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Review of: Judgment without Trial: Japanese American Imprisonment during World War II, by Tetsuden Kashima

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Review

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recommended to all who share these concerns across our various fields and disciplines.

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Judgment without Trial: Japanese American Imprisonment during World War II. By Tetsuden Kashima. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003. xi + 316 pp. Map, tables, chart, notes, bibliography, index. \$35.00.)

Few events in twentieth-century western U. S. history have been scrutinized more closely than the imprisonment of Japanese Americans during World War II. A team of anthropologists, political scientists, and sociologists studied the incarceration as it occurred. In the last sixty years historians and legal scholars have joined these social scientists in producing dozens of books and articles about the imprisonment. Tetsuden Kashima's thoughtful interpretation of the imprisonment demonstrates that this event has not been examined exhaustively.

Most of the scholars who have studied the Japanese American imprisonment have focused on the U. S. residents imprisoned by the army and the War Relocation Authority. Kashima argues that we cannot understand the imprisonment of people of Japanese ancestry (Nikkei) by limiting our attention to one group of Japanese people or a single federal agency. He shows that an "imprisonment organization composed of many different units from various sectors of the government and military" planned and implemented the incarceration (p. 5). As early as the 1920s, officials from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the army, and the navy drew up plans for the imprisonment of Nikkei in case the United States went to war against Japan. Other divisions of the Department of Justice and the State Department later

became involved. After Pearl Harbor these agencies imprisoned Nikkei from various parts of the United States, the territories of Alaska and Hawai'i, and fifteen Latin American countries.

Although three different federal agencies administered the camps in which Nikkei were imprisoned, all of these agencies exerted arbitrary control over their prisoners. Some prisoners suffered inhumane treatment and abuse. Some were moved from one camp to another, and many were separated from their families. In their zeal to remove disruptive prisoners from their camps, some officials coerced Japanese Americans into renouncing their citizenship. At least seven prisoners were shot and killed. As the title of the book suggests, all of these prisoners were judged without trial and rarely were able to mount legal challenges to the arbitrary actions of government officials.

The ambitious scope of the book may make it difficult for non-experts to read. People who are unfamiliar with the many federal agencies and officials responsible for the imprisonment may find some of the names and details confusing. Unfortunately, Kashima's flow charts do not clarify how the imprisonment organization operated. Readers familiar with the literature on the imprisonment will appreciate both Kashima's painstaking research and his ambitious effort to describe the imprisonment in all its dimensions. *Judgment without Trial* proves that the imprisonment was not an act of wartime hysteria. Instead, it was thoroughly planned, if not smoothly executed. Kashima's book also makes clear that Nikkei had to confront—usually without legal counsel—a bewildering array of federal agencies in their efforts to secure their rights as either U. S. citizens or as prisoners of war.

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