



Activity 2: Japan's Grievances

Student Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Read the following documents. When you are done, create a set of cartoons that graphically portray Japan's grievances against the United States and other western powers. Each cartoon should showcase a different grievance. Your cartoon strips should be both factually accurate and visually attractive. Be prepared to present your cartoon to the class.

Excerpts from K.K. Kawakami, "The Problem of Japan: A Japanese View," November 1921:
<http://www.teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1501>

The following comes from an article which appeared in the American journal The Nation in November 1921. Kiyoshi "Karl" Kawakami (1873-1949) was a Japanese journalist who covered American affairs for several important Japanese newspapers. He was also a frequent contributor to U.S. magazines and newspapers.

Roughly speaking, the land area of the earth measures 52,825,000 square miles; supporting 1,751,700,000 inhabitants. Of this total area the Caucasian peoples occupy or control about 46,146,084 square miles. It will be seen that the Caucasian race, having completed the occupation of Europe and the Americas, has conquered and secured control of the whole of Australasia, almost all Africa, the greater part of Asia, as well as the adjacent islands. And the Caucasian peoples who control so vast a territory number only 623,000,000....

On the other hand, the native population of Asia numbers no less than 900,000,000. And yet they control only 6,679,000 square miles of territory, because Siberia and Turkestan are occupied by Russia, India by Great Britain, and Tongking and Cochin-China by France, while Tibet, Chinese Turkestan, Mongolia, and Northern Manchuria, aggregating 2,655,000 square miles, are fast passing under British or Russian control. In other words, there are 134.8 Asiatics to each square mile of Asiatic land.

It may, therefore, be safely said that Asia's 900,000,000 souls have been expropriated of most of their territory and are today permitted to possess only 6,679,000 square miles. This, of course, does not mean that Asiatics have been evicted from the Asiatic territories controlled by Europeans, and that 900,000,000 people are actually compelled to live within the area of 6,679,000 square miles, i.e., 134.8 to the square mile. It is true that the natives of Asia are permitted to continue their habitation in India, Cochin-China, Siberia, and other Asiatic territories which have passed under the European scepter: But the fact remains that Asiatic nations are, by this process of expropriation, deprived of the opportunity to utilize the vast resources lying at their very doors.

It must be remembered that the Caucasian nations are always on the alert to exclude outside enterprises, and especially those of non-Caucasian peoples, from the territories they control. Even where they profess to follow the principles of free trade, they set up a barrier against non-Caucasian immigration. Moreover, by reason of their priority and their accumulated wealth, they have so firmly entrenched

themselves that outsiders, most of all non-Caucasian outsiders, find little chance to launch new enterprises in competition with them.

Now let us consider the particular case of Japan. Even schoolchildren know that Japan consists of volcanic ranges. The country is virtually filled with mountains, affording but 15,000,000 acres of tillable land, or only 16 per cent of the total area. This allows each inhabitant only one-quarter of an acre of farm land. In California farm land per capita of population is about nine acres. In Great Britain 77 per cent of its land area is agricultural land; in Italy 76 per cent; in France 70 per cent, and in Germany 65 per cent. Because of the peculiar topography of Japan the country appears, and as a matter of fact is, much more crowded than may be judged from statistics on paper. No traveler, not even the most unobserving, can fail to get this impression....

But it is not only the question of land shortage and overpopulation that weigh heavily upon Japan. Equally depressing is the fact that she has not within her own confines adequate mineral resources essential to modern industry. She depends almost entirely upon foreign countries for iron ores. Of coal she has little that can be used in the steel industry. But the most serious handicap is the lack of petroleum, a material which is becoming more and more important in transportation and in manufacturing industries. If you watch the chessboard of European and American diplomacy, you cannot fail to see how each nation is trying to outwit the other in gaining control of oil resources in different parts of the world.

And here is Japan, struggling to solve, partly at least, her population problem by becoming an industrial and trading nation, and yet harassed by the lack of three essential materials of industry—oil, iron, and coal. If she steps an inch out of her narrow precincts and tries to obtain, say in Siberia or China, the privilege of working such mineral resources, down comes the sword of Damocles in the shape of protest, official or otherwise, from the Western nations.

It is obvious that to great Powers of the West have accumulated more land than they should rightly own—than they can hold without doing injustice to the smaller nations, which find themselves in sad plight, due to the impossibility of finding room for their surplus population. The injustice of holding such vast territories would not be so obvious if they were to recognize, in favor of the small nations, the principle of unhindered immigration and of unrestricted enterprise within those territories. It is when they adopt a hide-bound policy of exclusion that they become a menace to the welfare of the human race.

A program to establish permanent peace with justice should contain one of two propositions, namely, a more equitable distribution of territory or the removal of the exclusive policy adopted by Western colonial Powers against Asiatic peoples. To the staid thinkers of the Occident this must seem a picturesque and Quixotic [hopeless] proposition. It is no more picturesque than were trade unionism or woman suffrage at their inception. Just as the political and economic theories which were denounced as visionary and perverted less than a century ago have since gradually been woven into the practical policies of various nations, so the above proposition will in time be seriously considered, not only by thinkers and theorists, but by practical men of affairs in all parts of the world. Unless we make supreme efforts to realize this ideal there remains but one alternative—the perpetuation of the savage "law of the survival of the fittest," which is equivalent to the Bismarckian axiom "Might is right."

“The Senate’s Declaration of War”: Japan Responds to Japanese Exclusion:
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5077>

In 1924 the U.S. Congress passed legislation severely limiting immigration from Europe, and cutting off almost all immigration from Asia. Two years earlier the Supreme Court had ruled that Asians were ineligible for U.S. citizenship. The Japanese viewed such measures as deliberate insults, and responded by organizing boycotts of American products. The following editorial appeared in the April 29, 1924 issue of the Japan Times and Mail.

There is no denying that the adoption by the American Senate of the exclusion amendment to the Immigration Bill has given a shock to the whole Japanese race such as has never before been felt and which will undoubtedly be remembered for a long time to come. The wonder is, rather, that the shock has not found expression in a louder outburst of indignation than is the case. The knowledge that Senators Johnson, Shortridge and company do not necessarily represent the entire American nation in offering an unnecessary affront, is largely responsible for the spirit of forbearance which seems to be generally ruling the mind of the nation for the present. The country is aware, also, that the Immigration Bill as a whole has yet to be passed by the Senate, to be put through a joint conference of the two Houses and then to receive the signature of President Coolidge before it becomes law, and it is unquestionably thought unwise to destroy, by ill-measured utterances, the only possible chances that might prove favorable to the Japanese in the meantime.

Nevertheless the fact remains that the Senate has passed, with an overwhelming majority, an amendment which they know is a most humiliating one to the Japanese race, and the event cuts the Japanese minds deep, a wound that will hurt and rankle for generations and generations....

...[T]he Senate has been most unfortunate in the choice of time for taking its action. While professing to be jubilant over the increased prospects of permanency of peace in consequence of the Washington Conference, all Japanese have ever since felt in the secret recesses of their heart that their country has been considerably weakened in its naval strength. To add to this there came that great devastating earthquake of last year [1923, when a massive earthquake destroyed a large section of Tokyo], with its far reaching effect in all directions, seen especially in the ever-increasing balance of the country's trade on the wrong side. It has been said openly more than once in different quarters abroad that Japan is as good as crushed to a naval and economic helplessness, from which there will be no recovering for a generation or two. Mark, then, it is at such a time that the Senate of the United States has said practically this: "We deliberately offer you this insult, knowing that you can do no more than make a wry face." [...]

This is extremely unfortunate. For a friendly turn in the hour of need will be remembered permanently, but an unfriendly act that takes advantage of one's helpless condition makes nothing of all the past and darkens the long future....