German-American Studies, Volume 31, 1997*

Friedman, Max: *Nazis and Good Neighbors: The Campaign Against the Germans of Latin America in World War II* (Cambridge University Press: 2003)