

Letters to the Editor

Sept. 25, 1981

Re: Frank Chin's Circus of Freaks

There is a saying that "a pen is mightier than a sword."

Frank Chin certainly used his pen to the fullest—its point penetrating deep into the heart of an important segment of Japanese America—with not just one quick jab, but over and over, each barb drawing blood; and doing so, seemingly with sadistic pleasure.

His chastising of Commissioner Daniel Lundgren for not using the gavel more courageously to keep "the raving mob" in control, was like an echo of Mr. Sam.

Frank Chin, ~~like Hayakawa~~, would like to have the Japanese American camp victims still docile, quiet, accomodating, and well-behaved in the presence of the likes of a Hayakawa and Baker.

The cheers for the 'good guys' and boos for the "bad" were healthy outlets of pride and unity that Japanese Americans concertedly manifested with zeal. No longer are they robots and puppets to please the masters. No more are they muted in shame and hurt. Thirty nine years of muffled anguish is enough.

Beuase of an elitist intellectualism for experts and expertise assessments and analysis (although there is a place for those in "official capacity"), Frank will never understand nor learn that the common folk, the ordinary people with the commonality of toil and hardships, suffering and pain, are the real heroes and inspirations. He seems to misconstrue ordinariness for mediocrity. His appetite for clever quips, sarcasm, and misplaced humor are devastatingly unpalatable and obscene.

~~deserving as~~
He is/a recognized literary figure, a master at satire, and a genius

with words, but like Hayakawa—an authority on semantics—is stunted in the area of compassion. *Calling the peoples' testimonies 'sob stories' was too much.*

But Sam and Frank are not peas from the same pod. They are from totally different shells. Frank is on the side of Japanese Americans *and has been actively involved—with dedication.* for redress. Sam, the erudite Canadian, has been long lost in the ivory towers of higher education, and more recently, in the halls of the Senate. As for his own Canadian Japanese who were sent to harsher camps than those in the U.S. Sam has conveniently closed his eyes and snoozed through that episode.

Frank, thus, is no enemy. He is merely an enigma, and is abusive to all—equally and impartially. From deep down inside he digs the JAs, and in his own peculiar way is trying to relay that. His fault lies in his damnable inclination to be different and unusual even at the strangest times and is extraordinarily good at it. *However, he has seriously researched the concentration camp experience of Japanese Americans and is extremely knowledgeable.*

It's too bad that he cannot seem to use his pen, at least on some occasion, as an acupuncturist uses the needle—to rejuvenate the flow of energy to bring healthful balance to the human body when needed. (Perhaps he some day will—for he has that kind of skill).

As for the participants in Frank's grossly described "circus of freaks," our heartfelt salutes and admiration to all who testified, all who helped organize the historic hearings, and all who are supporting redress for Japanese Americans.

Yuri + Family
Yuri Kochiyama and Family