

TEACHER'S GUIDE
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MISSION US: "Prisoner in My Homeland"

Bainbridge Review Editorial February 5, 1942

The Bainbridge Review was a small weekly newspaper published by Bainbridge Island residents Walter and Milly Woodward. It was one of the few newspapers along the West Coast to caution against anti-Japanese hysteria and oppose the removal of Japanese Americans from the coastal region. Even after the forced removal of all Japanese Americans from Bainbridge island, the newspaper continued to consider them as part of the Bainbridge community and hired a young Nisei to write weekly reports from the Manzanar prison camp.

More Plain Talk

The time has come to bear out the truth of our words, written two months ago in an extra edition of The review published the day after Hawaii was bombed. We spoke of an American recoil to Japanese treachery and wrote:

"And in such recoil of sentiment there is danger of a blind, wild, hysterical hatred of all persons who can trace ancestry to Japan."

Up and down the Pacific Coast, in the newspapers and in the halls of Congress are words of hatred now for all Japanese, whether they be citizens of America. These words reached a shrieking crescendo when Henry McLemore, with all the intelligence of a blind pig, wrote in the Seattle Times: "Personally, I hate the Japanese. And that goes for all of them."

That may be patriotism of a hysterical degree; but it certainly isn't the kind of patriotism that will win the war. Let us think, for a moment, what would happen if the government should adopt Mr. McLemore's fervid plea for the "immediate removal of every Japanese on the West Coast to a point deep in the interior. I don't mean a nice part of the interior, either."

Just who would grow our fruits and vegetables if Mr. McLemore's advice is followed? We have no figures before us, but it certainly is an apparent fact that the bulk of our produce and, we dare say, the bulk of the produce grown for our Army and Navy encampments on the West Coast, come from Japanese gardens. The economy of one-third of the nation would be thrown into utter confusion if all Japanese were herded into the interior.

But what of another factor--the wreckage that it would bring to lives of thousands and thousands of loyal American citizens who can't avoid ancestry in Japan!

For Who--besides those so blind as Mr. McLemore--can say that the big majority of our American-Japanese citizens are not loyal to the land of their birth--The United States! Their record bespeaks nothing but loyalty: Their sons are in our Army; they are heavy contributors to the Red Cross and to the defense bond drives. Even in Hawaii, was there any, record of any Japanese-American citizen being other than intensely loyal?

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The Review argues only with Mr. McLemore and his ilk. It will not dispute the federal government if it, in its infinite wisdom, calls for the removal from the Coast of all Japanese. Such order--which we hope will not come--will be based on military necessities and not on hatred.

Japanese people, whether citizens or aliens, must prepare themselves for what may seem to them unfair and unreasoning treatment. But if they value their American citizenship and the right to live in this free nation, they must stand fast in their loyalty. American boys--including some of their sons--are giving their lives for Liberty. Any other sacrifice is not too great.

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