



Minidoka WRA
Hunt, Idaho
February 10, 1944.

We, AMERICAN CITIZENS of Japanese ancestry, now awaiting call into the United States Army under the Selective Service, are highly gratified by the recognition by the federal authorities of our rightful place in America, and we are proud of being given the opportunity to serve our country in its hour of need. When and if called for active service, we shall do our utmost to contribute to the glories of arms of our nation and to give lie to perverted Axis doctrine of superiority of a "chosen race". We are willing and eager to add our share to the national effort in attaining an early victory and in the winning of the war.

However, in that we are now subject to all the obligations of citizenship whereas some of the rights and privileges of an American citizen have been denied to us or are temporarily suspended, we wish to point out that certain inequities exist. We respectfully submit that, consistent with the highest ideals of justice and democracy, our national government should devote attention towards the correction of these inequities.

We feel that the following matters merit special consideration by our government:

1. Freedom of movement:

We believe that we, American citizens of Japanese ancestry, should be permitted to exercise the equal right of movement anywhere at anytime as enjoyed by other American citizens. We are prohibited from entering coastal areas within the Western Defense Command in which our former homes are located. We believe that no discriminatory restriction based on race should be imposed upon the movement of any citizen who is not specifically deprived of such right by due process of law.

2. Right to own property:

We believe that the prohibition against "contraband articles" by the Western Defense Command should be revoked, and that we be permitted to possess whatsoever properties and to use them as any other citizen, subject to the same penalties for the misuse of any such articles.

3. Equal Choice of Service in the armed forces:

We believe that the arbitrary designation of qualified Americans of Japanese ancestry to either the special combat Unit at Camp Shelby or to the special language school at Camp Savage should be modified so as to allow inductives of Japanese ancestry an option of service in any branch of the armed forces of the United States. We feel that it would be a more effective and dramatic exhibition of democracy in action if we are permitted to fight the enemy at the side of our fellow Americans, regardless of ancestry or color, rather than in any segregated unit. Moreover, there are many amongst us who have had specialized training and desire to serve our country in the special field in which we are best qualified and can be of most service. We earnestly request that the privilege of selecting the branch of service in which we are to serve be extended to us, subject to the usual requirements of qualification and national necessity.

4. Availability of special military training program:

We believe that Americans of Japanese ancestry should be granted the same opportunity of joining in special military training programs in colleges and universities as other American soldiers. We feel that many of us are well qualified for such training, and that our best contribution to the war effort could be made along such specialized lines.

5. Equality of Opportunity for Advancement:

We believe that advancement in the military forces should be open to all American soldiers on the basis of ability and qualification. We believe that graduates of the Camp Savage Language School and teachers of Japanese ancestry should be granted commissions on the same basis as any other American citizen. We feel that the denial of the opportunity of advancement to American soldiers of Japanese ancestry to be repugnant to the ideals and aims for which this war is fought.

6. Equality of Employment in Industry:

We believe that the fullest opportunity should be extended to us for employment in any field of industry upon the same basis as any other American citizen. A great many of us have applied for jobs in essential industries to do our share in the nation's war effort, but have been denied such employment, subject to the advance "loyalty check", peculiarly handicapping us in our contribution to the war effort. We feel that such security measures of the internal plant division of the War Department should be applied on an equal basis as other American citizens, without penalizing us on account of race or ancestry. We feel that the President's Proclamation 8802 should be carried out in fact as well as in spirit.

We believe that the above matters should be clarified by our national government for our benefit, as American citizens, as a matter of fundamental right. We feel that the cheerful and willing assumption of our obligations as American citizens reciprocally calls for the unequivocal restoration of our full citizenship rights.

Further, we feel that the following matters should be given your favorable consideration:

1. "Friendly Alien Status" for Japanese nationals whose sons or daughters are serving in the armed forces of the United States. We feel that the sacrifice of the parents and the patriotism and devotion of such soldier sons and daughters merit special consideration. We condemn and abhor the militaristic caste of Japan and their megalomaniac actions in the conduct of this war; but we believe that those of us who are making actual sacrifices to preserve the American way of life ought to be granted special recognition.
2. That the present administration formulate, initiate and enact proper legislation to make financial restitution to those of us who have suffered tremendous monetary, as well as other, losses because of the forced evacuation from our original homes. We believe that such compensation is imperative to maintain the honor and ideals of our nation.

3. That our government exert its efforts to suppress and prevent discriminatory actions and inflammatory anti-Japanese campaigns aimed directly at us, American citizens of Japanese ancestry, and our parents. There exists a program of hate on the West Coast directed not against the enemy we are fighting but against us, who, by our conduct and sacrifices, have demonstrated our loyalty as American citizens; there are a number of un-American communities which will not accept us as residents and other communities which will not permit us to engage in business or other gainful employment. We feel that federal influences must be brought to bear to eradicate such practices, or our sacrifices on the altar of war will have been in vain.

We, as American citizens, are willing to offer our lives for our country, if need be. We are eager to fulfill conscientiously and patriotically every obligation of American citizenship. Therefore, we believe the request for the restoration of every right and privilege of American citizenship cannot be denied to us. Further, we strongly feel that the derogation of the rights of any American citizen besmirches the sacredness and inviolability of American citizenship. We have faith in America, we have faith that our government will not tolerate such inequities to exist any longer than absolutely necessary.

We, the undersigned, respectfully request that careful attention be given to the above matters, and that our government issue proper statements and directives regarding the future status and treatment of American citizens of Japanese ancestry.

