



DOROTHEA LANGE Courtesy of Abby Ginzberg

Families of Japanese ancestry wait with their baggage at a railroad station in Woodland to be sent to a remote camp.

# Can Muslim Americans be locked up like Japanese Americans were?

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**J**apanese and Muslim Americans, a transgender activist, a former Latino California Supreme Court justice and a Jewish filmmaker will discuss civil rights Saturday following the Sacramento premiere of "And Then They Came for Us" at the Crest Theatre.

The 47-minute film features George Takei of "Star Trek" fame, who was incarcerated as a boy along with 120,000 other Japanese Americans — more than half of them U.S. citizens — during World War II.

Social justice filmmaker Abby Ginzberg of Berkeley said she was inspired by the stark photos taken by Dorothea Lange of Japanese American families given barely 24 hours to evacuate their homes and gather at racetracks to

be sent to remote internment camps for the duration of World War II.

Lange's photos were largely unseen until after 2006, and many "were taken the moment people were told to register," said Ginzberg, who culled through more than 500 photos and picked dozens for her film. Sacramento Bee photographer Paul Kitagaki, an expert on the incarceration, is quoted on the power of Lange's images in telling what for generations was a largely untold story.

Ginzberg said she and fellow filmmaker Ken Schneider felt a sense of urgency last fall, "when people in the Trump administration started referring to the Japanese incarceration as a precedent for what they were trying to do with the Muslim travel ban and Muslims who were here."

The film is being brought to Sacramento by the nonprofit Asian-Pacif-

ic Bar Association of Sacramento, said Yoshinori Himel, association president.

"It raises issues vital to Americans as our national leaders propose a wall to prevent entry from Mexico, a ban on transgender service members, a Muslim registry and the Muslim entry ban currently before the U.S. Supreme Court, and as they encourage violent Nazi groups and official brutality," Himel said.

He said the film's title is drawn from German pastor Martin Niemöller's often-quoted statement, "First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out — because I was not a Socialist ... then they came for me — and there was no one left to speak for me."

Niemöller was imprisoned in Sachsenhausen and Dachau concentration camps from 1938 to 1945.

"We are in the midst of a campaign of fear and

hatred, the same kind of campaign of fear and hatred that caused the incarceration of Japanese Americans in World War II," Himel said. "We want to make sure it never happens again."

The term "internment" used by the U.S. government "is completely incorrect because it means limits placed on only selected citizens of enemy nations during war time, whereas the entire Japanese community was incarcerated and couldn't go anywhere."

The panel discussion following the film will feature producer-director Ginzberg; Cruz Reynoso, former California Supreme Court justice; Mia Frances Yamamoto of Los Angeles, activist and transgender attorney and former incarceration victim; and Basim Elkarra, executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations-Sacramento Valley.

Former KXTV anchorwoman Sharon Ito will moderate the discussion. A social action networking session will follow.

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