THE CHURCHES OF THE UNITED STATES AND AMERICAN ORIENTAL RELATIONS

By SIDNEY L. GULICK, D.D.

‘THE more I see of you the less you look like a Jap.’ This humorous yet highly significant remark by Mr Walter MacArthur was made at a dinner in San Francisco when for the first time Japanese labour delegates sat as guests of honour side by side with President Samuel Gompers of the American Federation of Labour and Secretary Paul Scharrenberg of the California State Federation of Labour. That historic dinner was clear evidence of the turn of the tide in American-Japanese relations.

Until the Russo-Japanese war (1905) the relations of America and Japan had been ideal. Mutual goodwill, helpfulness and appreciation had prevailed. Soon after the close of the war, however, persistent rumours insisted that Japan’s next war would be with the United States.

Real difficulties, moreover, began to develop in California on account of rapidly growing Japanese immigration. Extravagant stories were soon in circulation. In 1907 some 30,000 Japanese were admitted to the United States. Anti-Japanese agitation waxed violent. Then came the ‘Gentlemen’s Agreement’ between Japan and the United States by which Japan undertook to stop all new Japanese labour immigration to America. In the first full year of its operation (ending June 30, 1909) only 4443 Japanese entered the United States while 7493 departed. Since that agreement went into effect (1908–16) 15,141 more Japanese males have left the United States than have entered, while 21,993 more females have

come than have departed. This means that the Japanese government solved for us the problem of Japanese immigration without our passing any discriminatory legislation. And it also shows that Japanese men remaining in America are settling down for permanent life, bringing their wives and planning to rear their children here.

In spite, however, of the 'Gentlemen's Agreement' so faithfully administered, the anti-Japanese agitation went on. Many offensive bills were proposed in the state legislatures of the Pacific Coast, notably in that of California. Mutual irritation in California and in Japan became increasingly acute. In 1913 the famous Anti-Alien Land Law of California was enacted which brought matters to fever heat. Many in America confidently expected war. Meetings of indignation were held in Japan at which some foolish things were said by a few hot-heads. But the cablegram announcing a 'mob of 20,000 surging through the streets of Tokyo clamouring for war with America' was absolutely false.

Count Okuma made at that time a statement that should be repeated in every pulpit in America. 'The American-Japanese problem,' said he, 'cannot be solved by mere diplomacy, nor by legislation, nor even by war or threats of war. The only possible solution is by an appeal to the Christians of America to solve it on the Christian principles of universal human brotherhood.'

At that time of tension the daily papers of Japan were asking what the missionaries were doing about it—why the missionaries did not go back to the United States to teach America to be Christian. And the missionaries were not indifferent. Many letters and even cablegrams went from them as individuals and as groups seeking to head off the obnoxious legislation in California. Japanese regarded the proposed legislation as insulting and humiliating, because it singled out Japanese for differential legislation when there was no real occasion for it.

It was at that juncture that the Japan mission of the

American Board (American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions) sent a memorial to the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America as the largest single Christian body in the United States (composed of thirty denominations) asking that it 'appoint a commission to study the whole question in its relation to the teachings of Christ' and 'to seek to rally the Christian forces of the United States for the solution of the problem and for the promoting of such measures as are in accord with the highest standards of Christian statesmanship.'

Early in 1914 the Commission on Relations with Japan was established by the Federal Council. During the four intervening years a notable work has been accomplished. Many factors have been co-operating to bring about the present improved relations of America and Japan but one of them beyond question has been the contribution of the churches of America through the Commission on Relations with Japan.

In January 1915 the president of the Federal Council, Dr Shailer Mathews, and the writer of this account were sent to Japan as a Christian embassy to do what an embassy might to allay the irritation and to assure the Japanese that a campaign of education in the United States would be earnestly carried out. The effect on Japan of that visit, which lasted only one month (February), was unexpectedly great. It was described by one appreciative writer as 'beyond calculation.' The Rev. M. Ibuka, president of the Presbyterian college in Tokyo, wrote later saying: 'There can be but one opinion in regard to the inestimable value of your recent mission. A flood of light has been shed on the problem.' Dr J. L. Dearing said 'the value of the embassy far exceeded in significance what the promoters anticipated or dared to hope.'

The immediate result of that embassy was to quiet the anti-American agitation and to help Japanese to realize that there was a large body of Americans who earnestly were trying to solve the question in ways that were

honourable and mutually advantageous. The most important outcome, however, was an arrangement whereby two representatives of Japanese labour came in July to California as fraternal delegates to the Annual Convention of the California State Federation of Labour.

The writer had received (November 1914) from Mr Paul Scharrenberg, secretary of the State Federation, the suggestion that an exchange of fraternal delegates by Japanese and American labour would be mutually profitable. On arrival in Japan the matter was promptly presented to the foreign office. Even after securing the assent of the government to the principle of such exchange, there was difficulty in finding the right persons. And even then the government would not grant them passports unless assurances were given that the going of Japanese delegates to California would not be made the occasion of fresh anti-Japanese agitation and insult. Although such guarantees could not of course be given by any one, Mr Scharrenberg promised the writer in April that he would personally do whatever he could to make a success of the coming to America of the delegates. And he carried out his word most loyally. Messrs Suzuki and Yoshimatsu spent five months in California and left a friendly feeling with every one whom they met. They attended the California State Federation Annual Convention and were seated as fraternal delegates. Mr Suzuki's address there and in many Californian cities in the meetings of organized labour quite changed the attitude toward the Japanese, and this of course had its effect on the attitude of Japanese in California toward American labour. It was at this time that Mr MacArthur made the remark to Mr Suzuki quoted in our opening sentence.

This new mutual attitude came prominently to the front in August 1916 when the San Francisco Waiters' Union went on strike. Japanese waiters, though not members of the union and under no obligations, nevertheless walked out with the union waiters. And when

employers tried to hire other Japanese to come in to break the strike, no Japanese could be secured. This naturally immensely pleased the members of all labour unions. A few weeks later at the Annual Convention of the California State Federation of Labour (October 1916) four unions brought in resolutions requesting permission to organize Japanese. These resolutions were referred to the Executive Committee for a year of study.

In the meantime, Mr Suzuki, who had spent eight months in Japan building up his organization from 7000 to 30,000 members, returned to America (September 1916) bringing invitations to Mr Scharrenberg and President Gompers of the American Federation of Labour to visit Japan as fraternal delegates. The war has, however, made this impossible. At the national gathering of the American Federation of Labour at Baltimore (November 1916) President Gompers presented Mr Suzuki with a diamond-studded gold watch-fob as a token of the friendship of America for Japanese labour. The money for this gift was raised by Mr Scharrenberg. One of the significant items to be mentioned in this connexion is that for the first time in many years the Legislative Program of the California State Federation of Labour for 1916 had no plank calling for fresh anti-Japanese legislation.

The above statements, however, do not complete the evidences of a new spirit developing in California. The cordial welcome extended by California, and especially by San Francisco, to the various missions and groups that have come from Japan in recent months has been as surprising as delightful.

The head of the Parliamentary Mission, Dr T. Masao, said that they had felt some anxiety before reaching California as to how they would be received and treated, particularly in California. The experiences of Japanese in former years in California are still reverberating in Japan. Even eminent visitors from Japan have on occasion been subjected to insult and humiliation. This

Parliamentary Mission, however, much to their satisfaction, received nothing but the most cordial treatment wherever they went. In no city of the United States has their reception been more friendly than it was in San Francisco. While a suitable welcome was to have been expected from state and city officials and from the Chamber of Commerce of San Francisco, the representatives of organized labour were hardly expected to show the same manifestations of cordial goodwill. Such, however, was the case.

Mr George Shina, popularly known as the Japanese 'Potato King,' gave a dinner to the Mission which several representatives of organized labour also attended. According to the statement of Dr Masao, the frank conference which there took place in regard to Japanese labour in California and in Japan, and as to methods for meeting such difficulties as still remain in the economic competition of Japanese with American labour, was exceedingly satisfactory to all concerned. At that conference Mr Murphy, president of the California State Federation of Labour, was present and also Mr Paul Scharrenberg, its secretary-treasurer, 'the man behind the throne.' So cordial were the relations established that an official letter of introduction for the entire Mission to Mr Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labour, and to the other officers at Washington, was presented to them by Mr Scharrenberg on behalf of the California State Federation.

On their arrival in Washington, the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labour was in session. President Gompers took the opportunity to introduce the entire Parliamentary Mission to the entire Executive Council, on which occasion again frank and friendly addresses were made on both sides.

The members of the Japanese War Mission had much the same experience. Leaders of organized labour, who in years gone by had not been slow to express their opposition to and condemnation of Japanese, came forward with surprising manifestations of cordial greetings.

While these influences have been working through the ranks of organized labour, the campaign of education carried on by the Federal Council has been going on among the churches of America. The writer has been sent far and wide over this extended land, speaking not only in churches and before groups of Christian men and women but also before chambers of commerce, trade boards and clubs. Tens of thousands of pamphlets and leaflets have been distributed and numberless articles have been contributed to the secular and religious press.

Special conferences have been held in regard to these matters, significant resolutions have been passed, and important committees have waited on President Wilson and on the committees and members of Congress.

The writer has everywhere contended that a real difficulty has arisen in the new contact of the East and the West. California and the Pacific Coast states are right in contending that free immigration from Asia would be disastrous; but so also is Japan right in contending that invidious and humiliating race legislation is not friendly nor Christian.

Some solution accordingly must be found that recognizes and provides for the right on both sides. The proposals the writer has been urging he has called at times the New Oriental Policy and at times Proposals for Constructive Immigration Legislation. Stated in their very briefest form they are as follows :

America needs a sound policy for dealing comprehensively and constructively with all the closely interrelated problems, arising out of our enormous and varied immigration legislation, fitted to take the place of existing incomplete, disconnected and piecemeal laws and methods. The legislation needed should deal with :

The regulation of immigration.

The registration of aliens.

The distribution of immigrants.

The education of aliens for American life.

The protection of aliens by the Federal Government.

The naturalization of aliens.

Legislation dealing with these matters should be controlled by the following principles:

1. The United States should so regulate and, where necessary, restrict immigration as to provide that only so many immigrants of each race or people may be admitted as can be wholesomely Americanized.

2. The number of those individuals of each race or people already in the United States who have become Americanized affords the best basis of the measure for the further immigration of that people.

3. American standards of living should be protected from the dangerous economic competition of immigrants, whether from Europe or from Asia.

4. Such provisions for the care of aliens residing among us should be made as will promote their rapid and genuine Americanization and thus maintain intact our democratic institutions and national unity.

5. The Federal Government should be empowered by Congress to protect the lives and property of aliens.

6. All legislation dealing with immigration and with resident aliens should be based on justice and goodwill as well as on economic and political considerations.

These principles, however, need to find concrete expression. The writer is suggesting therefore the following specifications:

- i. The maximum permissible annual immigration from any people should be a definite per cent (say five) of those from that people who have already become naturalized citizens, together with all American-born children of immigrants of that people.

- ii. A Federal Bureau for the Registration of Aliens should be established and all resident aliens should be required to register and to keep registered until they have become American citizens. A registration fee (ten or perhaps five dollars a year) might well be required of all male aliens eighteen years of age or over.

- iii. The Federal Bureau for the Distribution of Immigrants should be developed and provided with increased funds for larger and more effective methods.

- iv. A Federal Bureau for the Education of Aliens for American Citizenship should be established. While this bureau should not set up its own schools, its duty should be to promote the establishment by local bodies of suitable schools in needful localities and all registered aliens should be given education for citizenship free of cost. The bureau should be provided with funds for subsidies to be granted to schools upon the fulfilment of conditions prescribed by the bureau. The registration fee of aliens might well be reduced by one dollar (\$1.00) for every examination passed.

- v. Congress should at once enact a law enabling the Federal Government to exercise immediate jurisdiction in any case involving the protection of and justice to aliens. The treaties place this responsibility on the Federal Government but no laws as yet give it this power. The bill drafted by

Hon. Wm. H. Taft and endorsed by the American Bar Association, or some similar bill, should be passed.

vi. The standards of naturalization should be raised. Only those applicants for naturalization should be regarded as qualified who have passed all the examinations of the schools for citizenship and who have maintained their registration without break from the time of their admittance to America. Under the foregoing provisions and rigid limitations as to numbers and qualifications, naturalization should be given to all who qualify regardless of race.

The above proposals for constructive immigration legislation have received wide individual endorsement. Many regard them as offering a genuine and fundamental solution for the entire problem of immigration, European as well as Asiatic. Whether or not anything will be done by Congress before the war closes it is not possible to forecast.

Certain it is, however, that the country is apparently ready now, as it has not been before, to grapple with immigration questions in sane and practical ways. These problems are now beginning to be recognized as involving great moral and international issues, as well as having important economic and political aspects. The country is beginning to recognize also, as never before, that international relations must be brought under the control of moral laws. The contribution which the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America has made to this developing consciousness in America is an important one.

The churches as churches cannot, of course, identify themselves with any political program of legislation. The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, though profoundly interested in establishing Christian international relations, has not committed and cannot commit itself to the foregoing proposals or to any specific legislative program. Steps are accordingly being taken by a small organizing committee to form a league of those who endorse these principles and proposals, which league may in due time formulate more definitely the details of the needed legislation, draft the bills and seek for their enactment by Congress.

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