

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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MISSION US: "Prisoner in My Homeland"

Japanese American Citizens League of Seattle Statement, Excerpt

Founded in 1929, the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) served as an advocate for citizenship for Japanese and Asian immigrants. In February 1942, the Seattle branch of the organization drafted a report to express its opposition to the forced removal of Japanese Americans. This document is an excerpt from that report.

STATEMENT BY EMERGENCY DEFENSE COUNCIL, SEATTLE CHAPTER, JAPANESE-
AMEERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE, SEATTLE, WASH.

REPORT PRESENTED TO TOLAN CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE, FEBRUARY 28, 1942.

For some time now there has been agitation for the evacuation of Japanese nationals as well as American citizens of Japanese descent from Pacific Coast States. Such evacuation has been proposed in a variety of forms.

We wish to go on record now that the safety and welfare of the United States is, has been, and will continue to be foremost in our minds. We, as American citizens, have a duty to this, our country, and the first tenet of that duty is complete and unshakeable loyalty.

For this very reason, we are opposed to the idea of indiscriminate, en masse evacuation of all citizens and loyal aliens of Japanese extraction. We are wholeheartedly in favor of complete cooperation with the military and other authorities on withdrawal of civilians from the immediate vicinity of defense projects and establishments. But we do not believe that mass evacuation is either desirable or feasible. We believe that the best interests of the United States will be served by other solutions to the problem.

We also desire the privilege of remaining here to fight shoulder to shoulder, and shed our blood, if necessary, in the defense of our country and our home together with patriotic Americans of other national extractions if that time should ever come.

If it is for the greater good that evacuation be decreed, we shall obey to the best of our ability. But we are convinced that here in our homes and in our community is where we belong, where we can lend every ounce of our strength, and every cent of our resources, in creating the

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sinews of war so necessary to total victory. We are Americans. We want to do our duty where we can serve best.

We believe the so-called Japanese problem is not so serious as certain vocal exponents of mass evacuation profess to believe. We are sure that the benefits to be derived from large-scale evacuation of Japanese from the State of Washington are overwhelmingly overbalanced by the benefits to be derived by keeping them here under the proper supervision.

The Japanese problem is not going to be solved by evacuation. If they are a problem here, they will be a problem wherever they are sent. Since this is so, it is logical that they can be kept under better surveillance where they are now, concentrated as they are well-defined areas and where they can continue to do their bit for the national defense.

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