## <u>U.S. Army Colonel Karl Bendetsen, Lithuanian Jew, was the</u> <u>Main Architect of the Japanese Internment Camps</u> 24 May 2022

\*Karl Robin Bendetsen (October 11, 1907 – June 28, 1989) was an American colonel who served in Washington Army National Guard during World War II and later as the Under Secretary of the Army. Bendetsen is remembered primarily for his role as an architect of the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II (a role he tried to downplay in later years).

Karl Bendetsen was born into a Lithuanian Jewish family in Aberdeen, Washington. His parents, Albert M. and Anna Bendetson, were first-generation American citizens. Karl changed the spelling of his last name during early 1942, and would later make written claims to descent from Danish lumbermen who had come to America as early as 1670."

## "Architect of Japanese American internment

Immediately following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the Federal Bureau of Investigation arrested approximately 5,500 leaders in the Japanese American communities in Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, and Hawaii. While the government was worried that these leaders had been involved in anti-American activity on behalf of the Empire of Japan, eventually, all were cleared of any wrongdoing.".....

While Bendetsen and other supporters of internment cited military necessity (and continue to do so), reports by the FBI and by the Office of Naval Intelligence had stated that not only were vast majority of Americans of Japanese ancestry loyal, but likewise their parents (who had been denied American citizenship) were loyal to the United States and held no allegiance to Japan.

"Bendetsen also ordered that any person, no matter their age, who had "one drop of Japanese blood" were to be confined. This included the

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removal of infants and children from orphanages and the transportation of hospital patients, a number of whom died when their care was cut off. He would later claim that the orders were not so broad-sweeping, though even Military Intelligence Service officers of Japanese ancestry were forced to leave California.

Throughout the rest of the war, Bendetsen and DeWitt opposed army orders that soldiers of Japanese ancestry be allowed to re-enter the coastal states while on leave or military assignment.[citation needed] The reason for opposition was primarily political along with the fear of ridicule because the soldiers had proven patriotic Americans while the government had spent millions of dollars to put those soldiers' families behind barbed wire."

## "Opposition to Japanese American redress

Bendetsen joined others who had been involved in the exclusion and incarceration to oppose the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians hearings, which in 1983 determined that there had been no just cause for the actions taken against Japanese American communities during World War II. He was adamantly opposed to calls for reparations to be paid to former camp inmates and their relatives."



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