

[INSERT RELEASE DATE]

Contact: [INSERT LOCAL PHONE #]

***The ENEMY ALIEN FILES:
HIDDEN STORIES of WORLD WAR II***

**Exhibit Documenting Treatment of Japanese, German & Italian
Immigrants by the U.S. Government during World War II**

[INSERT EXHIBIT DATES, eg, March 1 – April 30, 2003]

[INSERT DAYS OF WEEK & TIMES EXHIBIT IS OPEN]

[eg, Monday – Friday, 9-6, Sat/Sun, 10 – 5]

Exhibit Reception, Program: [INSERT DATE, TIME]

[INSERT LOCATION

INSERT ADDRESS

INSERT PHONE #]

Panel Presentation: [INSERT DATE, TIME]

[INSERT LOCATION & ADDRESS,

IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE]

An attack on America—fear, fury and calls for retaliation run rampant. The time is not September 11, 2001, but December 7, 1941, when the United States entered World War II. An exhibit currently displayed at the [INSERT VENUE LOCATION] illuminates disturbing parallels with post 9/11 experiences in Arab, Muslim and South Asian communities all over the U.S. Presented by the National Japanese American Historical Society, the American Italian Historical Society (Western Regional Chapter), the Japanese Peruvian Oral History Project, and the German American Education Fund, the exhibit examines the treatment of “enemy alien” immigrants during World War II.

Today, American citizens, residents and visitors of Middle Eastern and South Asian ancestry are targets of suspicion and harassment solely because of their ethnic origin. Sixty years ago, thousands of Japanese, German and Italian immigrants in the USA and Latin America experienced arrest, forced relocation, internment and even deportation to war zones solely because of their nationality. The ENEMY ALIEN FILES combines rare photographs, oral history excerpts, documents and artifacts to explore how wartime fears, anti-immigrant attitudes and racism affected men, women and children against whom no charges of wrong-doing were ever brought.

Throughout the 1930s, as turmoil in Europe and Asia escalated, the U.S. government prepared for the possibility of U.S. involvement in war. Preparations included surveillance of German, Japanese and Italian immigrants both in the USA and Latin America, compiling lists of “potentially dangerous persons,” alien registration, and planning for internment and deportation. On the day Pearl Harbor was attacked, FBI and INS agents began arresting aliens, many thousands of whom were interned for up to seven years.

The U.S. government also went outside its borders to bring more than 6,000 German, Japanese and Italian residents of Latin America to internment camps all over the United States. Many of these internees were deported to war-torn countries in hostage exchanges for U.S. citizens trapped abroad.

The Alien Enemy Act of 1918, which authorized internment during WW II, is still on the books. It specifies that citizens (over age 13) of enemy nations can be “apprehended, restrained, secured and removed” in case of declared war or actual or threatened invasion. No distinction is made between resident immigrants, refugees and aliens here on a temporary basis. If the U.S. goes to war against Iraq, this law could be immediately applied to Iraqi citizens here. Many of the actions taken during WW II, including the mass incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans (of whom two-thirds were U.S. citizens), were based on presidential Executive Orders, bypassing Congress and the Constitution.

Since the Gulf War and before, Muslims and people of Middle Eastern and South Asian ancestry have struggled against stereotypes based on their national origin or religion. Now their civil rights are at risk as the government attempts to balance legitimate national security concerns with protection of individual liberties. This nation has grappled with these issues before. The ENEMY ALIEN FILES exhibit is a timely and instructional reminder of what can happen in a time of fear and insecurity.

This exhibit represents the first time scholars from the German, Japanese, Italian and Latin American communities have collaborated to analyze the WW II experiences of “enemy aliens” and educate the public about their findings. The 20 participating scholars and advisors include Ronald Takaki, PhD, Professor of Asian American Studies at UC Berkeley, author of *Strangers from a Different Shore* and *A Different Mirror*; Lawrence DiStasi, President, American Italian Historical Society (Western Regional Chapter) and editor of *Una Storia Segreta: The Secret History of Italian American Evacuation and Internment during World War II*; John Christgau, author of *Enemies: WWII Alien Internment*; Grace Shimizu, Director, Japanese Peruvian Oral History Project; Max Paul Friedman, PhD, Professor of History, Florida State University; Stephen Fox, PhD, author of *UnCivil Liberties: Italian Americans Under Siege During World War II* and *America’s Invisible Gulag: A Biography of German American Internment & Exclusion—Memory and History*.

The exhibit appears at the [INSERT LOCATION & DATES], in conjunction with [INSERT #] special free program[s]. On (INSERT DATE OF 1ST EVENT), the [INSERT VENUE] will host a {INSERT EVENT TITLE} featuring [INSERT SPEAKERS & THEIR TITLES/AFFILIATIONS]. On [INSERT DATE OF 2ND EVENT], a [INSERT EVENT TITLE] will feature [INSERT SPEAKERS, PROGRAM DETAILS] The Enemy Alien Files traveling exhibit is made possible in part by funding from the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program.