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Chinese - Now & Then
by Joe Escobar - Friday, March 3, 2017, 10:02 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Chinese - Now & Then topic.

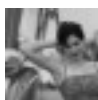
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IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, especially the cartoon numbers you are addressing. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Chinese - Now & Then

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Anti-Chinese Nativism



by Raya Aviani - Sunday, March 5, 2017, 9:35 PM

Drawn to the opportunities for work, Chinese men immigrated to the west coast of America before and after the Civil War. The industrialization of the west soon demanded and provided for the distribution of manufactured goods and natural resources, like gold and silver. Because Chinese laborers weren't allowed to become citizens, they were also excluded from the Homestead Act, which otherwise would have provided them with land if they became citizens, lived on the land for five years, and improved it (Textbook p. 595). This created a situation in which, instead of working the same as other men for a living, Chinese laborers mined and panned for gold, worked on the railroad, developed the land for government and local businesses, and whatever else they could do to earn money to send home and to survive, usually at dramatically lower wages than white men. Now, the Chinese were pitted against other man of every other ethnic group for work, because they would do it for less. Cartoon #1 exaggerates the prejudice of the Chinese takeover of jobs, including tobacco, clothing, and shoe production to name a few, with a sign reading "Chinese trade monopoly" on the ground. Outside, white workers wait for employment.

Anti-foreigner policies and taxes, nativist groups and violence aimed to rid the West of Chinese laborers. Mobs rioted against Chinese workers who were hired by the Union Pacific Railroad, ending in a massacre and the burning of Chinese homes (p.597). Cartoon #7 effectively shows how men of many ethnic backgrounds felt about the Chinese workforce taking their jobs, as they hang a Chinese man, with shovels, or tools of labor, at his feet.

The Chinese immigrated from a country of poverty and unstable political conditions, to one of racial inequality and hypocritical prejudices that helped to create it's own economic downturns. In cartoon #10, Nast's heroine of justice or liberty returns to shed light on the "Chinese question" issue. She scolds the white men for their treatment of the Chinese, acusing them of being "barbarians", "vicious, immoral and heathenish", and "the lowest and vilest of the human race," while their own transgressions against the black man literally hang and burn behind them.

I think it is this loss of humanity and fight for equality that led America into some of its most despairing moments, like the commercial said, we "turned our backs on principles that made us great".

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Re: Chinese - Now & Then

by Patrick Rugel - Monday, March 6, 2017, 4:06 PM

Several connections can be made between the video and the cartoons. In the 19 century you have the Chinese fleeing a country in scrambles and coming to America to improve their situation and gain opportunity (textbook pg. 596.) However,

Americans kind of take advantage of their situation and use them as a means to an end, labor in the railroad industry and in mining, pass laws directed at the Chinese specifically and concentrate them in communities such as Chinatown (textbook pg. 597.) Where as in the commercial the tables are turned and the Americans, due to the excessive spending and debt, are working for the Chinese. In both cases past and future, there is clearly situations of prejudice present, cartoons #6 and #7 and when the audience laughs during the video. The other major connection that I see in both the video and in the cartoons is the idea that foreigners rely to heavy on a government. In the third cartoon, is a caption that foreigners will consume Uncle Sam through labor wedges dependencies, ect, but in the video you have the idea that America relies on China to much, for cheaper manufacturing and goods leading to large amounts of debt owed. I would say that there is a big picture similarity, were a large power, government, corporations, are using foreigners as a means to an end and in the process discrimination and prejudice is clearly present between the two parties. As a generalization of the two cases, I guess you could say it is a historical recurrence, obviously there is differences between the two cases but there are similarities and as a big picture they are similar.

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The Chinese are brilliant

by Dawn Taylor - Monday, March 6, 2017, 7:10 PM

As Chinese laborers came from impoverished, politically unstable China, they came for the opportunity to work. By 1870 there were 63,000 Chinese in America. Most were men who planned to take their hard-earned savings home to the wives and families they had left behind. Once gold was all panned out, they labored building the trancontinental railroad, labored in the fields, developed fisheries and vineyards, an helped reclaim California swamplands. They were treated poorly, of course, by white men, being paid much less than white laborers (text 596,597).

In cartoon #4-The Chinese Question Again-Uncle Sam is holding the door closed so no more Chinese men can come into the U.S. As Chinese workers were creating their own communities throughout the West, the federal government had to address the issue of the growing population of Chinese. In 1882, America came up with its first discriminatory law targeting a specific immigrant group with The Chinese Exclusion Act, suspending Chinese immigration for ten years. This reduced the population by over 15,000 people.

The commercial showing a Chinese crowd laughing is about the failure of our nation. America has tried to spend and tax itself out of a great recession. The Chinese speaker says that the Chinese own most of our debt, so now we work for them. I think this has to do with Karma and the way America has treated the Chinese people as well as has not been smart economically.

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Re: The Chinese are brilliant

by Covita Hughes - Thursday, March 9, 2017, 3:29 PM

When I heard about the Chinese Exclusion Act during Professor Escobar's lecture Tuesday, I reached a new level of awareness regarding the emotional turmoil that the Chinese people must have went through during that time.

First they were encouraged to come over and work for pennies on the dollar, and then just as soon as the American people didn't need them as much they were blocked out like rodents. I admire them for their intelligence and perseverance.

It's interesting to me though that we know so very much today about the "right" and "civil" non-discriminatory ways to treat people, but some hatred and prejudice still prevails.

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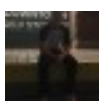
Re: Chinese - Now & Then

by Tanner Bull - Monday, March 6, 2017, 9:44 PM

In the commercial on “the potential future of the United States”, it describes the large debts that the United States government owed to the Chinese government and the power that government would have over the U.S. Connections rise in the political cartoons all describing Chinese immigrants as foreign stealing thieves who are coming to the U.S. to take over. Many of the political cartoons such as cartoons #1 and #8 show the Chinese people as octopuses and full of demeaning and negative words that portrays these races of people as subhuman and as cheap lower class. From the textbook, the Chinese exclusion act suspended Chinese immigration for 10 years apart from a few job categories. (Liberty, Equality, Power, pg. 597) There is large similarities among the expressed sentiments which is the ill treatment of a single group of people due to their race or ethnicity. Again, proving the expression of history repeating itself, which comes to mind in this situation. The case calls the similarity for how Chinese is being perceived. The earlier Chinese treatment was ill advised for what the commercial answered the fear of reasoning of the average America for these earlier Chinese immigrants.

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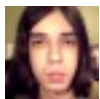
Re: Chinese - Now & Then

by Tanner Bull - Saturday, March 11, 2017, 11:29 PM

After re-watching the commercial video, the most obvious message that sticks out is the financial debts the U.S. government accrued and most of the debt owes to china. Creating the problem that these Chinese individuals all are either going to harm, make life more difficult or just take the power from the white people while all can be seen through the lenses of each political cartoon. The cartoons were just the indivual cases of how these Chinese people were facing, from the Chinese exclusion act, the made scapegoat that seems to be problem behind the economy, and the clear beating some faced simply because of their skin color or race. The argument that many could make that history repeats itself is the comparison to today, with President Trump and his foreign policy and treatment of foreign individuals. With the banning of certain individuals based on race or ethnicity or location of birth although many of these happening have been occurring for decades now and will always be a part of United States history due to foreign policy differences from president to president. (Lecture notes)

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Similar Issues, Historically Unrelated

by Kyle Quinoveva - Monday, March 6, 2017, 10:11 PM

Certainly while both the cartoons show along with the advertisement so a very anti-Chinese sentiment on a economic issue the events are not history repeating its self in a cohesive manner.

In a comparison, I find that Cartoons 1, 2 and 5 have some significant parallels to the ad its self and current day issues. The political cartoons very much on economic issues as well as the suffering of Americans due to cheap Chinese labor with Cartoon #1 showing white vagrants outside a workshop where a Chinese man is doing everything inside. Or Cartoon 5 showing a white laborer returning home to his family he needs to support while the Chinese workers bunk together in a shack. While these fears certainly aren't unfounded historical responses have been less than reasonable such as in Rock Springs, Colorado (pg 490) when mobs entered a Chinatown and burned several building down as well as killing several Chinese.

While these sentiments, a century apart, are shockingly similar I do not feel they are history repeating its self except, perhaps, in the vaguest of terms. While the situation feels identical it is not from a cyclic phenomenon of human behavior (Like how WW2 can trace many of its roots to WW1 which can trace some of its roots to the Franco-Prussian war, et cetera). The Rise of China as a global manufacturing power of the 1990s though today has no roots or links in the "Chinese question" of the mid to late 1800s and these issues arising are almost purely coincidental, being historically unrelated.

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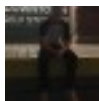


Who works for who now?

by Covita Hughes - Thursday, March 9, 2017, 7:08 AM

Cartoon number 1 depicted the average work ethic for Chinese men (on the left) and white men (on the right) It shows how Chinese are very productive, able to work hard and do more than his share. In contrast, we see white men gathered by a street lamp on a corner relaxing, visiting and watching another white man pushing a Chinese man back to work, as if he wasn't entitled to a break at all. The futuristic commercial touches on this by saying that America as a nation has failed due to laziness and overspending of resources. Another cartoon that depicts this is number 5 in which it is shown how each culture can live on 40 cents a day. We see on the left a room overfull of Chinese workers with zero luxury and it looks as if a couple of them are even eating a rat. On the right we see a happy American family greeting the man of the house, the kids are playing, the cat is enjoying some milk, and the mom and baby are greeting the man who is standing under the door which has a sign that reads "God Bless our Home". At the end of the commercial, the Chinese man says to the crowd with a chuckle that "They work for us now". I translate this as meaning "what comes around, goes around". After all of the work and low wages with no credit to the Chinese workers who helped build the railroad (text pg 596-597), a new time has come where the American's need them now.

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Re: Who works for who now?

by Tanner Bull - Saturday, March 11, 2017, 10:46 PM

I believe the main message of cartoon number 1 was to express how the Chinese people were being hired as cheap labor and individuals (specifically white men) were being fired due to striking for better wages. The employers then considered the Chinese as an alternate work force which further hurt the image of Chinese and Asians as the escape goat for the economic problems. The right side of the cartoon was to show the white men leaving town or in search for work through the rail road. The left side was expressing the many valuable skills these type of people possessed and made them a focus for the next labor force.

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Not much has changed

by Ryan Freire - Thursday, March 9, 2017, 3:45 PM

Truth be told as far as labor and the Chinese is concerned not much has changed in the U.S. Trump railed against China, getting the best of us in trade deals during his campaign speeches. We're pretty regularly hit with news articles about the horrific working conditions in Chinese sweatshops, cartoon #6 seems particularly relevant

here. Comparing these situations with the home life of the "proper" American seems to be an almost subconscious reaction when we talk about Chinese industry and its influence on the U.S.

Cartoons 1, 3, 5, and 9, sum up the rhetoric regarding China and the modern American economy very well actually. China devouring the U.S., China with its tentacles in everything we do, China putting our boys out of work with their efficiency and willing to work in far worse conditions. It hasn't been as overt as the Arabic rhetoric during the current campaign season, but it's definitely there. Even in casual jokes we make about our sweatshop clothing and cell phones. Humor being used as a sort of buffer from uncomfortable facts of the world around us is pretty thick when we talk about the U.S. relationship to china.

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Commerial

by Raya Aviani - Thursday, March 9, 2017, 10:33 PM

A few aspects of the commercial were very relatable to the 1860's-1890's. The biggest theme, besides government spending, was using the "Chinese threat" to encourage Americans to do something. Then, Chinese workers were hired as bait to scare white workers to quit strikes, leave unions and work harder for less (video Thursday). The threat of having Chinese workers take their jobs allowed business owners to keep more of their profits, while paying their workers enough to get by, industrializing small businesses.

This also leads to the second biggest theme; America bringing it's own destruction by overspending and eventually drowning itself in debt to other countries. We do this by allowing the government to take over private businesses. The videos and lecture on Thursday explained how the three main industries (mining, ranching and farming) were quickly taken over and regulated by wealthy private owners, businesses and agencies. We allow the individual to get pushed out and then hired by the bigger businesses to make their living because they can no longer compete with them. We forget what makes us great: the individual making their own living with their hard work, without government intervention.

The Homestead Act was our last attempt of preserving that freedom, "free land in the West would allow individual farmers to support themselves and ultimately help preserve American values of democratic individualism" (textbook p.595). It was a western "safety valve" to "ward off the potential evils of industrialization, urbanization, and capitalist expansion" (p. 595). But, instead, the settlement movement became the important factor in the industrialization of the West, and the nation.

The second greatest factor was the quick building of a transcontinental railroad which could transport all of the resources from the West to the East, and gained the interest of more business men and companies, and further government regulations. More government involvement led to more government spending. So, jump the future of this commercial and the US government is regulating everything, spending and borrowing money to do it.

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Re: Commerial

by Patrick Rugel - Friday, March 10, 2017, 4:45 PM

I would agree, the expansion west went from the concept of a family with dreams of opportunity to corporations monopolizing small business and private sectors. Mining is a good example, it starts with a man and a dream and a corporation comes in and squeezes them out (textbook.) America is a capitalistic country, in this point in history, it was easier to hire cheap labor, the Chinese, then to employ the average American (lecture.) The movement west as you say defiantly encouraged industrialization and monopolization of smaller business and with it corporations found a way to use the Chinese, who would work long hard hours cheaper then the average American, and with it Americans saw that as their westered opportunity diminishing as seen on several of the cartoons. In the video, I believe that big idea is that the U.S. government would rather pay private or others sectors for cheaper and easier goods and services, using the easiest most convenient solution. As is seen with the building of the railroad west, the government gave private sectors subsidies to build the railroad, rather then organize it and do it themselves (lecture.) Fast forward to the video's time period, the philosophy of paying someone else to produce goods and services, at a cheaper price will end at a point of swimming in debt.

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