

FEATURE

The Indo Project

An open letter to filmmaker Angelina Jolie

Here is our open letter to filmmaker Angelina Jolie in which we, The Indo Project (www.theindoproject.org) initiate a counter petition as an answer to the petition started in Japan, to ban Angelina Jolie's movie UNBROKEN. We encourage people to sign to stop the continued effort of Japan to deny and censor its war record and crimes.

To Angelina Jolie,

Prior to the release of your movie **Unbroken**, which depicts, among other things, the circumstances of a Japanese POW camp, the news broke that your movie might be banned from being distributed and screened in Japan. Japanese nationalists have already collected 8,000 signatures in a petition to ban the movie, and Hiromichi Moteki of the *Society for the Dissemination of Historical Fact* has questioned the movie's credibility and called the film immoral, racist and demonic.

We at **The Indo Project** question Mr. Moteki's sources and hope he's aware of the list of the many war crimes the Japanese committed in the period 1937-1945. Has he ever read up on the Nanking Massacre and other massacres, the building of the Burma railway line or the Bataan Death March? Official Japanese war crimes include torture (including water boarding), use of chemical weapons, forced prostitution (comfort women) and forced labor (romusha). WWII statistics of casualties are tricky and controversial but if we have to mention one number, Mr Moteki can check the US Navy Department Library for himself. While the total number of American service men (93,941) in German POW camps experienced a 1% death rate, US service men

(27,465) interned in Japan and Southeast Asia, had a 38-40% mortality rate.

We at *The Indo Project* all had relatives in Japanese internment camps and life was exceedingly harsh: starvation, excruciatingly long train rides in box cars without water or food, withholding of food and medication in the camps, torture, death marches---we have heard it all in our families. A denial of the war crimes represented in the movie is a denial of the atrocities perpetrated against our family members who rest in war cemeteries and mass graves all over Indonesia, killed, directly or indirectly, by the Japanese army.

The war in Asia has been underrepresented in movies and books, and sadly, generations of Japanese schoolchildren still may not know what their grandfathers did in the war as Japan's role in WWII has been denied and pushed under the rug for generations. This denial has now been compounded by name calling, which, in our view, is compelling testimony of how nervous some Japanese factions are about being found out in a movie that shows the excessive cruelty of some Japanese officers. By banning the movie in Japan, the Japanese miss yet another opportunity of educating their children about the Japanese war record.

We applaud you, Ms. Jolie, for pointing your cameras at the war experience in Asia. By doing so, you honor our grandparents and fathers and mothers who perished in Japanese internment camps and prisons. Your hero in the movie, Louis Zamperini, survived to tell his tale to Laura Hillenbrand and you, and in the telling of his story, it has become our story too.

We want to endorse your movie by starting a counter petition, signed by the survivors (POW's and civilian internees of the Japanese camps) descendants and other family members or friends of those who could not sign for themselves because they died under the Japanese regime. We petition Japan to stop all forms of

censorship and show the movie, and we commit to supporting the movie by taking family and friends to see it together.

Please find our petition here:
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on behalf of The Indo Project
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About The Indo Project

Who are we?

We are a core group of dedicated Indo and Indo supporters who share the premise that our history and culture needs to be preserved in the English language. People of mixed European and Indonesian ancestry, are called Indos, DutchIndonesians, or Indo-Europeans. We come from Oregon, California, Massachusetts, Washington, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia and our numbers are growing. The majority of us are 2nd generation born right after WWII; however, our supporters range in all ages. We all have some kind of direct connection to the former Dutch East Indies.