

"The Chinese Question"

Harper's Weekly

February 18, 1871

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First-Year Seminar (COLA 100) Cartoon Project
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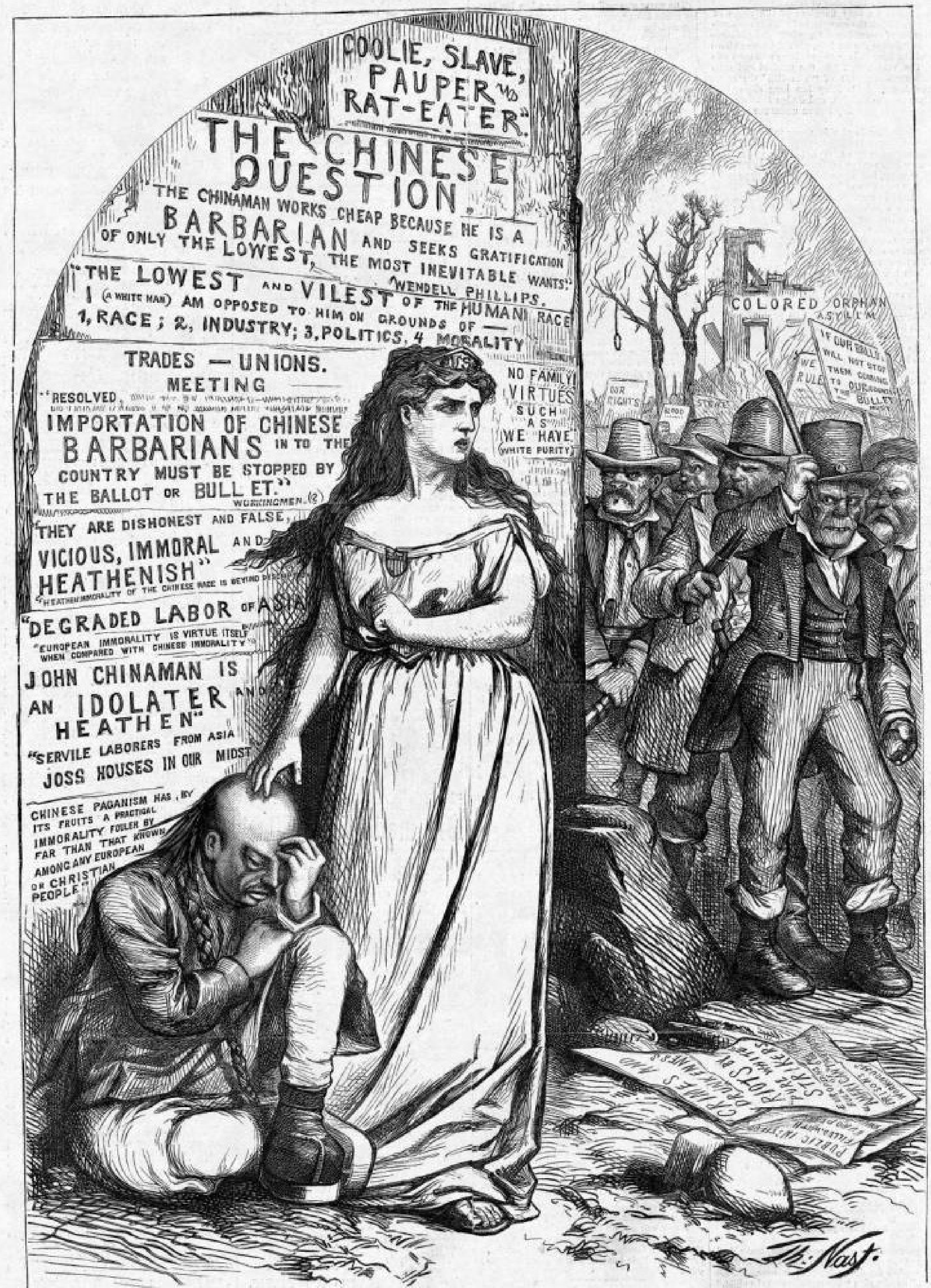
Published in *Harper's Weekly* on February 18, 1871, *The Chinese Question* defends Chinese immigrants against the brutal prejudice and discrimination that they faced in America. In this cartoon by Thomas Nast, Columbia, the feminine symbol of the United States, shields the despondent Chinese man against a gang of thugs, whom she emphatically reminds that "America means fair play for all men." This armed mob whom were also immigrants consisting of Irish Americans and perhaps German Americans as well. They were very angry about the Chinese coming to America to work and they protested against the Union Draft and Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation by burning the Colored Orphan Asylum and lynching blacks.

On the wall behind Columbia are numerous slurs against the Chinese immigrants such as coolie, barbarian, mongolians, pagan, immoral and vile. These Chinese immigrants were also known as "John Chinaman." The 1876 the Republican platform had Congress investigate the effects of the Chinese immigration and importation on the moral and material interests of the United States. In 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act which banned all Chinese immigration to the United States for ten years.

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COLUMBIA.—"HANDS OFF, GENTLEMEN! AMERICA MEANS FAIR PLAY FOR ALL MEN."