

The Independent

May 7, 1921

p. 475

The Real Yellow Peril

By Earl S. Parker

Secretary of the
American League of Justice



Behold the Yellow Peril!—four sunny appealing little sinners the sight of whom must certainly strike terror to the stoutest heart

THE real "yellow peril" in California is not Japanese immigration, but yellow journalism and yellow politics.

The only test of public sentiment on the question in California was the vote on the alien land law of last November. Of the registered voters in the state over 222,000 voted against the alien land bill, while 668,000 voted for it and more than 400,000 who voted for candidates or on other issues were so indifferent to this question that they did not vote at all.

The wishes of a majority of the people of a great state are certainly deserving of careful consideration, and were this a question affecting only the people of California the citizens of that state would have every right to settle it in their own way. But it may be worth while to inquire into the methods used in securing that majority, to analyze it and to see how the people of other states are affected by California's decision, before endorsing it.

During the campaign, every newspaper of prominence and every candidate for office from constable to United States Senator were actively or passively supporting the alien land bill. On the other side were a few men, without the power of money and without control of the channels of publicity, who were pleading for honor, justice and a square deal. The real issues were never allowed to come before the people, and statements of those who opposed the alien land law, over the signatures of such men as Lyman J. Gage, ex-Secretary of the Treasury; James A. Blaisdell, president of Pomona College, and David Starr Jordan, former president of Leland Stanford University, were refused publication in the leading newspapers even as paid advertisements. A member of the State Senate, a candidate for reelection, said privately that he was opposed to such "fool legislation," but could not afford to oppose it openly for fear it might destroy his influence on other questions. Numerous bankers and other business and professional men expressed themselves in a similar way.

The constitutionality of the law remains to be proved, and its inadequacy for its purpose is admitted by the very men who fathered it. Within sixty days after its passage the California legislature was busy enacting new laws to strengthen it and

the Governor was appealing to Washington for Federal aid.

The methods used in the campaign are illustrated by the map on the next page, which purports to show the control of California land by Japanese. It



is an exact reproduction of the map on page 54 of "California and the Oriental," issued by the State Board of Control at Sacramento. The explanation strengthen it and the Governor was appealing to Washington for Federal aid.

The methods used in the campaign are illustrated by the map on the next page, which purports to show the control

The Real Yellow Peril

control of California land by Japanese. It is an exact reproduction of the map on page 54 of "California and the Oriental," issued by the

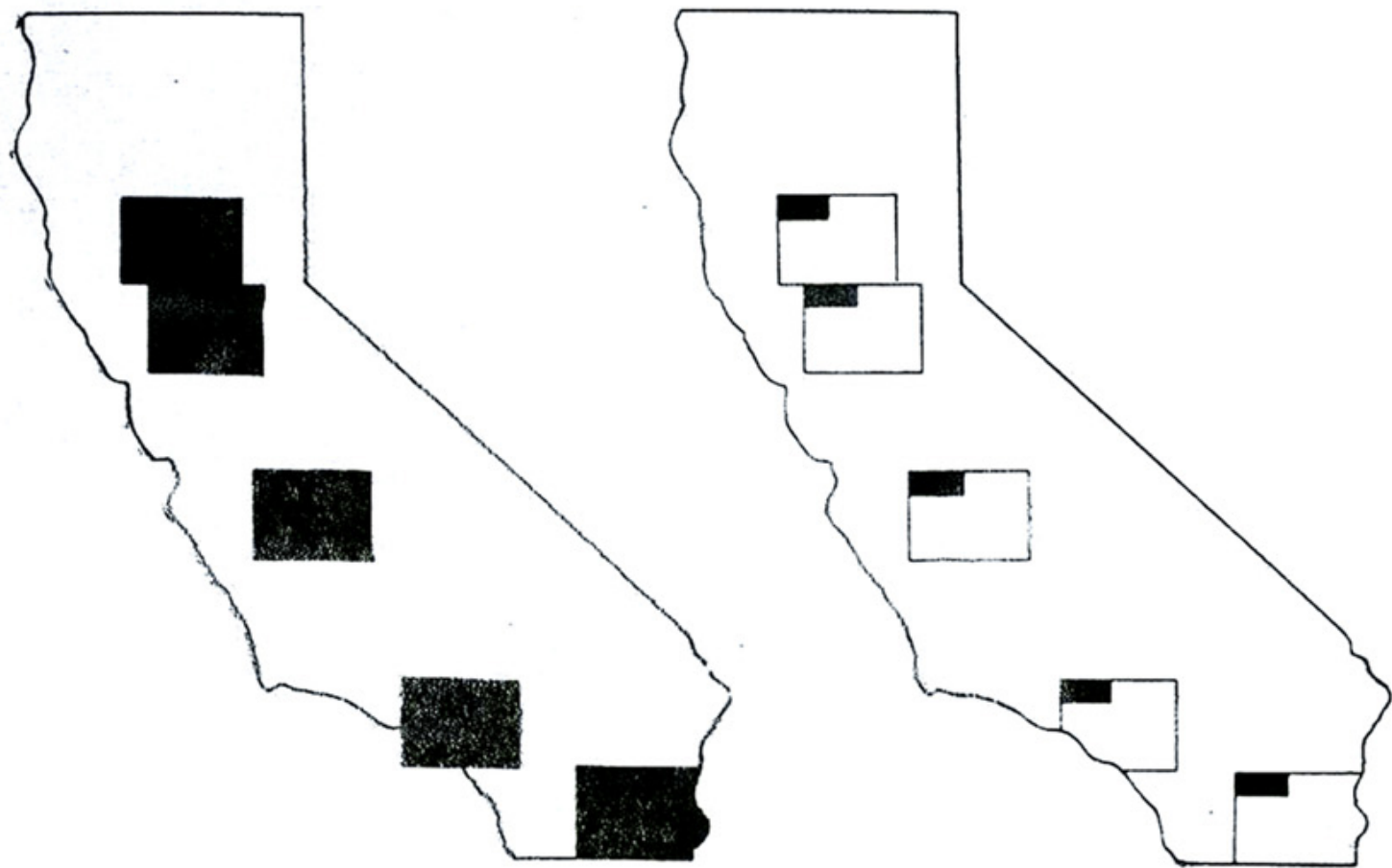
State Board of Control at Sacramento. The explanation printed with the map says, "Dark sections occupied by Orientals." Now the dark sections cover about 21 per cent of the face of the map and the inference is plain that 21 per cent of the land in California is owned or leased by Japanese. As a matter of fact the proportion of land actually occupied by Japanese is too small to show on this map; being only four-tenths of one per cent. The figures quoted from the California Board of Control bear out this statement.

The increase in Japanese population in California has also been much misrepresented. The following are the real facts from the United States census reports:

	Total Population	Japanese	Per cent Japanese	Increase per cent
1900	1,485,053	10,151	0.7	...
1910	2,377,549	41,358	1.7	1
1920	3,426,861	70,196	2.2	0.5

During much of this period Japanese immigration was unrestricted, and the increase during the last few years has been largely due to the necessity for business firms to send commercial agents to this country to care for the large increase in trade, and not to an increase in the number of laborers. Our purchases from Japan increased in five years from \$104,453,000 to \$302,137,000 and our sales to Japan in the same period from \$51,474,000 to \$464,456,000.

Consider what the purchase of \$464,000,000 worth of goods means to the American workman. Eighty per cent of every dollar's worth of goods shipped to Japan finds its way directly into the pockets of the workmen. This means that Japan's purchases each year maintains an employed army of 204,430 men for the full year at a daily wage of \$6. In other words, purchases by Japan give employment to almost twice as many Americans as there are Japanese in this country, including women and children. The Japanese are not crowding the Americans off of the farm or out of the fishing and other industries. There is no organized movement to colonize California and a great deal of the land now occupied by them has been reclaimed from the desert and the swamps or is land on which the Americans were unable to make a living. The majority of



The map on the left claims to show the proportional occupation of California by the Japanese, about 21 per cent of the total area. But the land actually occupied is about four-tenths of one per cent, with less than one Japanese to every two square miles, and a control by each of less than seven acres. The second map gives the proportional population, 2.2 per cent

the work being done by the Japanese is of a character the Americans do not care to do.

Of what quality is the Japanese settler? Let those who know him best testify; calling as witnesses only men who are themselves opposed to Japanese immigration.

John S. Chamberlin, Controller of the State of California, says: "I frankly admit the intelligence, the industry and thrift of the Japanese, the wonderful strides Japan has made since Perry's time and her proud position today as one of the greatest nations of the world."

Hon. William N. Vaile of Colorado says: "The Japanese, it is universally true, are the finest kind of people, law abiding—I may say more law abiding than we are ourselves, none in the poorhouse, none in the insane asylums."

Robert Newton Lynch, vice-president of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, speaks highly of "Japan's entry into the great war, her staunch rejection of German sympathy and her great service in policing the waters of the Pacific, even protecting the waters of our Pacific coast," and he adds, "It raised the Japanese in popular esteem and confidence on the Pacific coast."

Governor Stephens speaks eloquently of the many admirable qualities of the Japanese and says: "We assume no arrogant superiority of race or culture over them. Their art, their literature, their philosophy and in recent years

The Real Yellow Peril



Native born Japanese children of the McKinley School in Berkeley, California, saluting the American flag. These children are going to carry loyalty to America into their homes and to their parents

their scientific attainments have gained for them a respect from the white peoples, which we who know them so well fully share."

Benjamin Ide Wheeler, president emeritus of the State University, mentions "their good taste, persistent industry, their excellent qualities and their virtues," but strangely enough adds that these things "render their presence among us a pitiful danger." There is no record in history where the Almighty has been able to produce a race able to justify its existence and leave out the homely virtues of thrift, industry and hard work. If the possession of these qualities by any class of people in the U. S. A. constitutes a danger, the prayers of the people should be that, like small-pox and measles, it may become infectious with no quarantine laws against the speed of it.

Before going farther with this discussion let it be understood that there is no quarrel among the people of California as to the advisability of preventing immigration of the laboring classes. This cannot be stated too strongly. All are agreed, including the Japanese, that it is not desirable to admit any but students, artists, travelers and members of the professional classes.

The whole question is, "How shall this be done and how shall those who are here be treated? Shall the spirit and letter of the treaty be kept? Shall these people and the Japanese nation be dealt with as become one great nation dealing with another nation? Shall the question be handled in a way to allow America to retain her self-respect, and the confidence and good will of Japan and the other nations of the world? Or shall a shortsighted policy be followed that will forfeit the good-will so essential to America if she is to continue as the great moral leader of the nations?"

What is the menace? Is there danger from the American born child of Japanese parents?

There seems to be no danger from the parents. They have been law abiding, industrious, honest and willing and anxious at all times that their children should acquire an education and knowledge of our language. It is not surprising that they should be a bit backward about asking their children to become wildly enthusiastic over a country that denied to them, the parents, any opportunity to become citizens. Is it surprising that they should still cherish memories of the land that gave them birth and the only land to which they can look for protection?

The children attend the public schools and are always among the best students. They have the respect of the teachers and of their associates. They take part in the school activities and are staunch supporters of the athletic and debating teams and root just as loyally for their football heroes and are just as quick to crab at the umpire as are the proud descendents of the Pilgrim fathers. The east may be east and the west may be west, but when the east and the west meet under the stars and stripes to root for the same football team, the influence of the American school will have made them one, so far as loyalty to the flag and the things for which it stands are concerned.

These young American citizens are proud of their standing and are quick to associate themselves together in citizenship clubs and resent any insinuation that Japan has any claim on their services. This is true in California and in the Hawaiian Islands, and no greater punishment could be meted out to them than to compel them to go back to Japan and live under the conditions which they would find there.

The record of the American citizens of Japanese parentage during the great war is [Continued on page 499] an honorable record and there is no reason to fear, in case of another war, that they will not be found shoulder to shoulder with other American sons, doing their bit for Old Glory, in spite

The Real Yellow Peril

of the scant encouragement given them by the political clique that now holds California so firmly in its grasp.

Senator Phelan discovered one menace in the Japanese children; their number. He charges that "Japanese women give birth to a child every year." According to Governor Stephens's report the Japanese woman of child-bearing age gives birth to a child on an average of once in four and a half years. The birth rate is not so high as in the rural districts of several American states.

Japanese foreign policy has not met with the approval of the American people, but her aggressions in China, Manchuria and Korea should be judged by the example set by European Powers whose conquests in Asia and Africa make Japan's puny efforts at empire building seem child's play. In spite of her mistakes, which have been no greater than those of other nations, there is a strong progressive and democratic spirit in Japan. Every act of injustice and every false and misleading statement on the platform or in the press in America tends to strengthen the Japanese militarists and to weaken the growth of democracy.

In case of war the United States with its superior resources would doubtless be the victor. But who would profit from the victory? Would the humiliation of Japan and the destruction of her government, the only stable and organized native government in Asia, solve the Far Eastern question? Is it desirable that the white race, outnumbered by the so-called yellow races, alienate the only nation of the Orient which has shown capacity for adopting our Western civilization?

It is safe to say that the progress of the world depends upon the issue of peace or war between America and Japan.

The plain duty of every patriotic American citizen is to come out openly for suppression of war talk, for suppression of the agitators and alarmists, and for the enactment and enforcement of laws for the protection of all aliens without discrimination, to the end that America may deserve and get the respect of the nations of the world. When she has done this, her councils will be heeded and her example will be followed without the necessity of an appeal to arms.

America must clean her own backyard.

Los Angeles, California

The Independent