

extra copy

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To the Japan Times ^{Editor}:

The turmoil and crisis of race relations in America must be familiar to Japan Times readers, as it is to all peoples throughout the world. This provocative "American problem," its explications and rationale, may differ according to news media and individual writers, but the fact that, perhaps, all reports going abroad are written by white newsmen or derive from established metropolitan (white papers) should denote that a one-sided view is being dispersed.

The turbulence on racial matters seething in all parts of the United States should indicate that the opinions and feelings of Black people differ from the general exposure given traditionally by the white news media.

Most revealing at this time is the vociferous protest of Black athletes against participating in the Olympic Games. As the initiator and a former Olympic contender, Prof. Harry Edwards states, the boycott is to focus international attention on U.S. bigotry. It is having its impact on the wide attention it has gained.

However, past participation of Black athletes in the Olympics, has given a false image of "American equality" and "Negro dissatisfaction", concealing the actuality of life in America for Black people--the countless violations and the enormity of outrages on their rights and humanity. In protest of this desecration of their heritage and the ravishment of their dignity ramified in every area of American life, Black athletes are now spurning medals, adulation, publicity, prestige, college scholarships, professional offers, business contacts, and personal opportunities and achievements. Today's militant Black athletes feel that their sense of personal worth and obligation to their people's struggle is more important than rewards and recognition. They have become a new kind of force in the freedom movement here.

I hope that the Japanese people will not only 'see' the relevance of the boycott and support it, but may even reconsider their participation in the 1968 Olympic Games and decide to bolster the protest as did the 32 African nations, in boycotting themselves, thus aligning with the efforts of Black athletes of two continents.

Hoping, too, that the Japanese people are not following in the footsteps of Europeans and Americans, whose supremacist attitudes (based on skin color, economic-political-cultural differences) have mangled and strangled the lives and psyches of dark-raced peoples globally. With anxiety, I wonder of the plight and future of African-Japanese children growing up in Japan who may be carrying similar scars of racism, rendered through the vehicles of ostracism, exploitation or contempt.

Black people have been historically degraded and excluded from the mainstream of so-called "civilized" nations, but are ironically embraced and utilized by these same paternal countries who have exploited their physical prowess and capabilities for international sport competitions and imperialist wars. Though their youths are found unemployable in an automated society, they are being eagerly welcomed into the armed forces as "cannon fodder."

May you dwell on this pertinent issue of the boycott, and reassess the Olympic Games in terms of its customary objectives, and the more urgent prerogatives of nations and peoples whose identity and demands must be dignified.

A housewife of Japanese background, fortunate to be living in Harlem where Black people have opened my eyes and mind to black-white reality, black aspirations and humanistic values.

Mrs. Mary Kochiyama + family

P.S. Congratulations to the Zengakuren for their persistent militant and active opposition to the horrendous "undeclared war" on Vietnam, which is despoiling a nation of Asian peoples and its civilization.

Sadly in America, Asian-Americans (in particular, Japanese-Americans) assimilated and interwoven into the American fabric, are quietly cocooned in the security of material comfort and preoccupation; and utter no grievances against American transgressions and domination. Unable to relate to liberation struggles of the Bandung World, their minds have been cultivated into developing the same missionary and mercenary mentality of white paternalists and supremacists.

However, a thunderous ovation to the peoples of Vietnam (DRV and NLF) illuminating this earth in the most dramatic and dynamic way, despite untold sacrifices, the beauty and might of the collective effort of ordinary people achieving extraordinary triumphs.

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