

#2 Document: Yes Restrict Immigration
A Clear and Present Danger: The Chinese Exclusion Act

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The following excerpt is from a 1902 San Francisco AFL (American Federation of Labor) pamphlet entitled Some Reasons for Chinese Exclusion: Meat vs. Rice, which called for a second extension of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act.

We.....desire to assure our readers that in maintaining our position we are not inspired by..... prejudice of any kind, but with the best interests of our country uppermost in our mind

Beginning with the most menial avocations (*lowly jobs*) they [the Chinese] gradually invaded our industry they gradually invaded one industry after another until they not merely took the places of our girls as domestics and cooks, the laundry of our poorer white women, but the places of the men and boys, as boot and shoemakers, cigarmakers, bagmakers, miners, farm laborers, brickmakers, tailors, slippermakers, etc.Whatever business or trade they enter is doomed for the white laborer, as competition is surely impossible. Not that the Chinese would not rather work for high wages than low, but in order to gain control he will work so cheaply as to bar all efforts of his competitor.

For many years it was impossible to get white persons to do the menial labor usually performed by Chinese. It was Chinaman's labor, and not fit for white.

Of their social habits,.....

With the habits, manners, customs, and whole economy of life violating every accepted rule of hygiene; with open cesspools, exhalations (*smells*) from water-closets (*toilets*), sinks, urinals, and sewers tainting the atmosphere with noxious vapors and stifling odors; with people herded and packed in damp cellars, living literally the life of vermin, badly fed and clothed, addicted to the daily use of opium to the extent that many hours of each day or night are passed in the delirious stupefaction of its influence.....

Whereas the experience of the last thirty years in California and on the Pacific coast having proved conclusively that the presence of Chinese and their competition with free white labor is one of the greatest evils with which any country can be afflicted:

Therefore be it *Resolved*, That we use our best efforts to get rid of this monstrous evil (which threatens, unless checked, to extend to other parts of the Union)

Source: American Federation of Labor, *Some Reasons for Chinese Exclusion. Meat vs. Rice. American Manhood against Asiatic Coolieism .Which Shall Survive?* Senate Doc. No. 137, 57th Congress, 1st Session (Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1902).