

SOME RESOURCES RELATED TO ANTI-ASIAN COVID RACISM

Websites:

Stop RepeatingHistory.org <https://www.stoprepeatinghistory.org/> has excellent long videos available about the WWII incarceration and relevance for today. They also have several short videos on current topics: <https://www.stoprepeatinghistory.org/media>

StopAAPIHate <https://stopaapihate.org/> -- for information and to report a hate incident, available in several languages, also:

Asian Americans Advancing Justice: aaaj-c.org

Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council: a3pcon.org

Chinese for Affirmative Action: caasf.org

OCA Covid19 Toolkit: OCA Advocates <https://www.ocanational.org/oca-covid19-home>

angryasianman.com

<https://helenzia.com/>

some keywords for searches:
asian american empowerment
anti Asian violence
aapi census

Readings:

1. Washington Post Op-Ed:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/04/02/targeting-asians-asian-americans-will-make-it-harder-stop-covid-19/Opinions>

Targeting Asians and Asian Americans will make it harder to stop covid-19

Opinion by **Helen Zia**

April 2, 2020 at 1:52 p.m. PDT

Helen Zia was a spokesperson for the Justice for Vincent Chin campaign and is the author of "Last Boat Out of Shanghai."

Though the wave of anti-Asian racism that looms in response to the global [coronavirus](#) pandemic is ugly and frightening, it is not new. I should know: I witnessed the harassment and violence Asian Americans faced in the wake of the collapse of the U.S. manufacturing sector in the 1980s. Scapegoating Asian immigrants and Asian Americans did nothing to save the U.S. auto industry then. And it won't provide the scientific advances and government leadership necessary to slow the spread of covid-19 now.

In the late 1970s, I moved to Detroit hoping to be part of its famed labor movement and got a job as a factory worker at a Big Three automaker. My pay was almost \$10 per hour, more than six times the minimum wage, thanks to a thriving industry and a strong union.

But the [Iranian revolution in 1979](#) brought severe oil and gas shortages and threw the auto industry into crisis. Suddenly I, and millions of other factory workers, lost our jobs. The downturn in Detroit took down the companies that supplied it, the service industry businesses that catered to auto industry workers, and eventually, the larger economy.

Along with other once-productive people, I spent long days at the unemployment office, in lines that snaked around city blocks in the freezing cold. Misery doesn't begin to describe the depths of despair that infected the once-great industrial region. Politicians, CEOs and union bosses pointed fingers at each other, trying to deflect blame. Workers simmered with frustration and outrage. Soon they found an enemy they could all agree on: Japan.

The Japanese auto industry, [they said](#), was the source of everyone's woes. This enemy was hurting America by producing fuel-efficient cars when no one wanted Detroit's gas guzzlers. People who drove Japanese cars were shot at. Never mind that Volkswagen Beetles were also popular — racism is a more effective tool when the enemy looks different. Some even declared that the United States was at war with Japan, [suggesting](#) that nuclear bombs might be a solution to the crisis.

Everyone "Japanese looking" became targets as hate-filled rhetoric dominated the airwaves. I never knew when someone might curse me with racist epithets, or threaten to get violent, even though I, too, had lost my job.

Our fears were realized in 1982, when two white autoworkers in Detroit bludgeoned to death a 27-year old Chinese American named [Vincent Chin](#). Witnesses reported hearing the perpetrators tell Chin that "It's because of you motherf----- that we're out of work!" His killers never spent a full day in jail. And their rage did nothing to help Detroit autoworkers get back into their factories.

But Chin's murder triggered a national civil rights campaign. The multiracial, cross-cultural coalition that emerged helped enact changes in the law that have benefited all

Americans in the decade since, from [allowing victim impact statements](#) to be read at sentencing to protections against hate crimes.

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The similarities between the anti-Japanese racism of the 1980s and the current racially charged response to the coronavirus pandemic are chilling. President Trump has made the deliberate decision to use anti-Chinese language to describe the disease. Already, there are hundreds of reports of anti-Asian harassment and violence. This violence could become much worse as more people lose jobs — and lives.

Americans can do better than this, and they have done better. After the Sept. 11 attacks, President George W. Bush warned the nation against Islamophobia. He didn't stop hate crimes, but he set the tone from the country's highest office that targeting Muslims was not acceptable. Bush later [credited his friendship](#) with his Cabinet Secretary Norman Mineta for opening his eyes to the xenophobia that motivated the incarceration of 120,000 U.S. citizens and noncitizens of Japanese descent during World War II.

Even though Trump recently stopped using his inflammatory name for the virus, he already gave permission to hate-mongers. Other leaders need to step up, as did the governors of New York and California, and the Asian American members of Congress.

Like all of us, Americans of Asian descent need to know they will be protected not just from covid-19 but also from violence and harassment when they go out to buy groceries, walk the dog or take their kids to the park.

This isn't just a matter of our safety: About 20 percent of the nation's front-line health-care workers [are immigrants](#), including from many countries in Asia. As the Association of American Medical Colleges [reports](#), as of 2018, 17 percent of doctors practicing in the United States were of Asian descent. The virus of hate puts these first responders, and the patients they serve, in double jeopardy. And as the Silicon Valley Leadership Group [pointed out in a statement](#), 1 in 6 of the network's science, technology, engineering and math employees is from China, Hong Kong or Taiwan. Keeping these workers safe also protects their ability to search for a vaccine and a cure for covid-19.

At this time of grave uncertainty, everyone is at risk. Anti-Asian racism is no cure for covid-19; instead, it's another virus that puts us all in danger.

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2. Women's Media Center article by Helen Zia

<https://womensmediacenter.com/news-features/trump-rhetoric-fuels-anti-asian-harassment-and-violence>

JUNE 11, 2020 | [Helen Zia](#) | [RACE/ETHNICITY](#)

Trump rhetoric fuels anti-Asian harassment and violence



CBS White House correspondent Weijia Jiang questioning Trump. (Photo: C-SPAN)

At a Rose Garden press conference in mid-May, a White House correspondent asked President Trump why he asserts that the U.S. is outperforming other countries in testing for COVID-19 when the incidence and deaths of Americans is so high. Trump dismissed her question with the disdain he holds for women and journalists, [adding](#): "... you should ask China. Don't ask me, ask China that question, OK?"

The CBS News reporter was Chinese American Weijia Jiang, who followed up with, "Sir, why are you saying that to me, specifically?" Trump dismissed her question as "nasty," cut her off as well shutting down CNN correspondent Kaitlan Collins for allowing Jiang's follow-up question, and abruptly ended the new conference, stomping off.

That exchange reprised a news conference from two months earlier, on March 18, at the start of the national emergency and sheltering orders, when White House correspondents Cecilia Vega of ABC News and Yamiche Alcindor of PBS NewsHour pressed Trump to explain why he continued saying "Chinese virus" when U.S. and global public health officials used the name "COVID-19"— and racist attacks on Asian Americans were spiking. Again, it was women journalists who challenged the president. Trump dismissed any racial connection and continued to insist on blaming China for the pandemic.

In the U.S., there are more than 20 million people whose ancestors hail from throughout Asia and the Pacific; some are immigrants or refugees, while others have roots in America going back five, six, even 10 generations. However, because Asians of all backgrounds are often thought to be all the same by uninformed people, the burgeoning

racial tensions are stoking fear and anxiety throughout Asian American communities, beyond those of Chinese descent.

They have good reason to fear: News and social media have been exploding with reports of harassment and bullying, from schoolyard tauntings and [beatings](#) before the lockdowns, to a racist [stabbing attack](#) of 2- and 6-year-old Southeast Asian children in a store. Videos have been posted of beatings of elderly Asian Americans at bus stops or walking near their homes; [acid was thrown](#) in an Asian woman's face as she took her garbage out; taxi drivers have refused to give rides to Asian-looking customers; Asian Americans pushed onto subway tracks, with harassment even directed at essential workers and health care givers in scrubs who have been threatened on their way to work.

When China was first battling the virus, weeks before Trump declared a national emergency, numerous anecdotal online posts were already buzzing about harassment and prejudice, especially against Chinatowns and other Asian shops and neighborhoods. After Trump's March 18 China-blaming, those accounts spiked dramatically. Asian Americans reported their fears of going out for groceries, walking the dog, or taking their kids to a park.

To address the rise in racist incidents after the White House briefing, Asian American advocacy groups set up reporting websites. The most active site, [StopAAPIHate.org](#), had recorded nearly 700 incidents as of March 26, after its first week. By May 20, more than 1,700 incidents had been reported in 45 states and Washington, D.C. The majority were filed by non-Chinese, and two out of three reports were filed by Asian American women, perhaps because they are perceived as vulnerable and passive.

The rash of hate crimes reports by Asian Americans met with online comments along the disdainful theme "So now Asians have discovered racism," as if they had not previously felt the pain of racism. In San Francisco, the police chief commented on the harassment surge noting that his department hadn't received a single complaint. On numerous occasions, including the mass shooting of a Stockton, CA schoolyard in 1989 that targeted and killed several Southeast Asian children, the first reaction by law enforcement and major news media alike was to deny that racism was involved; the killer was later found to have been influenced by white supremacists. Like sex crime survivors, Asian Americans can be reluctant to file police reports when they expect to be discounted and may even doubt themselves.

Contrary to the doubters, Asian Americans have a long history of experience with racist targeting and scapegoating. In the late 1800s, there was rampant mob violence and ethnic cleansing against Chinese that included lynchings and massacres, with racism

codified into federal immigration laws, rendering Chinese migrants as the first "illegal aliens" to America: the Page Act of 1875 barring Chinese women from the U.S., followed by the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 that made immigration of Chinese men illegal. Subsequent federal laws prevented other Asian immigrants from becoming naturalized citizens until 1952.

In more recent times, the collapse of the auto industry beginning in 1979 led to a prolonged recession. The economy tanked, while frustration, anger, and outrage simmered as politicians and CEOs deflected blame by pointing at Japan, because it produced fuel-efficient cars that buyers preferred to Detroit's gas-guzzling dinosaurs. So did Germany with its Volkswagen Beetles — but racism is a more effective tool when the enemy looks foreign. America's leaders declared an economic war with Japan — just as Trump and other politicians evoke the language of war toward China today.

Back then, anyone who looked Japanese became a moving target as hate-filled rhetoric dominated the airwaves. In that racially charged powder keg, two white autoworkers in Detroit bludgeoned to death a young Chinese American named Vincent Chin — because he "looked Japanese." The same volatile ingredients are present today. There is real terror among Asian Americans that the assaults and hate crimes already taking place will become much worse as communities open up, with more people out of work — and losing lives.

Yet history offers other lessons, showing how people of conscience come together to fight bigotry in times of crisis and scapegoating. Following the killing of Vincent Chin, a broad-based multiracial movement to fight anti-Asian violence emerged — led by Asian American women. After 9/11 in 2001, Asian American groups again came together to support Muslim, Arab, and South Asian American communities against Islamophobia, again with strong women's leadership. Even President George W. Bush warned the nation against xenophobia, setting the tone from his White House that xenophobia and hate crimes would not be tolerated.

That kind of presidential stand against hate is not only lacking today, Trump actively promotes division, anger and violence, putting everyone at risk.

This article was written before the cold-blooded killing of George Floyd and the massive outcry for justice, the insistence that Black lives matter. The nationwide protests and calls for action to stop hate and state violence have opened a conversation about systemic change in America. It will take people, united, to end the state violence that killed George Floyd and Breonna Taylor; to tackle the domination and supremacy that killed Ahmaud Arbery and drives the global increase in violence against women as well as anti-Asian and other hate crimes. Joining together is the only way to solve the

systemic disparities of race and gender, health, wealth, and more that have been so starkly laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic.###

[Note: you can also hear Helen discussing this in conversation with Robin Morgan Live! Podcast on WMC's website: <https://womensmediacenter.com/wmclive/wmc-live-314-helen-zia-original-airdate-4-5-2020>]

3. *Asian American Dreams: The Emergence of an American People* by Helen Zia

Is available online in paperback, about how Asian American communities have evolved, including about overcoming hate crimes and about the empowerment of Asian Americans. A sample chapter is at: https://www.amazon.com/Asian-American-Dreams-Emergence-People-dp-0374527369/dp/0374527369/ref=mt_paperback?_encoding=UTF8&me=&qid=1590209106

VIDEOS and FILM:

1. PBS: The Asian Americans: Five 1-hour segments spanning the Asian American experience. Helen talks about growing up in the 1950s in Episode 3 and the Vincent Chin case in Episode 5.

<https://www.pbs.org/show/asian-americans/>

Resources and curriculum aids: <https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/define-american-video/asian-americans/support-materials/>

2. The Chinese Exclusion Act:

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/chinese-exclusion-act/> Has curriculum guides

3. Becoming American: The Chinese Experience:

<http://www.pbs.org/becomingamerican/>

Has curriculum guides

4. "Who Killed Vincent Chin?" An Academy Award nominated documentary that came out in 1987 after the landmark case of a hate killing of Vincent Chin in Detroit, who was killed because he looked Japanese. This was when Japan was the enemy because it

could produce high quality fuel efficient cars. People who drove Japanese model cars were shot at; bumper stickers read "Toyota, Honda, Pearl Harbor" Unfortunately, the film is hard to find because of music licensing that expired, but some schools and college libraries have copies that may be borrowed.

SOME SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS BY HELEN ZIA:

@HelenZiaReal Covid19-related social media posts

-3/24 Post

Listen Up! Asian Americans and People of Conscience Allies!

I lived through the auto industry's collapse and the climate of misery and hate that led to Vincent Chin's killing. Those were horrific times -- but the train wreck from the hate and hysteria of this pandemic and global recession is coming and will be MUCH WORSE!

In 1982, the U.S. economy tanked and people were frustrated, miserable and angry. Politicians and CEOs found an "enemy" to blame: Japan. Asian Americans became moving targets. When the powderkeg of racism blew, Chinese American Vincent Chin was beaten to death for "looking Japanese."

With this pandemic, people are losing livelihoods AND lives. The misguided outrage is bound to explode: Asian Americans, esp who "look Chinese"-- must prepare: 1. Take precautions; 2. Report incidents; 3. Organize and educate among your communities and networks; 4. Strengthen ties with allies! and 5. Hold politicians and institutions accountable.

1. Take precautions: Don't get caught offguard by racist encounters! The #antiAsianVirus is Global, people are losing jobs and losing family members; as in the Vincent Chin days, they want someone to blame. Be alert and prepared for defensive action. Though stereotype is the meek, weak AAPI who won't fight back, violence is not a solution. Be aware of your surroundings. Learn from #BlackLivesMatter and have your phone camera ready to put the racists online. Talk to LGBTQ folks about being #QueersAgainstHomophobes. Be safe!

2. Report incidents: On several AAPI websites with online reporting forms, including: Chinese for Affirmative Action; www.caasf.org, #stopaapihate Asian Americans Advancing Justice; www.standagainsthatered.org #standagainsthatered OCA-Advocates; www.ocanational.org

3. Organize and educate your communities and networks. People who "look Chinese" are being blamed and attacked by the #antiAsianRacism virus. Expect resistance and disbelief from those who buy into the "model minority" myth--this includes law enforcement. In the 1980s, many Americans didn't think Asians could be

Americans, or that we could speak English. Contact your local AAPI advocates online to get educated about racism and the "model minority" poison, then educate and mobilize others!

4. Asian Americans can't tackle this alone -- connect with allies -- people of color and people of conscience. AAPIs must also show that we will step up and be good allies to other communities.

5. Hold officials accountable to keep everyone safe! Answer Census2020 to be counted.

3/28 Post

Word for the day: "Sentiment" as in "Anti-Asian sentiment"

"*Sentiment*" connotes a feeling, emotion, affection; it's a soft and sensitive word. Should not be used in conjunction with intentional threats, hateful words, slurs or physical attacks because it downplays the true harm that comes from anti-Asian *discrimination, prejudice, bias, racism, xenophobia, hate, extremism, ignorance* or any number of other more accurate descriptors. Please do not use a euphemism to describe harmful behavior. Historical note and disclosure: In the 1980s, with the anti-Asian hate killing of Vincent Chin, I and others used the very term "anti-Asian sentiment." I wish we hadn't, but in those days, America didn't even recognize the existence of Asians in America, let alone the racism we experienced. Many APAs weren't comfortable talking about race or racism then.

Today is different, and the tsunami of anti-Asian racism has already begun. Let's call it what it is. Please spread the word.

3/30 Post

Grateful to our first responders and caregivers--and let's not forget the #IMMIGRANTS who make up 29% of physicians, 24% of dentists, 20% of pharmacists, 16% of registered nurses, 23% of home health, psychiatric and nursing aides!- and many are Asian Americans. Meanwhile We must all help to stop the pandemic of racism and to ensure the safety of all people! stats from JAMAonline and @onerationaapi. #immigrantsmakeamericagreat

4/2 Post

OK, Piling On: @AndrewYang says when he's been called racist slurs he's glad that his sons weren't present "because then I might have to explain to them" what the slurs mean. Sadly, when Asian Americans as young as 2 and 6 have been stabbed by a

hater in Texas, all kids need to be taught that bigotry to anyone hurts everyone--and that the world's problems can only be solved when people work together. If only politicians could learn this, starting at the #WhiteSupremacyHouse.

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES:

Hollaback is a terrific nonprofit established to end harassment in all its forms by transforming the culture that perpetuates hate and harassment. They have many online resources and have numerous training modules, such as how to handle harassment -- online or in person-- and how to be a supportive bystander.

<https://www.ihollaback.org/resources/>

SOME TIPS ON WHAT ALLIES AND INDIVIDUALS CAN DO TO ADDRESS ANTI-ASIAN RACISM:

- **Acknowledge** anti-Asian racism exists : educate yourself and others
- **Use your social networks** to amplify anti-Asian racism and condemn it
- **Oppose and reject** racist language such as “China virus”
- **Equip yourself** and others with “in-the-moment” tools (for more info: Hollaback.org)
 - Distract -- draw the attention of harassers away from their target
 - Delegate – get help from someone else
 - Document – if it’s safe, take photos or video. Report the incident.
 - Direct – if it’s safe, speak directly to the harasser
 - Delay—after the incident is over, check in with the victim
- **Practice** your own reaction AND HAVE YOUR CAMERA READY TO VIDEO HARASSERS!
- **Prepare children** discuss racial prejudice, name calling and bullying with them
- **Report racial incidents** – insist incident be classified as a hate crime when filing a report with law enforcement
- **Alert authorities, law enforcement and officials** -- hold them accountable to address hate crimes
- **Contribute** to Asian American Pacific Islander non-profits and businesses