

# “The Particular Anguish of Being Japanese in the 1942 US”



by Lev Tsitrin

“As the rest of the world watches the war in the Pacific with horror, one community is following it with a particular kind of anguish: the Japanese citizens of the US. They are connected by family ties, language, culture and history to their fellow Japanese in Japan – while living, working and studying side-by-side with Americans in the very country that caused their people’s misfortune.” Thus read a *New York Times*’ “guest essay” in early 1942, four months after Pearl Harbor.

Well, to be perfectly honest, it didn’t. But it could have – to judge by what [the paper did say in early 2024](#), four months after October 7: “As the rest of the world watches the Gaza war with horror, one community is following it with a particular kind of anguish: the Palestinian citizens of

Israel. They are connected by family ties, language, culture and history to their fellow Palestinians in Gaza – while living, working and studying side-by-side with Jewish Israelis in the very country that caused their people's misfortune."

What a fascinating couple of sentences! For starters, according to the *New York Times* it was Israel that caused Gaza's present "misfortune," not Hamas.

And then, how about the headline, "*The Particular Anguish of Being Palestinian in Israel*"?

How terrible! The Israeli Arabs are forced to be tongue-tied, so "The trauma [of watching Israel's war on Hamas] has been compounded by their inability to do or even say much about it. The government has cracked down harshly on criticism of its actions, and even empathy with the Palestinian people in Gaza." Apparently, just saying "destroy Hamas!" – in Arabic instead of Hebrew – gets one to be arrested (how else to interpret the interesting factoid that "people have been arrested for social media posts that were often simply misunderstood by those who don't speak Arabic"? Apparently, an army of censors stand ready to report every instance of the use of Arabic on social media, and gets those who communicate in Arabic in trouble!)

Why continue? The *New York Times*' "guest essay" is obvious garbage (which can be said of plenty of its opining, in fact). But what is far from obvious, is the reason the paper keeps publishing such drivel. Have the country run out of matters that cry to be reported, but aren't? There are plenty – for instance, there is an uncharted universe of judicial fraud committed from federal benches under the cover of the self-given, in *Pierson v Ray*, judicial "right" to act "maliciously and corruptly" that I keep urging the *New York Times* to start reporting – but it won't. So what is the paper's criteria in selecting essays for publication? Why did it lend its pages, just the other day, to a screed by one Abdullah H. Hammoud

titled "[I'm the Mayor of Dearborn, Mich., and My City Feels Betrayed](#)" – "betrayed" by Biden who, according to the Mayor Hammoud's logic, ought to have left Israel to Hamas's gentle mercies out of gratitude for the Dearborn Arab vote?

Go figure. Clearly, the paper feels that it needs to bend backward in expressing its sorrow for Palestinian "misfortune" since October 7. Perhaps, it is the physical distance that gives the *New York Times* its almost superhuman – and clearly unnatural – pseudo-objectivity. To judge by editorials quoted by [Wikipedia](#), after Pearl Harbor the papers were somewhat less high-mindedly detached from the reality then they are today. Given the knowledge of the defeat of Japan in WW2, the measures taken by the Roosevelt administration are now condemned as excessively harsh, if not racist. Yet back at the time when the nation was wounded, and the victory was far from certain, such was not the prevailing sentiment. As February 28, 1942 *Los Angeles Times*' editorial put it, "all [US Japanese] must be restrained. Those truly loyal will understand and make no objection."

Unlike the US in 1942, the Israelis are not restraining "all" Israeli Arabs – only a tiny handful of virulent anti-Israel zealots get a rap on the knuckles ("A Palestinian doctor was suspended from his position, Palestinian students at colleges and universities have been punished"). It may even be that the *New York Times*' "guest essay" overestimates the Israeli Arab support for Gaza. One suspects that a very large number of Israeli Arabs actually "understand and make no objection." Though, of course, you won't figure that from reading the *New York Times*.