

October 21, 1987

To the Editor:

This is in response to a letter from Ms. Setoguchi in the October 7th issue of your Japan Times, a copy of which was sent to me. Ms. Setoguchi's arguments against redress for the internment of Japanese Americans calls for a response.

I think that the most important point Ms. Setoguchi misses is the fact that Japanese Americans were incarcerated without due process and that the United States government clearly violated the constitutional and civil rights of a group of people. The Constitution, even 45 years ago, was the document which had been adopted in 1787 to protect the rights of all of its citizens. We do not in any way minimize the sufferings of the blacks or the Indians but there are distinct differences between all of these issues. First, the Negroes were brought to this country and owned by private citizens. Secondly, the Indians were deprived of their land in what was a war between two nations before the

Constitution. During the Viet Nam conflict, people protesting it were arrested and imprisoned without due process. Each person was awarded \$10,000 for two or three days of imprisonment. After World War II, the U. S. pressured Germany to pay reparations to Jews and even today, Germany continues to do so. As the Indians would say, we should not talk with "forked tongue".

The other matter that needs to be addressed is the fear of anti-Japanese sentiment. It is true that we Japanese Americans have always been unfairly linked to the economic problems between Japan and the United States. Ms. Setoguchi should realize that professing loyalty will not change those attitudes. One needs only to remember that all of our protestations about loyalty did not keep us out of camp. I, too, am a proud Japanese American but more importantly, I want to be an American who can speak out against injustices without apologies for what my ancestral country does or does not do. Pointing to our successes and refusing to acknowledge that we have lived with a stigma of disloyalty and feelings of guilt is to me pride without substance.

Yes, we do have a budget deficit but as Congressman Hyde, who is one of our most conservative Republicans, said, quote " We can just do without a couple of highways. Justice comes first."

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Against redress for internment

To the Editor:

Although this letter is not likely to make me popular among my Japanese-American "brethren," I think something more needs to be said about the redress issue. When a Caucasian person takes a stand against redress, he/she will be labeled "prejudiced"; when a person of Japanese ancestry takes a stand against redress, he/she is labeled a "banana." "Banana" or not, I think the Japanese-Americans and others who favor redress to the tune of \$20,000 per internee need to take yet another look at what they are asking for.

Michael G. Driver said that "It is a matter of sadness that there are people in high places who would deny their fellow Americans a belated pittance in apology for a deed which had no place in the United States." (Sept. 30).

I quite agree that the internment of the Japanese-Americans during World War II was wrong and should never have happened. Internment was an injustice, to say the least, and disturbed the lives of many loyal Americans. However, in asking for redress, we are applying today's standard of civil rights to something which occurred over 40 years ago. Should today's taxpayers pay that burden? Should we also pay for the blacks who were victims of slavery and the Indians who were forced from their land — also injustices sanctioned by the U.S. government?

I am a loyal American and I can't support the monetary redress when it will mean a further drain on what is already a weakened U.S. economy. The Japanese culture has a tradition of rising against

the odds, of putting forth whatever effort is needed to succeed. Not only has that philosophy served the nation of Japan since the war, it has served the Japanese-American community in the U.S.

To now seek retribution may spark more unjust anti-Japanese sentiment. In the wake of recent "Japan-bashing," is this really the way to show the strength of the Japanese-American community?

I am proud of my Japanese-American heritage and of the way our community has come back from the injustice of internment to become successful today. The only reparation I ask for is that we, as an American nation, educate our children in the ways of international understanding so that the crime of internment or relocation never happens again.

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