

BE CAUTIOUS ASSOCIATING VIRUS WITH CHINA

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Body

The May 10 article "Chinese, COVID-19 Positive People Feel Stigma From Virus" hit a nerve. The real danger lies in the propaganda-like responses being elicited by the steady diet of political ads laced with Sinophobia themes appearing on our TVs.

Today's concerns about losing customers could likely become a larger tragedy with a Chinese American citizen being physically assaulted for "looking like the enemy."

It often begins with vocal abuses against the "perfidious Chinaman" designed to feed the reptilian mindset. These discriminatory practices often become formal policies and laws - the Chinese Exclusion Act, for example.

COVID-19 induced economic and social restrictions, frustrating citizens to find solutions by transforming the health problem into a political enemy. References to "the Chinese or Wuhan virus" politicize the issue. We must not underestimate its deleterious effect. They serve as ignition points for more confrontational opportunities.

Could there be a call for the internment of all people of Chinese ancestry? It happened before. The internment of all people of Japanese ancestry following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor was the result of decades of similar racial prejudices and stereotypes. They were my neighbors, classmates, friends and teachers. I learned from their torment and tears. Executive Order 9066 legitimized this historical xenophobic wrong. Will the U.S. Constitution fail again?

I am apprehensive but remain cautiously optimistic recalling Abraham Lincoln's words: "We must not be enemies, but friends. ... Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory ... will yet swell ... when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

I'm trusting in the "better angels of our nature."

Notes

The writer is a third-generation Chinese American.

Graphic

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