

REIMAGINING CHINA: FROM EXCLUSION TO ACCEPTANCE

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Abstract
of
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It is widely agreed that the Chinese Exclusion Acts were repealed to undermine Japanese propaganda against the United States during World War II and deepen the U.S. alliance with China. While these geopolitical considerations were essential, perceptions of China changed during the preceding period of Chinese exclusion which spanned from 1905 to 1943. These changes in public opinion arguably led to a decisive vote for the repeal of exclusion in Congress.

This text explores the historical developments and cultural shifts that underlay these changes in perception. China's transition from an empire to a republic was critical to this process, as was the missionary background of the country's most popular chroniclers during its republican period. This paper utilizes newspapers, editions of *Time* magazine from the 1930s and 1940s, popular literature, and contemporary academic writings to explore Americans' changing feelings about China during the exclusion era.

These writings demonstrate that optimism about China derived from a paternalistic view of the country. Chinese people were only considered capable of assimilating in direct proportion to their receptivity toward Christianity and Western ideas, which they were believed to hold in increasing esteem.

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Date

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Introduction

When they passed in the late nineteenth century, the Chinese Exclusion Acts had the unprecedented quality of classifying an entire nationality of people as “alien.” Although prior naturalization laws had limited immigration to “free white persons,” these laws were virtually unenforced. The federal government generally viewed immigration as beneficial to its relationships with other countries, as expansionists were optimistic that the frontier would continue to expand past the West Coast in the post-Civil War republic. This tendency was evident in 1868 when U.S. minister Anton Burlingame and Secretary of State William H. Seward granted China “most favored nation” status with the Burlingame Treaty, as it was believed that unlimited emigration and immigration between the two countries would expand missionary and commercial efforts in China. This policy was universally praised by the press, overwhelmingly passed by Congress, and led to a “special relationship” between the two countries.¹

By contrast, many Americans on the West Coast saw Chinese immigration to be an ominous development. This view was expressed by California writer Pierton W. Dooner, who wrote in his dystopian novel *The Last Days of the Republic* that the Chinese were “a race alien alike to every sentiment and association of American life” and “incapable of assimilation.”² Ninety-nine percent of California voters declared they were “against Chinese immigration” on an 1879 ballot; tens of thousands of them joined anti-

¹ Beth Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go: Violence, Exclusion and the Making of the Alien in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 28.

² *Ibid.*

Chinese rallies in occupied sandlots to listen to Dennis Kearney utter his rallying cry, “The Chinese must go!”³ His arrest only inspired him to tour the country and rally people behind his cry nationwide.⁴

Thus, the Chinese Exclusion Acts emerged out of a contradictory relationship between the United States and China in which federal interests clashed with local prejudices. In *The Chinese Must Go*, Beth-Lew Williams argued that federal policy toward Chinese immigrants was driven by the upswell in violent agitation and vigilantism on the West Coast. Weeks after President Chester A. Arthur’s veto of the first Chinese exclusion bill caused him to be burned or hanged in effigy throughout California, he and the Republican Party reversed their positions and passed another version of the law on May 6, 1882.⁵ Subsequent violence against Chinese immigrants across the West Coast pressured the federal government into passing further exclusion measures, and by 1920, the Chinese population of Western states dropped from a high of 102,102 in 1880 to 38,604 in 1920.⁶

These tensions between domestic public opinion, diplomacy, and government policy as outlined by Beth Lew-Williams inform this paper. Prior to World War II, these tensions became less pronounced as Americans grew to see Chinese as potential allies in global affairs and came to identify with their struggles. As Madeline Hsu argued in *The Good Immigrants*, non-quota Chinese students increasingly immigrated to the U.S. and

³ Ibid., 41-42

⁴ Ibid., 42.

⁵ Ibid., 51.

⁶ Ibid, 224.

forged links with Americans on the mainland through the Boxer Indemnity Scholarship program, a trend which found its ultimate expression with the ascension of Chiang Kai-shek and Soong Mei-ling in China. Moreover, in the intervening decades between the infamous Immigration Act of 1924 and World War II, American missionaries, authors, and activists increasingly wrote about China and raised money for its causes, in the hopes of creating a democratic and Christian China.

In this paper, I will argue that this shift was critical in shaping the movement which coalesced against Chinese exclusion. In my first chapter, I will explore how the Boxer Rebellion and the Chinese boycott of 1905-1906 represented the beginning of this shift, as indemnity payments for Chinese education became the great hope of policymakers and U.S. commercial interests who preferred “revolution” along Western lines to “Boxerism.” This chapter will also foreshadow the transformation of Soong Mei-ling into Madame Chiang and explore how her family history was affected by the vicissitudes in exclusion policy. Next, I will cover how “yellow peril” fears were reshaped by the rise of Japan, and demonstrate how this obliquely affected the perception of Chinese people in the U.S. This chapter relies on “yellow peril” literature about the rise of Japan and newspaper accounts which demonstrate the nascent optimism about China, a trend which David Scott identified in *China and the International System*. My third chapter will show how Pearl Buck and Henry Luce constructed a heroic image of China in the 1930s—an image well-documented by T. Christopher Jespersen—and aroused people’s sympathy for the country. This chapter will also outline how Buck and Luce were informed by their missionary backgrounds and how they brought that to bear

with United China Relief—the philanthropic effort which was most successful in winning sympathy for the Chinese cause. My fourth chapter will pertain to the Congressional debates, diplomatic cables, and lobbying efforts surrounding Chinese exclusion, particularly as they related to newfound hopes for a democratic China as represented by Madame Chiang. I will conclude my thesis paper by summarizing the most important factors that led to the signing of the Magnuson Act and briefly detail the negative repercussions that Chinese people faced with the rise of the “red peril.”

Traditional interpretations of the repeal of Chinese Exclusion have emphasized the importance of different factors and dynamics. Historian Fred Riggs emphasized the role of Congress and pressure groups in his 1950 book *Pressures on Congress*, noting that the convergence of the Citizens Committee to Repeal Exclusion was crucial in creating a consensus around the Magnuson Act. In their 1998 article “A Democracy at War,” Xiaohua Ma emphasized exclusion repeal in the context of the U.S. transition to a race-neutral immigration policy during and after World War II. Karen Leong built on this argument in “Foreign Policy, National Identity, and Citizenship,” arguing that the efforts of Congress were secondary to the FDR administration’s unilateral efforts toward repealing exclusion. Using the existing scholarship as a framework, I argue that China also used its diplomatic leverage in World War II to force the issues of extraterritoriality and exclusion, a strategy which proved effective as Americans feared the potential for an alliance between China and Japan.

Chapter 2: The New Mandarins

While Chinese laborers were subject to various exclusion laws after 1882, various geopolitical developments provided an increasing number of Chinese students with the opportunity to study in the U.S. Starting with the Spanish-American War, William McKinley abandoned the policy of non-interventionism overseas and annexed Hawaii and the Philippines—both home to large populations of overseas Chinese people—and used his newfound Pacific hegemony to seek more favorable terms of trade with China. U.S. overseas imperialism coincided with increasing attempts by European powers and Imperial Japan to annex parts of the Chinese mainland, in addition to rising missionary activity and unequal treaties. The backlash against the encirclement of China would lead to the Boxer Rebellion, and in turn, the killing of Western missionaries and Chinese Christians.

Having already annexed the Philippines prior to the rebellion, the U.S. was able to provide a significant troop presence to protect its missionaries and become party to the “Eight-Nation Alliance.” Thus, when the alliance demanded 450 million fine taels of silver in indemnity payments, the U.S. demanded more than 7% of the total payments. Adding insult to injury, Congress elected to extend the terms of the Chinese Exclusion Acts a year later, and in 1904 expanded the policy to the Philippines and Hawaii. These humiliations would coalesce in 1905 with a historic boycott against American goods and a shift in exclusion policy.

Undoing the Yellow Peril

In December 1904, Liang Cheng—the Chinese ambassador to the United States—wrote U.S. Secretary of State John Hay in the hopes that he might reduce the amount of indemnity funds demanded for the Boxer Rebellion.⁷ This plea was made in view of a fast-changing political situation around the indemnity payments; fearful of Japan’s rise in the Pacific and rising Chinese nationalism, prominent Americans began to criticize the terms of the excessive Boxer Indemnity for fear that it might alienate China from the West’s influence. This situation became especially pronounced when the *New York Sun* reported that Reverend William Scott Ament, the director of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), had collected indemnities amounting to thirteen times the amount of damages inflicted by the Boxer rebels.⁸ Months after the *Sun* article, Mark Twain authored a scathing essay entitled “To the Person Sitting in Darkness” to condemn the incident. As Vice President of the Anti-Imperialist League, he distributed over 150,000 copies of his essay throughout New York and ignited a fierce debate over the nature of the missionary enterprise.⁹

This culminated in secretary of war William Taft’s speech in June of 1905, in which he criticized the United States for having been “unjust” to the Chinese. Business leaders who had benefited from U.S. Open Door policy with China also chimed in, as

⁷ Stacey Bieler, *Patriots or Traitors: A History of American-Educated Chinese Students* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 46.

⁸ “Envoys Will Sit as Judges,” *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, December 24, 1900, accessed November 25, 2020, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/86548410/>

⁹ Everett H. Emerson, *Mark Twain: A Literary Life* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000): 257.

many were optimistic that the Chinese self-strengthening movement would lead to the “Westernization of China” and believed that better treatment of Chinese Americans would improve business opportunities abroad.¹⁰ Missionaries who were critical of the indemnity payments even advocated remitting some of them to fund education for Chinese students. Among these was Arthur Smith, sometimes referred to as “the dean of American missionary educators,” who had previously argued in 1901 that Western education and science would “shatter Chinese ideals” and prevent the development of anti-foreign movements in China.¹¹

American policymakers and missionaries had reason to fear that “Western-inspired” Chinese revolutionaries would pose as much of a threat as the Boxers had to America’s sphere of influence. In 1892, the signing of the Geary Act provoked a major backlash within Chinese American communities. The law forced returning Chinese residents to possess property of \$1000 or more and required all Chinese immigrants to register for a certificate of residence within one year of arrival. This was offensive enough that the chairman of San Francisco’s Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) advocated a boycott of the registration order, and only ten percent of Chinese people in the city ultimately complied with the Geary Act’s registration policy; however, a federal court ruled the CCBA chairman’s order to be unconstitutional.¹²

¹⁰ Madeline Hsu, *The Good Immigrants: How the Yellow Peril Became the Model Minority* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 40-41.

¹¹ Bieler, *Patriots or Traitors*, 42.

¹² Guanhua Wang, *In Search of Justice: The 1905-1906 Chinese Anti-American Boycott* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2001), 33-34.

In his study of the boycott movement of 1905-1906, Guanhua Wang suggests that CCBA merchant leaders lost credibility in the years following the failed boycott of the Geary Act and thus provided space for secret societies to flourish.¹³ Shortly after the 1902 extension of the Chinese Exclusion Acts, Chinese constitutional monarchists and republicans pressured merchants to boycott goods from the United States. Members of Baohuang hui (Chinese Empire Reform Association) were especially crucial in this effort as the organization had more than 100,000 members worldwide and over 100 chapters in the Americas.¹⁴ Chen Yikan, the editor of its Hawaiian newspaper, advocated a boycott in 1903 and toured the United States to generate support for his plan.¹⁵ Reverend Ng Poon-chew, the editor of the largest Chinese-language newspaper in the country (*Chung Sai Yat-po*) and leader of the Chinese American Christian community, advocated limiting Chinese trade with the United States as early as 1900. Ng also assisted Sun Yat-sen in his fundraising activities, whose revolutionary organization in Hawaii recruited many of the Chinese who participated in the 1905 boycott.¹⁶

In response to mistreatment of Chinese merchants and students in the United States, the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce declared a boycott against the country on July 20, 1905. Whereas the failed boycott against the Geary Act had mainly been organized by merchants, the Anti-American Boycott of 1905-1906 came to encompass students, intellectuals, and ordinary consumers throughout China and overseas Chinese

¹³ Wang, *In Search of Justice*, 83.

¹⁴ Wang, *In Search of Justice*, 71.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 85.

communities throughout Southeast Asia and Hawaii. While Shanghai merchants were initially at the center of the movement, many were unable to turn a profit without remaining open to the American market. Reform organizations throughout China, such as women's anti-foot-binding societies, took the initiative in passing their own resolutions for boycotts against American goods to put further pressure on merchants. Pro-boycott newspapers such as *Shibao* published commentaries praising the merchants who had made the "greatest sacrifice," and argued that the public needed to find ways to assist merchants involved in the boycott.¹⁷ Chinese throughout Southeast Asia and the United States provided financial assistance to the movement, and the U.S. consul general in Guangzhou acknowledged that "this agitation could never have lived for as long as it had, were it not for the numerous contributions made."¹⁸

Wong Sin Kiong's study of the boycott movement emphasizes how Southern China became a nexus point for boycott advocacy during this time. The movement achieved newfound momentum and sympathy upon reaching Guangzhou, as ninety percent of Chinese Americans hailed from the province of Guangdong and had family connections to protestors in mainland China.¹⁹ After the Qing government issued an edict against the boycott, the movement assumed a new shape as people throughout Southern China continued it under the guise of memorializing Feng Xiawei—a man from Guangzhou who killed himself in front of the American consulate in Shanghai in protest

¹⁷ Ibid., 170.

¹⁸ Ibid., 172.

¹⁹ Wong Sin Kiong, *China's Anti-American Boycott Movement in 1905: A Study in Urban Protest* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2002), 71.

of an unequal labor treaty. One such memorial in Hong Kong was designed explicitly to appear “civilized” to win the sympathy of foreigners, as the organizers took care to not be accused of “Boxerism” and hung up memorial wreaths and flower scrolls instead of burning incense.²⁰ Some boycotters even appealed to the United States government on the basis of their shared interest in transforming China into a Christian country, as one group of Christian converts wrote that, “When Americans treat our people as we have described, this not only makes our nation cease to love your Excellency’s nation, but it causes our people to scorn Christianity.”²¹ Protestors were inspired by Zou Rong’s doctrine of *winming dizhi* (civilized boycott) and made a point of treating Americans within China respectfully.²² The organizers of the movement also stressed the importance of *minqi* (popular spirit) in helping China gain respect worldwide, as students brought the boycott to the masses—both literate and illiterate—by putting together public lectures, visual media, and theatrical performances.²³

Missionaries and educators believed that the anti-American boycott showed the urgency of modifying both the Boxer Indemnity and exclusion policy. W.A.P. Wilson, a Presbyterian missionary who served as the inaugural president of Peking University, wrote with alarm that more students were electing to study in Japan instead of the United States after the boycott, but remained optimistic that, “If we show a disposition to treat

²⁰ Kiong, *China’s Anti-American Boycott Movement*, 81.

²¹ *Ibid.* 72.

²² *Ibid.*, 135-36

²³ *Ibid.*, 137

our Chinese fairly, their hearts will be open to us as never before.”²⁴ By contrast, some had a positive view of the students and reformers who comprised the movement, as they had goals aligned with westernization and Christianization of Chinese education such as the abolition of the Confucian text-based exam system. This attitude was encapsulated by Edmund J. James, president of the University of Illinois, who wrote to Theodore Roosevelt that “China is upon the verge of a revolution....The nation which succeeds in educating the young Chinese of the present generation will be the nation which for a given expenditure of effort will reap the largest possible returns in moral, intellectual, and commercial influence.”²⁵

President Charles Eliot of Harvard University concurred with this attitude and argued that offering full scholarships to Chinese would end the boycott. Shortly thereafter, Yale University, Cornell University, and Wellesley College followed Eliot’s advice and set up scholarships for aspiring Chinese students, and six hundred candidates competed for them in Nanjing.²⁶ After firing Victor Metcalf—his exclusionist Secretary of Labor and Commerce—President Roosevelt later met with both Edmund James and Alfred Smith. He ultimately took up Smith’s goal of “shattering Chinese ideals” to heart in his 1907 address to the nation, as he decided to return part of the Boxer Indemnity to China and expressed his faith in “educational work as a civilizing force among this backward race.”²⁷

²⁴ W.A.P. Wilson, *The Awakening of China* (Public Domain Books, 2009), 250-51.

²⁵ Hsu, *The Good Immigrants*, 42.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 43.

In response to the boycott, Theodore Roosevelt conceded that “We have behaved scandalously toward Chinamen in this country” and ordered the Treasury Department to “end all discourtesy or harsh treatment in connection with the merchant, traveler, or student.”²⁸ Whereas the mean rejection rate of incoming migrants was fifteen percent between 1894 and 1905, the rate fell to barely over six percent between 1906 and 1924.²⁹ Immigration officials were also ordered to heed the assurances of U.S. consular officials rather than ascertain information through long interrogations. By 1910 they were ordered to investigate students, merchants, and other exempt classes of Chinese on ship rather than at immigration stations.

In 1908, Roosevelt reached an agreement with Congress to educate 100 Chinese students per year by returning the Boxer Indemnity excess that the U.S. had collected for damages.³⁰ Moreover, it was agreed that \$500,000 indemnity funds would be returned to China per year, with the final payment amounting to \$1.4 million.³¹ This decision paid immediate dividends for U.S. relations with China as the Chinese minister to the United States thanked the country for “this signal act of generosity...which affords another conspicuous proof of the high sense of justice.”³² *Chinese Students' Monthly*, a journal written by Chinese students on the East Coast, published an editorial titled “American Hospitality and the Chinese Students” after the indemnity scholarship fund was passed. The writer of the piece was optimistic that this policy would bring both countries closer

²⁸ Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go*, 212-13.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 213.

³⁰ Bieler, *Patriots or Traitors*, 44.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 44.

³² *Ibid.*, 46.

together and that foreign-educated students in China had demonstrably “reduced the possibility of friction and rupture in the relations of China and other nations.”³³

In the aftermath of the anti-American boycott, the United States government successfully improved its image among Chinese immigrants, even as laborers continued to leave the country and be deported. Following on the heels of its successful Open Door policy—which had prevented the economic partition of China—the United States managed to salvage its international reputation and counter the rising influence and standing of Japan after the Russo-Japanese War. America’s rising influence in China would also shape the lives of the most prominent family in the Republic of China’s history.

The Rise of the Soongs

Through her book *The China Mystique*, Karen J. Leong explains how women came to occupy China’s movement towards modernity in the Western imagination. In the decades leading up to Chinese exclusion’s repeal, the Soong sisters particularly came to symbolize the potential of Western influence in China. Yao-jun Soong—their father—was something of a Chinese Horatio Alger story, as he emigrated to the United States at seventeen and became an apprentice at his uncle’s store in Boston. Unhappy with his job, Yao-jun stowed away on a cutter whose captain, Charles Jones, helped him reach North Carolina. He was taken in by members of the Southern Methodist Church in Wilmington, North Carolina, where he was baptized Charles Soong in honor of his captain and worked

³³ Hsu, *The Good Immigrants*, 46.

in a printing shop.³⁴ His church helped him enroll at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee and he became acquainted with the state's missionary community.³⁵

Upon returning to mainland China, Charles Soong made money printing Bibles in Chinese and became involved in the Christian Methodist Church.³⁶ He represented an emerging Chinese gentry in the 1890s which believed in reforming China through industrial power rather than military might, and supported his printing business by importing heavy industrial machinery from America. He also supported the newly wealthy Fou Fong family by becoming manager of their flour mill, and his mastery of English allowed him to conduct business with Westerners.³⁷ Just as his labors in Wilmington helped him become a printer, so too did the city's antebellum aesthetics influence his design for his publishing house, as it contained the large courtyard, façade, and large verandas typical of an antebellum household.³⁸ His Dixie accent in tow, Charles Soong became the leading minister of his church and effortlessly moved between the worlds of East and West within China.

Surrounded by missionaries and various other internationals, Charles and his wife had six children while they lived in Shanghai. Their three sons would later become

³⁴ "Soong Ching-Ling Dies in Peking; Widow of Sun Yat-Sen was 90," *New York Times*, May 30, 1981, accessed November 10, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/05/30/obituaries/soong-ching-ling-dies-in-peking-widow-of-sun-yat-sen-was-90.html>

³⁵ Karen J. Leong, *The China Mystique: Pearl S. Buck, Anna May Wong, Meiling Soong, and the Transformation of American Orientalism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 107.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Sterling Seagrave, *The Soong Dynasty* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 65-66.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 63.

prominent bankers and politicians in the Republic of China, while the Soong sisters would achieve international fame as reformers, philanthropists, and de facto political leaders. Moreover, Soong Mei-ling and Soong Ai-ling would eventually marry the single richest and most powerful men in the Republic of China—Chiang Kai-Shek and Kong Xiongxi respectively—while their third daughter would marry Sun Yat-sen, the revolutionary founding father of the republic.

Having involved himself in subversive activities with Sun Yat-sen during the Qing era, Charles Soong decided to send his three daughters to the United States for schooling and a more secure lifestyle. Charles was conscious of how Westerners perceived the Qing Empire, and Soong Mei-ling later stated that he was “fulfilling his vision of what educated women could contribute towards a strong revitalized modern China.”³⁹ He first sent Soong Ai-ling to the United States in 1904 by arranging for her to obtain a Portuguese passport in Macao and establish contact with missionaries there. Despite her status as an incoming student and her Western passport, she was detained aboard a steamship for three weeks and nearly sent away. Ultimately, the president of Wesleyan College interceded on her behalf and appealed her detention to the Washington D.C. immigration office, and she was able to land on the East Coast.⁴⁰

Indignant about her treatment, she used her father’s connections to the country to attend a reception which was attended by Theodore Roosevelt the very next year. Unfazed by his status, Ai-ling confronted the president about the United States’ claim to

³⁹ Leong, *The China Mystique*, 108.

⁴⁰ Hsu, *The Good Immigrants*, 39.

being a democracy while discriminating against Chinese—an allusion to her own negative experience—and asked, “Why should a Chinese girl be kept out of a country if it is free?” Soong Mei-ling’s biographer later claimed that Roosevelt apologized for the country’s policy and promptly turned away.⁴¹ Whether or not this minor incident affected Roosevelt’s subsequent pivot away from Chinese exclusionists, this would foreshadow the role that Ai-ling’s family would come to have within the United States, and her two younger sisters would follow her to the United States in 1907 without facing delays in their journeys.

Western Self-Congratulation and China

Observers and media outlets extolled the generosity of the United States government in remitting indemnity payments. Sarah Pike Conger, the wife of the American minister to China, wrote that the attitude of the United States was “too deep, too broad, too high in word expression” and that it signified “sisterly good will.”⁴² A single visit by special envoy Tang Shao Yi, in which he thanked the United States for the remission, lent credence to this narrative. *The Pittsburg Daily Headlight* titled the visit summarily as “China is Grateful.”⁴³ Yi’s visit made headlines in The Honolulu

⁴¹ Ibid., 39.

⁴² Michael Hunt. “The American Remission of the Boxer Indemnity,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 31, no. 3 (May 1972): 540.

⁴³ “China is Grateful,” *The Pittsburg Daily Highlight* (Pittsburg, KS), September 25, 1908, accessed November 3, 2020, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/94751690/>.

Advertiser and the paper emphasized the enthusiasm of Chinese students in Hawaii, as the Chinese Students' Alliance of Hawaii petitioned the ambassador for funding.⁴⁴

While many Chinese people shared this enthusiasm, recent scholars have criticized the narrative that there was a total Chinese consensus around an indemnity scholarship program. Although Tang Shao Yi's tour was usually ascribed to Chinese gratitude for the indemnity remission, the *New York Times* reported in 1909 that Yi also aimed to "further certain plans for the enlistment of American capital in Manchuria, and that he desired also to have the Chinese Legation in Washington raised to the rank of an embassy."⁴⁵ As historian Michael Hunt explained in his reappraisal of the indemnity remission, Theodore Roosevelt wanted an explicit report on how the remission would be used before he was willing to grant it.⁴⁶ In his view, the Chinese government was more concerned about controlling its border with Manchuria in order to prevent Japanese and Russian incursions in the territory. Moreover, Yuan Shikai's proposal to use the funding for railways and mines was rejected by the Qing government in order to please both U.S. officials and foreign investors, despite the fact that it would have accorded with China's ongoing self-strengthening movement for national reform.⁴⁷

American "China hands" were unabashed in their enthusiasm that the scholarship indemnity would spread Western civilization throughout China. An anthropologist stated

⁴⁴ "Chinese Prince and Ambassador Welcomed," *The Honolulu Advertiser*, November 15, 1908, accessed November 26, 2020, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/258982690/>.

⁴⁵ "Peking Recalls Special Envoy," *The New York Times*, January 9, 1909, accessed November 3, 2020, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/20409647/>.

⁴⁶ Hunt, "The American Remission of the Boxer Indemnity," 547.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 548.

enthusiastically that future Chinese leaders “will be studying American institutions, making American friends, and coming back here to favor America for China in its foreign relations.”⁴⁸ Many Chinese officials objected to the U.S. actions, viewing these attempts to control Chinese indemnity remissions as violations of China’s sovereignty. Even notable education reformers and advocates of Western methods such as Chang Chih-tung—who had previously led the abolition of the Confucian examination system—were against full U.S. control of the indemnity program. Between 1907 and 1909, Chih-tung lobbied the U.S. State Department to abandon its plans for having an American superintendent students in the United States, and further ensured that the Qing Board of Education would choose which Chinese students to select for the program.⁴⁹

Nevertheless, the modifications to exclusion and indemnity policy had the intended effect of deepening the U.S. relationship with China. Missionary groups became invested in educating Chinese students and opened over 6,380 Christian schools in the country by 1918.⁵⁰ Additionally, the number of Chinese students in the United States increased from 1900 to 1927.⁵¹ This trend was exacerbated by Japan’s pariah status, as the country’s incursions into Manchuria made it a less-popular destination for aspiring students. Moreover, Western-educated Chinese were increasingly sought after by Chinese employers, particularly during the country’s Republican era. China maintained

⁴⁸ Ibid., 557.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Hsu, *The Good Immigrants*, 35.

⁵¹ Ibid., 47.

jurisdiction over which students it selected and stipulated that over eighty percent of those who received funding would be educated in technical fields.⁵²

By the 1930s, American observers largely viewed the scholarship program as a success. The Institute of Pacific Relations wrote proudly in a 1934 memorandum that aside from Chiang Kai-shek, every member of the Chinese cabinet had previously studied in the United States.⁵³ The writer of the memorandum was also optimistic that student organizations had helped Chinese students appreciate Western culture by coming into contact with American students and studying in American homes, despite acknowledging that “intolerance and ignorance” had hindered their experience.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the writer was optimistic that some Chinese were coming to appreciate the values of Western civilization rather than simply being satisfied with acquiring technical skills, noting that they had made a “valuable contribution” as interpreters of Western literature to their homeland.⁵⁵

As Madeline Hsu explained in *The Good Immigrants*, the prioritization of academics over laborers in immigration would initiate the creation of the “model minority.” Aside from the 1932-1933 school year—during which enrollment dropped due to the Great Depression—annual reports from the Institute of International Education showed that there were 1,000 Chinese students in the United States every year from 1921

⁵² Ibid., 48.

⁵³ “Memorandum on Chinese Students in the United States,” *The Institute of Pacific Relations, American Council* 3, no. 7 (April 1934): 4.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 2-3.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 4.

to 1934.⁵⁶ A consensus arose among missionaries and policymakers that Chinese people could be assimilated and acculturated through the guiding hand of the United States. The fall of the “oriental despotism” represented by the Qing Empire and the rise of the American-educated elite who would rule the Republic of China were crucial to this change in perceptions, as were the cross-cultural interactions made possible by the Boxer Indemnity Scholarship fund. As we shall see, the rise of Japan as a new military power at the turn of the century created an additional opportunity for this image of the Chinese to crystalize.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

Chapter 3: New Awakenings and New Perils

Americans' fears of Chinese immigration were supplemented by the fear of Japanese militarism at the beginning of the 20th century. Toward the end of the 19th century, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany warned other European leaders that the various Asian powers—the “yellow peril” as he expressed it—would combine their forces to extinguish the white race.⁵⁷ In the eyes of many nativists, the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War vindicated the Kaiser. He bragged that the term “yellow peril” was beginning to be used in British newspapers for the first time and warned that this signified the inevitability of a future war between the U.S. and Japan. Graciously, he offered his Prussian soldiers to the U.S. to patrol the California coast in order to prevent an invasion.⁵⁸

During the Russo-Japanese War, William Randolph Hearst echoed some of these fears as he published a variety of articles in the *San Francisco Examiner* warning of Japan's ability to invade the West Coast and repeatedly warned of the impending “yellow peril” in his editorials. The defeat of a white Christian nation by an Asian country startled enough Western observers that it spawned a variety of books and lectures about the new “yellow peril” represented by Japan, while California's politicians formulated new laws to segregate Japanese from whites and pressured Congress to extend the Chinese Exclusion Act to Asians writ large. The vague outline of the Kaiser's paranoia was thus

⁵⁷ John C.G. Rohl, *The Kaiser and His Court: Wilhelm II and the Government of Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 203.

⁵⁸ Rohl, *The Kaiser and His Court*, 203-4.

reified by the threat that Japan now posed as a uniquely Asian power in a world dominated by Europe and the U.S., and many feared that Japan would enlist other Asian countries in a pan-Asiatic alliance. These fears would extend into World War II, as the fear of an alliance between China and Japan would motivate the U.S. to deepen its alignment with China.

Imaginary Hordes

According to sociologist Stanford M. Lyman, the old China-centric paradigm of the “yellow peril” diminished with the failure of the Boxer rebellion and the phrase became increasingly synonymous with the Japanese laborer. To prove his claim, he cited an issue of the San Francisco journal *Organized Labor* from 1900 which claimed that the Japanese represented “a far greater danger to the laboring portion of society than all of the opium-soaked pigtailed who have ever blotted the fair name of this beautiful city.”⁵⁹ As a contrast, Lyman also cited a cartoon that was penned after the crushing of the Boxers in which the European powers use a long and unthreatening Chinese queue as a clothesline for their flags.⁶⁰

This divergence in prejudices directed at both Chinese and Japanese people was also captured by Jacobus tenBroek in *Prejudice, War and the Constitution*, who argued that the Chinese were considered less threatening than Japanese people as they got replaced in California agriculture. This perceived threat was captured by a California

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

writer for the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* who wrote that, “The Chinaman is willing to be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water; the Japanese has no aptitude for menial tasks nor any intention of performing them except as stepping stones to his own high ambitions.”⁶¹ One poll conducted among high-school students and college freshman in California during the late 1920s demonstrated that the preference for Chinese people long preceded World War II, as the vast majority of the respondents expressed a preference for them over Japanese people whom they considered to be “dishonest, tricky, and treacherous.”⁶²

Nevertheless, the “yellow peril” fears that the Chinese evoked would complement those of the Japanese “yellow peril” rather than fade into the background entirely. During Japan’s siege of Port Arthur, the *San Francisco Examiner* printed multiple articles and cartoons about the possibility of an unholy alliance between China and Japan. “Is There a Yellow Peril?” headlined the Examiner’s editorial page on August 20, 1904 and posed the question of whether Japan would be satisfied merely with an “Asia for the Asiatics,” or whether it would aim to conquer additional territory. The article emphasized with capital letters the fact that ninety-two percent of Japanese children were in school and that they only appeared civilized as a result of “adaptability” and “imitation” of Western behaviors, but that they might very well ally themselves with “China’s hordes.”⁶³ Moreover, the author of the article raised the specter that “this Japanese nation, already

⁶¹ Jacobus tenBroek, *Prejudice, War, and the Constitution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968): 24.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 24-25.

⁶³ “Is There a Yellow Peril?” *The San Francisco Examiner*, August 20, 1904, accessed November 26, 2020, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/457530396>.

looked up to with much race pride by the Chinese, should drill those Chinese and attack the supremacy of this white race with two or three millions of armed men.”⁶⁴ The cartoon reflected the perspective of the editor, as the Japanese fighter shouts to a brawny Chinese man that “If I can do this to a big white nation myself, what could we do united?”⁶⁵

A month later, lead editor Arthur McEwen published a satirical piece titled “*Side Lights on the Yellow Peril*” in the Examiner. This article tacitly endorsed Thomas Watson, the populist and nativist candidate for president in 1904, and mocked the complacency of Democrats and Republicans in the face of Asian immigration. The Democratic subject in the satire briefly comes to the realization that Japan will soon “take charge of China, drill her, and make her ready to fight the world,” and that “the triumph of Japan will mean a halt has been called to the grand march of Anglo-Saxon civilization.”⁶⁶ However, the Republican steers him away from supporting Watson, and instead convinces him that these fears are exaggerated. The two figures are depicted as a donkey and an elephant in a mental hospital, while a caricatured Chinese man looks menacingly at the reader with a grin and says sarcastically “I’m solly for Lussia.”⁶⁷

The anxiety surrounding Japanese immigration found its most violent expression on the West Coast. Between the late 1890s and early 1900s, many Japanese immigrants on the West Coast saved enough money to become labor contractors, promoted additional

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ “Side Lights on Japanese on the Yellow Peril,” *San Francisco Examiner*, September 18, 1904, accessed November 26, 2020, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/458077231>.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

immigration from Japan, and formed large rural Japanese settlements which gradually filled the vacuum created by Chinese exclusion.⁶⁸ From 1905 to 1907 alone, the aggregate acreage under Japanese cultivation in California more than doubled from 62,048 to 132,291, with much of this land being under direct ownership.⁶⁹ The screeds against Japanese people assumed new viciousness in *Organized Labor* during Japan's victories over Russia, as their journalists wrote that "these one million little Japanese Napoleons will soon turn their eyes around for new territory to conquer" and condemned Japanese Americans for having a "propensity for spying."⁷⁰ Many Japanese were targeted by violent white mobs with a viciousness that resembled the race riots of the Chinese exclusion era. Attackers organized boycotts of Japanese-owned laundries and attacked them and their owners. One of the owners, J.N. Tsukamoto, said of the violence that "Whenever the newspapers attack the Japanese these roughs renew their misdeeds with redoubled energy."⁷¹ One anonymous Oakland writer described the scene of people conversing on a train, in which passengers discussed Japan's newfound "egotism" and one boy shouted, "Oh, Japs think they can lick all creation, since they licked Russia, but

⁶⁸ Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 23.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁷⁰ tenBroek, *Prejudice, War, and the Constitution*, 26. The journal also depicted a Japanese invasion of California as an imminent threat, noting that "Japan intends to make California its Manchurian fields."

⁷¹ Masuda Hajimu, "Rumors of War: Immigration Disputes and the Social Construction of American-Japanese Relations, 1905-1913," *Diplomatic History* 33, no. 1 (January 2009): 10.

you bet they can't lick Uncle Sam!"⁷² These protests culminated in the San Francisco Board of Education's decision to segregate all Japanese and Korean children into separate public schools from whites on October 11, 1906, an incident which set off a diplomatic crisis.⁷³

Amid anti-Japanese mob violence and legislation in San Francisco, rumors of Japan's ability and desire to wage war spread from the West Coast to newspapers nationwide. Takahashi Sakue, a visiting professor of international law from Tokyo, documented hostile American attitudes in newspaper articles; rumors of war appeared during the month of June 1907 in the *Denver Post*, the *Houston Post*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *New York Financial Age*, the *Manchester Mirror*, and the *Washington Post*.⁷⁴ People across the country flooded Theodore Roosevelt with letters reporting suspicious activities and begged him to change American immigration policy towards the Japanese.⁷⁵ Roosevelt, who respected the Japanese and wanted to deescalate the situation, negotiated the Gentleman's Agreement of 1907. This had the effect of placating anti-immigrant sentiment by preventing the Japanese from allowing any further emigration to the U.S., but also placated Japan by overturning San Francisco's school segregation policy and allowing for the immigration of wives, parents, and children of Japanese Americans who were already present. However, some nativists were unhappy that

⁷² "California Race Issue Seen at Close Range: A Woman Tells Why the Japanese Meet with Opposition; Changed Since their War," *New York Times*, December 16, 1906, quoted in Hajimu, p. 14.

⁷³ Hajimu, "Rumors of War," 11.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

Roosevelt failed to carry a bigger stick into these negotiations, as they longed for the extension of Chinese exclusion policy to the whole of Asia.

Popular Literature, Japan, and the “Awakening of China”

While many were remiss of the threat that Japan posed after the Russo-Japanese War, some were optimistic that a reformed China would bode well for the West. In *China and the International System*, David Scott describes how envoy Wu Tingfang—“envoy extraordinaire” and ambassador of the Qing Empire to the U.S.—popularized the concept of “The Awakening of China.”⁷⁶ In one of his speeches, he described how “‘The Sick Man’ is rapidly convalescing, ‘The Sleeping Lion’ is awake...China is moving and she is moving with a rapidity.” Addressing concerns that China might become a military threat to the United States like Japan, he later argued that the Chinese were “by nature and education a peace-loving people,” as “[t]he essence of the Confucian system is that right, and not might.”⁷⁷ Theodore Roosevelt seconded this notion, noting that “awakening of interest in Occidental thought...has translated into Chinese not only certain scientific works, such as the writings of Huxley, but also many chapters from the four gospels.”⁷⁸ Normally predisposed to alarmist headlines about the “yellow peril,” *The San Francisco*

⁷⁶ David Scott, *China and the International System, 1840-1949: Power, Presence, and Perceptions in a Century of Humiliation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), 183.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ “First Article by Roosevelt in Outlook,” *The San Francisco Examiner*, November 28, 1908, accessed November 27, 2020,

Examiner even paraphrased Roosevelt's article in its drop head by stating that "People are absorbing western advancement."⁷⁹

In addition to newspapers, prominent authors wrote books on the ascendancy of Asia which reached a wide reading public. Homer Lea—a former national guardsman, author, and geopolitical strategist—published *The Valor of Ignorance* in 1908 and largely dismissed the threat posed by China. Because he had learned Cantonese, met Sun Yat-sen, and involved himself deeply in Chinese revolutionary politics prior to writing the book, he was thus more sympathetic to China and its potential for Westernization than to Japan. The introduction to his book contained a glowing endorsement by retired general J.P. Story, who agreed with Lea that in contrast to the Japanese, "the most persistent lovers of peace, since the historical period, have been the Chinese."⁸⁰ Instead, Lea contended that Japan posed a greater threat in the Pacific because "True militancy belongs to primitive, homogenous peoples, wherein political control is restricted to the fewest number of persons, or even to a single individual."⁸¹ Compounding these fears, Lea also alleged that Japan had already accomplished a "tentative military occupation" of Hawaii due to the colony's 65,000 Japanese immigrants.⁸² Lea surmised that Japan, not content to stop with Hawaii, would take over the rest of America's Pacific colonies and use them as a foothold to invade Washington, Oregon, and California.⁸³ One year after

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ J.P. Story, Introduction to *The Valor of Ignorance* by Homer Lea (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1909), Preface, xx.

⁸¹ Lea, *The Valor of Ignorance*, 206.

⁸² Ibid., 250.

⁸³ Ibid., 257.

Lea's death in 1912, the *San Francisco Examiner* published his book as a series of articles, with newly printed titles such as "Japanese Tactics in California"⁸⁴ and "Strategy of Attack on San Francisco."⁸⁵

American novelist Jack London held the opposite view of China as Lea, believing that it had the manpower to establish a dystopian pan-Asiatic world order. London's science fiction novel *An Unparalleled Invasion* reflected Americans' fears that Asian countries would ally against world white supremacy. In his telling, the Russo-Japanese War represented the canary in the coal mine for Asian domination of the world. This was because he believed expansionist Japan saw in China a "kindred race" with whom they could ally, whereas China remained incompatible with Western values.⁸⁶ In typical orientalist fashion, *An Unparalleled Invasion* dismissed the prior conflicts and differences between China and Japan as London focused on their common "Mongol stock."⁸⁷ Thus, it was only with the gradual and peaceful takeover of China by Japan that "China was at last awake," as "Where the West had failed, Japan had succeeded."⁸⁸ However, this development subsequently leads to China becoming a more fearsome version of the Japanese Empire by undergoing its own Meiji restoration and expelling all Western missionaries, engineers, drill sergeants, merchants, and teachers. China

⁸⁴ "Japanese Tactics in California," *San Francisco Examiner*, August 18, 1913, accessed November 26, 2020, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/461052537/>.

⁸⁵ "Strategy of Attack on San Francisco," *San Francisco Examiner*, August 29, 1913, accessed November 26, 2020, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/461128357/>.

⁸⁶ Jack London, "Unparalleled Invasion" in *Of the Strong* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1914), 75.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 77.

subsequently becomes so productive and well-populated that it no longer needs Japan and expels its dignitaries, whereupon it becomes a world historic empire.⁸⁹ The book ends with the other nations of the world deciding to resort to germ warfare to destroy China and pledging never again to use the weapons thereafter.⁹⁰

Perhaps the most influential book on the “Asiatic” threat was *The Rising Tide of Color against World White Supremacy* by Lothrop Stoddard, a eugenicist whose books were recommended reading in the Ku Klux Klan.⁹¹ Although Stoddard saw threats to global white supremacy in every continent, he was particularly concerned with the potential for Chinese and Japanese domination. Echoing London, Stoddard believed that Japan could transform Chinese nationalism into a form of “Pan-Mongolism.”⁹² He argued that this would benefit both parties as China had previously absorbed previous conquerors such as the Yuan and Qing with little effort.⁹³ Moreover, he also believed that China and Japan would find themselves in natural alignment with each other, as they were each overpopulated to the extent that they had “increasingly the imperious need of racial expansion.” He also identified Japan’s political strategy as something of a “Far Eastern Monroe Doctrine” to prevent Western encroachment in the region, which would transition in stages from the elimination of white holdings in East Asia, to the cause of

⁸⁹ Ibid., 79.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 100.

⁹¹ Michael Yudell, *Race Unmasked: Biology and Race in The Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 41-42.

⁹² Theodore Lothrop Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Color against White World-Supremacy* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1920), 28.

⁹³ Ibid.

securing freedom of immigration alongside racial equality, and finally to achieving imperialism and world dominion for itself.⁹⁴

Stoddard's anxieties about the Far East were laid bare when he argued that "Nothing, indeed, better illustrates the white world's unsoundness at the beginning of the present century than its reaction to the Russo-Japanese conflict." Regretting that European powers failed to prevent Japan's humiliation of Russia in the Russo-Japanese war, he continued: "Analyzing the possibility of Europe's presenting a common front to the perils disclosed by the Japanese victories...political passions, social hates, and national rivalries would speak louder than the general interest."⁹⁵ This argument echoed a longstanding white supremacist demand for Western countries to halt immigration and form a united front against the growing threat that Asia posed to global white supremacy. Congressman Albert Johnson—who would eventually cosponsor the landmark Immigration Act of 1924—argued in 1913 that only "the early union of the white nations" could prevent an invasion of the West led by Japan.⁹⁶ Congressman Frank O. Smith concurred with Johnson and claimed that the United States needed to establish an "International Executive Power to Insure Universal Peace and the Union and Supremacy of the White Race" and cede the eastern strip of Alaska to Canada as a gesture of good will to recruit the country to its cause.⁹⁷ In Stoddard's view, World War I was a "modern

⁹⁴ Ibid., 30-31.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 171.

⁹⁶ Sidney Lewis Gulick, *The American Japanese Problem: A Study of the Racial Relations of the West and East* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), 226-27

⁹⁷ Ibid., 228.

Peloponnesian War” in which all the Western powers made themselves ripe for Asian conquest, just as the latter war exposed the Greeks to Roman conquest.⁹⁸

Stoddard’s ideas would be influential through the 1920s and even into the late 1930s. During the early 1920s, he gave lectures warning of the rising presence of Japanese immigrants in California. Madison Grant, his intellectual forefather, wrote the introduction to *The Rising Tide of Color* and was advised as an expert on the Johnson-Reed Act that ultimately banned Asian immigration in 1924. Heeding Stoddard’s warnings about the military threat of Asia, the *New York Times* gushed in its review of *The Rising Tide of Color* that it was “Perhaps the most striking specimen of its kind since Prof. Usher’s ‘Pan Germanism’ burst upon us just before the war began.”⁹⁹ At Army War College, Stoddard gave lectures encouraging prospective command officers to maintain white supremacy against the “Asiatic” threat throughout the 1930s until the outbreak of World War II, whereupon his Nazi sympathies came under scrutiny.¹⁰⁰

As violence and deportation caused the Chinese population to decline at the end of the 19th century, the Japanese laborers who replaced them would become the primary target for anti-Asian exclusionists at the beginning of the 20th century. Geopolitical tensions between Japan and the United States alongside the Russo-Japanese War would render both the Japanese Empire and its emigrants synonymous with the term “yellow peril.” These fictions would find their worst expression in the 1920s, as the rising

⁹⁸ Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Color*, 172.

⁹⁹ “Books in Brief Review,” *New York Times*, May 9, 1920, accessed November 26, 2020, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/26760791/>.

¹⁰⁰ William H. Tucker, *The Founding of Scientific Racism: Wickliffe Draper and the Pioneer Fund* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 28.

consensus towards exclusionary immigration policy and the influence of eugenics made Japanese Americans feel unwelcome in their own country.

By contrast, many commentators were hopeful that China was approaching a breakthrough in its relationship with the West; this optimism was expressed by a commentator who visited the 1910 World's Fair in Nanjing and commented that "it would be difficult to estimate fully the beneficial aspects of this Nanking expedition in its international aspects" and that there was "a promise of a mutual understanding and a cordial cooperation between China and the Western nations."¹⁰¹ However, David Scott emphasized how the same commentator went on to say that the "relations between Chinese and foreigners are not as harmonious as they might be owing to the 'Sovereign Rights' [Unequal Treaties issue] recovery movement."¹⁰² Thus, as Chinese people continued to express dissatisfaction with the unequal treaties at the forefront of the U.S.-China relationship, many Americans remained fearful that the failure of the Western project in China would allow for a Sino-Japanese alliance and remained attached to "yellow peril" phantasms. These trends—the optimism for cooperation and curiosity about the "yellow peril" alike—would cause a more positive orientalist literature about China to develop in the United States, especially as Imperial Japan seemed to constitute the larger threat to U.S. hegemony than China.

¹⁰¹ Scott, *China and the International System*, 184.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

Chapter 4: Depicting the “Model Minority”

As the fear of Chinese immigration became dwarfed by the menace of Imperial Japan, the media increasingly portrayed the Chinese as a model minority. Even in popular culture, the emergence of Charlie Chan detective novels in the 1920s served as a positive contrast to the “yellow peril” menace of Fu Manchu. After Chiang Kai-Shek completed his Northern Expedition in 1928, many Western observers believed that the country simply needed to mop up a few communists before unifying under a Christian and democratic government. Moreover, the racial concerns that motivated the stringent immigration legislation of the 1920s lost some of their power after the Great Depression. Americans became disenchanted with the nationalist politics that birthed fascism in Europe, as membership in the second Ku Klux Klan declined and economic issues became more resonant throughout the country. This lapse in negative sentiment against Chinese people allowed for a new master narrative to emerge, as missionaries and popular writers began to promote an image of China that was at once both romantic and familiar.

Pearl Buck: Missionary, Writer, and Activist

Pearl Buck’s novels had the effect of allowing American audiences to sympathize with the Chinese experience. Having spent most of her childhood in China, Buck came to know and appreciate Chinese people. Although her parents were missionaries, they

preferred living among Chinese people to their missionary compound, and Buck grew up as a product of that environment.

Unlike many of her Christian peers, Pearl Buck was not especially driven to convert Chinese people to Christianity. To her mind, Chinese people already had enough of a spiritual background and moral compass to make Christianity redundant, to say nothing of their longstanding civilization. In advancing the cause of aid to China, Buck argued that sympathetic understanding was necessary. She was fond of noting that Confucius said “Around the four seas, all men are brothers” 500 years before Christ preached his sermons.¹⁰³ She also believed that Chinese culture was inherently democratic and had declined as a result of European colonialism rather than in spite of it. In making this case, she argued that their university examination system contained the “germs of democracy” since anyone could participate in it, that they had a prosperous economy, and that the Chinese people had “excessive pride and self-satisfaction” even when engaging with rich European merchants.¹⁰⁴

In writing *The Good Earth*, Pearl Buck aimed to depict the sentiments of Chinese people as she saw them rather than depicting them as primitive heathens. When asked why she did not have the protagonist of the book convert to Christianity, she replied that, “I was writing about the average people in China. I do not believe that Christianity has touched the average man or woman more than I made it appear in that book—as words

¹⁰³ Pearl Buck, “China and the West,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 168, no. 7 (July 1933): 119, doi:10.2307/1019043.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 120.

seen or heard and not understood.”¹⁰⁵ This is humorously reflected in the pages of the book where Wang Lung—the main protagonist—tries to find a job in Southern China. He is approached by a foreigner about Christianity after pulling him on his rickshaw. Ironically, the white man is depicted as the less dignified party, sporting hands “hairy and red-skinned,” along with “strange eyes and fearful nose.” Upon seeing the paper thrust at him, Wang Lung looks at its depiction of Jesus on the cross in bewilderment and horror. Later his children delight in the depiction of blood gushing out of Jesus’s sides and his father says, “Surely this was an evil man to be thus hung.”¹⁰⁶

Unlike Chinese scholar-gentry and Western Sinophiles who only wrote about the most noble aspects of China, Buck was a liberal humanist who aimed to depict the harshest aspects of peasant life in *The Good Earth*. Shortly before Wang Lung first flees the countryside with his family, his wife O-Lan encourages them to eat tree bark and grass to prevent themselves from starving.¹⁰⁷ Upon reaching the city of Kiangsu, a passerby suggests to them that they cover themselves in mud and filth to beg for money more effectively.¹⁰⁸ After Wang Lung finds his first job, one of his peers suggests that he request more money when pulling white foreigners on his rickshaw as, “they are such fools that they do not know the price of anything, but let the silver run out of their pockets like water.”¹⁰⁹ His experience in Kiangsu ends climactically as he robs a rich

¹⁰⁵ Pearl Buck, *Is There a Case for Foreign Missions?* (New York: John Day Company, 1932), 26.

¹⁰⁶ Pearl Buck, *The Good Earth* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1931), 123-24.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 78.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 86.

man with a mob by his side and gathers enough money to buy land back in his hometown.¹¹⁰

While much of the book could be criticized for depicting impoverished Chinese people as something akin to noble savages, it arguably had the effect of contextualizing and universalizing the Chinese experience for Western audiences in the early 1930s. Both its ardent critics and devoted fans noticed that Wang Lung's peasant experience could easily be applicable to the peasant in any country; one critic even argued that "it would not have differed greatly had he toiled on the Nebraska prairie rather than in China."¹¹¹ The theme of a peasant farmer having to vacate their land likely had a special resonance during the Great Depression, and the book ultimately sold millions of copies throughout the tumult of the 1930s and 1940s and inspired a popular movie adaptation.¹¹² William Soskin of the *San Francisco Examiner* recalled how scant the newspaper's coverage of China was prior to the book's publication, and quoted his previous managing editor as having said that "One guy dead in The Bronx is better than 100,000 dead Chinese" as far as the media was concerned.¹¹³ After the publication of *The Good Earth*, however, Soskin wrote that Chinese people came to be appreciated as "fellow men in a world where travail

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 114.

¹¹¹ Michael Hunt, "Pearl Buck – Popular Expert on China," *Modern China* 3, no. 1 (January 1977): 39.

¹¹² Ibid., 33-34.

¹¹³ "Reading and Writing," *San Francisco Examiner*, January 16, 1934, accessed November 13, 2020, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/458152785/>.

and suffering are universal experiences.”¹¹⁴ Furthermore, he wrote that the country came to be appreciated as more than “a vague, misty, incense-soaked land of exotic values.”¹¹⁵

Pearl Buck became an esteemed writer just as she became something of an iconoclast in the missionary profession. In 1932, she ignited a controversy when she submitted her essay entitled “Is There a Case for Foreign Missions?” to *Harper’s Weekly*. In it, she accused missionaries in good standing of being “so lacking in sympathy...so scornful of any civilization except their own...so coarse and insensitive among a sensitive and cultivated people that my heart has fairly bled with shame.”¹¹⁶ In addressing the church and foreign missions, Buck asserted that missionaries were wrong to emphasize the gospel above all other considerations when operating in foreign countries and argued that it was not necessary to assert the rightness of Christianity over other religions.¹¹⁷ She believed that Christianity failed to spread in foreign countries because missionaries were not meeting the needs of communities, and argued that Christians needed to manifest Christ in their mode of life instead of emphasizing the gospel. In her view, missionaries who preached in China but refused to invite students of other races into their homes were merely part and parcel of this “horde of hypocrites” who never truly lived the Christian life.¹¹⁸

After Buck was forced to resign as a missionary, she continued her career as an author by turning *The Good Earth* into a trilogy. Having already won the Pulitzer Prize

¹¹⁴ Ibid

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Buck, *Is There a Case for Foreign Missions?*, 8.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 25.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 29-30.

for *The Good Earth*, in 1938 Pearl Buck became the first woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature “for her rich and truly epic descriptions of peasant life in China and for her biographical masterpieces.”¹¹⁹ In her acceptance speech before the Swedish Academy, she reaffirmed her belief in the inherent virtues and democratic traditions of Chinese people and stated that emperors had long employed “imperial ears” to respond to conditions throughout the country and stave off rebellion. Furthermore, she stated that these “imperial ears” often gossiped about the emperor among ordinary people, such that the Chinese—who were “the most democratic of peoples”—could rest assured that the emperor was only an ordinary man just like themselves.¹²⁰

Buck’s newfound fame and status in the United States allowed her to advocate for Chinese people beset by the Second Sino-Japanese War. Buck and Richard J. Walsh—her second husband and publisher—founded the China Emergency Relief Committee in 1940, which sent money, food, and clothing to China. She also formed the East-West Association to inform Americans about Asian affairs and became the honorary chairwoman of United China Relief (UCR) in 1941.¹²¹

Throughout the 1940s, Pearl Buck’s status as an author became overshadowed by her role as an advocate for racial equality, immigration reform, and relief for Chinese victims and refugees. Having been responsible for many of the most enduring images of

¹¹⁹ The Nobel Prize, “The Nobel Prize in Literature 1938,” accessed November 14, 2020, <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1938/summary/>.

¹²⁰ The Nobel Prize, “Pearl Buck – Nobel Lecture: The Chinese Novel,” accessed November 14, 2020, <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1938/buck/lecture/>.

¹²¹ National History Women’s Museum, “Pearl S. Buck,” accessed November 15, 2020, <https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/pearl-buck>

Chinese people in the United States, her advocacy came naturally to her as the wider public considered her to be an authority on China. Buck also differed from many of her contemporaries who simply wanted to impose Western values onto China. She instead declared that, “[t]o enter a new country to learn and not to teach is the basis of understanding between peoples who meet.”¹²² Nevertheless, Buck was willing to work with conservative Christian “China hands” as both sought to aid Chinese victims of Imperial Japan. Moreover, she was willing to allow the image of an increasingly Christian and Western China to supersede her own popular image of the country in the fast-emerging corporate media landscape.

The Life and Times of Henry Luce

Much like Pearl Buck, Henry R. Luce had a nostalgic attachment to China which had roots in his family history. His father, Henry W. Luce, was a member of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions (SVM) which was an offshoot of the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA). During the heyday of U.S. Open Door Policy with China, the senior Luce met YMCA leaders who were enthusiastic to convert China to Christianity. One, John R. Mott, once remarked optimistically that Chinese people were “the Anglo-Saxons of the Orient.”¹²³ He also became friends with many of his fellow aspiring missionaries. One SVM member reminisced that, “China was the goal, the

¹²² Robert Schaffer, “Pearl Buck and the East-West Association: The Trajectory and Fate of ‘Critical Internationalism,’” 1940-1950.” *Peace and Change* 28, no. 1 (January 2003): 13.

¹²³ Hsu, *The Good Immigrants*, 26.

lodestar, the great magnet that drew us all in those days”; he, Henry W. Luce, and other missionaries would jog together chanting, “This will carry us another mile in China.”¹²⁴

Despite their similarities in upbringing, however, the junior Luce grew up mostly confined to his missionary compound in China whereas Pearl Buck lived among Chinese people. In an article written for *Diplomatic History*, historian Michael Hunt argued that Luce’s isolation contributed to a superficial understanding of both China and the project of Westernization, as he scarcely met any Chinese people, never learned the language, and remained oblivious to the contemporary failures of U.S. imperialism in the Philippines.¹²⁵ Indeed, even as nearly one million Filipinos died in the Filipino-American War, Henry W. Luce regaled his son with stories of U.S. presidents from children’s books, which included tales of Theodore Roosevelt’s “muscular Christianity.” These would later inspire the younger Luce’s own politics.¹²⁶ The starry-eyed Henry R. Luce would later mourn Japan’s invasion of his German-occupied Chinese hometown. He fondly recalled of this era that, “There was one department store...full of many of the wondrous things Americans could read about in the Sears Roebuck catalogue, and rich with the smell of newly opened boxes...[t]his was Tsingtao until 1914.”¹²⁷

In founding *Time* and *Fortune* magazines, Henry R. Luce strived to continue the missionary work of his father. Although Luce had a laissez-faire approach to most of the

¹²⁴ T. Christopher Jespersen, *American Images of China: 1931-1949* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 3-4.

¹²⁵ Michael Hunt, “East Asia in Henry Luce’s ‘American Century,’” *Diplomatic History* 23, no. 2 (1999): 323-24.

¹²⁶ Jespersen, *American Images of China*, 6.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

articles in his journals, *Time* editor Thomas Matthews admitted that he had direct influence on articles concerning current events in China.¹²⁸ His emotional connection to China was clear from the outset: in December 1922, he expressed sympathy for the nascent Republic of China in his dummy issue of *Time*, even as the country was beset by civil war.¹²⁹

Luce initially limited his coverage of China in order to focus on issues of more immediate interest to Americans. However, the 1927-1931 period presented major developments for potential coverage of China in the U.S., including Chiang Kai-shek's unification of the country, his conversion to Christianity, Japan's invasion of Manchuria, and Pearl Buck's publication of *The Good Earth*.¹³⁰ Issues of *Time* from 1931 and 1933 featured Chiang Kai-shek on their covers, as Luce celebrated his efforts to kick out the Japanese and, later, Chinese Communists.¹³¹ Eventually, Luce's coverage of Chiang took on a hagiographical tone. One feature from 1936 discussing General Xiang Xueliang's kidnapping of Chiang emphasized how Chiang read the Bible throughout his captivity, made sure to mention that he was released on Christmas Day, and reduced the incident's political complexity to his captor being a "dope fiend."¹³²

A member of Luce's staff later admitted in an interview that, "We felt we were on the side of the angels in most cases, with the possible exception of Chiang Kai-shek...the

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹²⁹ Robert Edwin Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce: A Political Portrait of the Man Who Created the American Century* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994), 46.

¹³⁰ Jespersen, *American Images of China*, 24.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 34.

only sacred cow we admitted.”¹³³ When Chiang fought the Japanese in 1938, *Life* praised his war tactics and initially ignored his disastrous destruction of dikes along the Yellow River; when the magazine finally reported the Yellow River flood, it made note of the Japanese soldiers who were killed but omitted any mention of Chinese casualties.¹³⁴ Throughout the 1930s, Chiang appeared on the cover of *Time* more often than Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Mahatma Gandhi, and Joseph Stalin.¹³⁵ Luce also featured Chiang in a September 1941 issue of *Fortune*, lauding him for bringing China to the “community of nations” and opening it to U.S. markets.¹³⁶ Theodore White—a *Time* journalist and friend of Luce—repeatedly attempted to report Chiang Kai-shek’s atrocities, dictatorial tendencies, and bad military tactics, but Luce refused to publish White’s most critical reporting. The two later became estranged as a result.¹³⁷

Luce was a vocal internationalist who believed that America had a paternal duty to the world. When most Americans were still skeptical about getting involved in World War II, he penned his most famous essay—“The American Century”—to advocate intervention in early 1941. In the essay, Luce advocated for spreading the ideals and principles of Western civilization throughout the world and “lifting the life of mankind from the level of the beasts to what the Psalmist called a little lower than the angels.”¹³⁸

¹³³ *Ibid*, 36.

¹³⁴ Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce*, 104.

¹³⁵ “List of covers of Time Magazine (1930s),” Wikipedia, last modified October 29, 2020, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_covers_of_Time_magazine_\(1930s\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_covers_of_Time_magazine_(1930s))

¹³⁶ Jespersen, *American Images of China*, 42-43.

¹³⁷ Hunt, *East Asia in Luce’s ‘American Century,’* 326.

¹³⁸ Henry R. Luce, “The American Century,” *Time*, February 1941, 65.

Additionally, Luce specifically raised the issue of American business opportunities in Asia; absent American intervention, he argued that “in the decades to come Asia will be worth to us exactly zero—or else it will be worth to us four, five, ten billions of dollars a year.”¹³⁹ Moreover, he saw America’s economic influence as an opportunity for it to send “technical and artistic skills” through the world, as he believed that the country could be a force of good if it had “the sincerity and good will to create the world of the 20th century.”¹⁴⁰

In the pages of *Time*, China was depicted as a society that was becoming increasingly democratic due to Western influence. After Japan’s invasion of China displaced over 50 million Chinese people, many of them built industrial cooperatives in western China to survive and make ends meet. Although these projects were horribly underfunded by the Kuomintang government, Luce insisted in *Time* that these “democratic self-starters” could serve as the basis for greater democracy in China after the war. He was also encouraged by the Christian colleges in China which had existed since the initiation of the Boxer Indemnity Scholarship program. An article titled “The New China” featured in *Fortune* magazine proclaimed that “[t]he contributions of Western missionaries and of brilliant Chinese educated in Western universities” had finally started to have an impact in the country.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Christopher T. Jespersen "'Spreading the American Dream' of China: United China Relief, the Luce Family, and the Creation of American Conceptions of China before Pearl Harbor." *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 1, no. 3 (1992): 280.

United China Relief

The Second Sino-Japanese War brought Pearl Buck and Henry Luce together, as both galvanized people to aid China's resistance to Japanese invasion. As tales of Japanese atrocities spread throughout the United States in late 1937, Americans took notice. At the end of the year, a Gallup poll found that Japan's invasion of China was the second most followed story of the year, behind only the Ohio floods and ahead of Amelia Earhart's disappearance. Gallup also determined that forty-three percent of Americans were sympathetic to the Chinese, and this figure would rise to seventy-four percent by 1939.¹⁴² Additionally, a *Fortune* survey from 1938 found that more Americans were concerned by Japan's invasion of China than Nazi Germany's more recent invasion of Austria.¹⁴³

In the aftermath of the invasion, Americans formed multiple organizations to aid Chinese civilians, war orphans, and soldiers. Committee members of the various organizations struggled to coordinate their efforts throughout the war and eventually agreed to merge into a larger organization in late 1940. This was facilitated in large part by Henry Luce, who contacted people affiliated with Pearl Buck's Emergency Relief Committee Inc. and enlisted Buck's support for a merger.¹⁴⁴ This culminated in the formation of United China Relief (UCR) in February 1941. Initially intended to be a

¹⁴² Jespersen, *American Images of China*, 46.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce*, 188. Eleanor Roosevelt praised United China Relief Inc.'s mission to raise \$1 million in her daily newspaper column and served as its honorary chairwoman. See Eleanor Roosevelt, "My Day, February 18, 1941," *The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Digital Edition* (2017), accessed November 20, 1941, https://www2.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?_y=1941&_f=md055814.

temporary umbrella organization, Henry Luce leveraged his influence to ensure that the newly founded organization would have a board of directors composed of “an outstanding group of Americans.”¹⁴⁵ These would include producer David O. Selznick of *Gone With the Wind* fame—who was conscious that feedback from *Life* could determine the success of his movies—Pearl Buck, John D. Rockefeller III, and former presidential candidate Wendell Willkie.¹⁴⁶

Luce donated \$50,000 of his personal fortune to support UCR’s headquarters in New York, supplying them with rent money, furniture, phones, and clerical workers.¹⁴⁷ He also solicited money from wealthy donors such as tobacco heiress Doris Duke and financier Bernard Baruch, the head of the War Industries Board during World War I, who personally contributed \$102,340.¹⁴⁸ Inspired by Luce’s media empire and conscious that some Americans would remain biased against Chinese people, UCR leaders determined that the organization needed to create a suborganization “designed to influence and condition public opinion,” create a bureau “designed to capitalize on that public opinion by turning it into cash,” and sell “China to the American people.”¹⁴⁹ Luce subsequently prodded prominent writers, advertising agencies, and broadcasting companies to help with publicity. UCR mailed out 25,000 appeals and advertised its fundraising drive over the radio; following Luce’s advice, UCR depicted Chinese people as fierce resisters who

¹⁴⁵ Jespersen, *American Images of China* 47.

¹⁴⁶ Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce*, 188. Thomas E. Dewey also wanted to be in good graces with Luce and agreed to serve as UCR’s Greater New York chairman. See Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce*, 203.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 204.

¹⁴⁸ Jespersen, *American Images of China*, 49.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

had halted the “Japs” in their tracks. This campaign netted UCR 6,500 replies and \$50,000 in donations.¹⁵⁰

These efforts would become increasingly imbued with pomp and circumstance. After returning from a trip to China publicized in *Life*, Clare Booth Luce—Henry’s second wife—spoke at a UCR fundraising dinner at the Waldorf Astoria in New York. The June 1941 talk featured the organization’s most famous members as guests and was broadcast on NBC. In her speech, Clare plead for American assistance to China on behalf of America’s “spiritual allies and fellow Christians.”¹⁵¹ She claimed that China had made progress toward “becoming a modern, healthy nation” until Japan’s invasion in 1937, and noted that, “over fifty percent of China’s leaders...beginning with Generalissimo Chiang and Mme. Chiang [were] Christian, and [were] graduates of the thirteen Christian colleges in China.”¹⁵² She also took pains to compare China to the West, as she exclaimed that Madame Chiang had the spirit of “any girl from the Golden West” as she could shoot “as straight from the hip.”¹⁵³

UCR also sold various merchandise with Chinese themes through mail order catalogues, including stuffed pandas, blouses, tea, and cookbooks for making various Chinese meals. Perhaps UCR’s most effective merchandise was their line of postcards and Christmas cards, as they emphasized the country’s imagined connections to Christianity and the West. One of these cards, “The Madonna and Child,” featured a

¹⁵⁰ Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce*, 204.

¹⁵¹ Jespersen, “‘Spreading the American Dream’ of China,” 281.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 281-282.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

Chinese Virgin Mary and baby Jesus, while another one entitled “The Nativity in the Cave” added a Chinese angel and shepherds.¹⁵⁴ Their most famous card depicted the rape of Nanking and featured a photograph of Chinese baby named P’ing Mei sitting in the wreckage of the city after it was destroyed by Japan; the image would be reprinted in various newspapers and magazines throughout World War II. Beyond simply emphasizing the boy’s suffering, the UCR’s appeal which featured his picture made sure to mention that he was “one of 450,000,000 friendly, democratic Chinese who loved and helped America in the past—who need our help now in order to survive and be a free, independent, friendly neighbor in the future.”¹⁵⁵

In addition to bringing together China’s leading advocates and America’s leading politicians, United China Relief successfully sold Henry Luce’s vision of China to the public. While Americans were reluctant to risk their lives abroad in 1941, UCR’s efforts led many people to invest time and money towards China’s success in their war with Japan. Both Pearl Buck and Henry Luce led Americans to become increasingly fascinated with China throughout the 1930s, whether as an exotic curiosity or a potential Christian ally, and Japan’s invasion of the country in 1937 further cemented this emotional investment with China. This interest was reflected in the growth Luce’s multimedia empire, as his subscriber base grew from 750,000 in 1937 to more than 3.8 million in 1941.¹⁵⁶ Thus, the groundwork was laid for the Sino-American alliance in World War II and the subsequent repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 284.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 284-285.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 293.

Chapter 5: Liberal Internationalism

On December 7, 1941, Imperial Japan bombed Pearl Harbor and sent shockwaves throughout the United States. People across America feared that Japan might invade the U.S. mainland and that many of the worst “yellow peril” fears about the country would materialize. However, the Luces took the news very differently. Clare Booth Luce teased her antiwar guests for being “appeasers” upon hearing the news, while Henry R. Luce was seen in good spirits at his office. Fellow *Time* correspondent Theodore White later recalled that Luce was happy how clear-cut America’s position in the world then became, as the country would inevitably have to liberate China from Japan in order to avenge the thousands of dead Americans at Pearl Harbor.¹⁵⁷ After his father died later that day, Luce cabled Bernard Baruch that, “He lived long enough to know that we were on the same side as the Chinese.”¹⁵⁸

The next day, the United States and China declared war against Japan. Chiang Kai-shek subsequently summoned Clarence Gauss, the American Ambassador to Chongqing, and proposed a military alliance to fight the Axis powers.¹⁵⁹ Their alliance was formalized by a Joint Declaration of the United Nations on January 1, 1942, and Franklin Roosevelt would symbolically refer to the country as one of the “four

¹⁵⁷ Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce*, 248.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 249.

¹⁵⁹ Xiaohua Ma, "The Sino-American Alliance during World War II and the Lifting of the Chinese Exclusion Acts," *American Studies International* 38, no. 2 (2000): 41, accessed November 22, 2020, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41279769>.

policemen” which would lead the world at the conclusion of the war.¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the United States still maintained unequal treaties with China during the early stages of the war, and Japan exploited this fact in promoting their “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere” against Western imperialism. In attempting to counter this propaganda, an opportunity arose for the U.S. to make amends to the people of China for years of unequal treaties and discrimination.

Exclusion and the Four Freedoms

In propagandizing against the United States, Japan immediately pointed out the hypocrisy inherent in Franklin Roosevelt’s “Four Freedoms” as his proclamation failed to address racial issues. In their wartime magazines, Japanese writers proclaimed Japan to be the emancipator of East Asia and condemned America’s “beast-like treatment” of Asian people.¹⁶¹ On the 100th anniversary of China’s Nanjing treaty with Britain—which had famously been the first of many unequal treaties between China and the West—the Japanese-installed Wang Jing-wei puppet regime urged Chinese people to unite with Japan and drive out the British “vampire” which had plagued the country for a century.¹⁶² The regime continued to attack the Allied powers, and used its newspapers to call for “all Asians to unite together to drive away American and British imperialists from Asia in order to establish an Asia for the Asiatics.”¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Xiaohua Ma, "A Democracy at War: The American Campaign to Repeal Chinese Exclusion in 1943," *The Japanese Journal of American Studies* 9 (1998): 126.

¹⁶² Ma, “A Democracy at War,” 127.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 128.

Liberal internationalists also condemned America's unequal treaties with China and became more active during this period. In 1941, Donald Dunham—a former member of the U.S. consulate in Hong Kong—approached Pearl Buck and her husband Richard J. Walsh about publishing an appeal for repealing Chinese exclusion in *Asia* magazine, of which they were both leading editors and contributors. After America's entry into World War II, *Asia* published Dunham's memo—with elaborations from fellow East Asian relations specialist Charles Spinks—under the title “Repeal Chinese Exclusion!”¹⁶⁴ In addressing Japanese propaganda, Spinks highlighted the fact that Japan had successfully managed to “demonstrate a fundamental inconsistency between the American idea of the Open Door in Asia and American Asiatic exclusion at home.”¹⁶⁵ Moreover, he argued that the law was especially offensive in how it singled out the Chinese, as it required even temporary Chinese visitors to possess documents which indicated their exemption from exclusion status. Thus, by forcing Chinese visitors to possess more than a passport, Spinks gave voice to an anxiety of Chinese people that “...the United States, in effect, does not recognize a passport of China, which is fully tantamount to not recognizing the sovereign power of that country.”¹⁶⁶

In addition to publishing the thoughts of liberals, magazines like *Asia* occasionally gave voice to concerned Chinese Americans. Its September 1942 issue featured Walter Kong, a Santa Barbara merchant who was born and raised in Honolulu.

¹⁶⁴ Fred W. Riggs, *Pressures on Congress* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1950), 48.

¹⁶⁵ Charles Nelson Spinks, “Repeal Chinese Exclusion!” *Asia* 42, no. 2 (February 1942): 94.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 93.

In his article, Kong described how he was harassed by immigration officials when he attempted to visit Tijuana despite his status as an American-born citizen.¹⁶⁷ Describing American immigration officials as “the Gestapo,” Kong also detailed the interrogations experienced by aspiring Chinese immigrants, his own nieces’ struggles in trying to immigrate as students, and the harsh conditions of immigrant detention.¹⁶⁸ Moreover, he tied his struggle to the larger context of race and civil rights, as he wrote that while it remained to be seen whether Congress would recognize the “hardships and humiliations” of the exclusion acts, he hoped that “our immigration officials...will be disposed to regard those of Chinese blood, whether returning as American citizens or coming as guests seeking temporary or permanent residence, more like fellow human beings.”¹⁶⁹

The Equality Principle

The shift in U.S. foreign policy toward better treatment of China began with the proposed relinquishment of U.S. and British extraterritorial rights in the country. These negotiations began in earnest on March 1942 but were stymied by the British government, which remained reluctant to relinquish its privileges in Shanghai.¹⁷⁰ After

¹⁶⁷ Walter Kong, “How We Grill the Chinese,” *Asia* 42, no. 9 (September 1942): 520.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 521. Walter Kong listed several of the inane questions which immigrants were asked in their examinations, such as “What was the address of your father’s noodle shop in Hong Kong?” and “What direction does your house face?” For the full list, see “How We Grill the Chinese,” 521-22.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 523.

¹⁷⁰ US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, China 1942* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1956), 292, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015002134842>.

nearly a year of negotiations, the U.S. and British governments signed separate treaties for the relinquishment of extraterritorial rights on January 11, 1943. The U.S. treaty was approved by the Senate unanimously on February 11, 1943, and later came into effect on May 20, 1943.¹⁷¹

During these negotiations, the Chinese government pushed for a more lenient policy on immigration and naturalization. Eight months into the negotiating process, Secretary of State Cordell Hull met with Chinese Ambassador Wei Tao-ming and Minister Liu Chieh. After presenting China's newest amendments to a U.S. draft treaty on extraterritoriality, Ambassador Wei confided to Hull that China was interested in "the question of liberalizing the Chinese immigration situation."¹⁷² To drive home the point, the Chinese government's first proposed modification to the treaty was a new Article I which would read, "The relation between the Republic of China and the United States of America shall be based on the principles of equality and reciprocity."¹⁷³ Recognizing the potential implications of this language, Hull telegraphed the British ambassador to the U.S. with concern that the proposed language "may have relation" to the desire to liberalize immigration.¹⁷⁴ George Atcheson Jr.—Assistant Chief of Far Eastern Affairs—concurred with Hull, as he believed that the language would have the potential of "bringing in extraneous matters...language which would be subject to misconstruction by persons in this country as affecting broad questions which are necessarily not within the

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 418.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 344.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 346.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 348.

scope of our present endeavors.”¹⁷⁵ Both the U.S. and China haggled over the language of this amendment and Acheson later reported that the Chinese government would not back down. They regarded the principle of the amendment as “fundamental” and insisted that “it would be very pleasing to the Chinese people as a whole.”¹⁷⁶ The two countries finally came to a compromise twenty days after China’s initial proposal, with the new language stating that the U.S. and China were to negotiate as “equal and sovereign States.”¹⁷⁷

Having been a party to the 1942 negotiations, Maxwell M. Hamilton—Chief of the Division for Far Eastern Affairs—came away convinced that repealing the Chinese Exclusion Acts was necessary for a stable alliance with China. Hamilton was among the diplomats who were the most eager to resolve the question of extraterritoriality, writing worriedly in 1942 that the Chinese could be won over by Japan’s appeal of “Asia for the Asiatics.”¹⁷⁸ However, the Senate’s unanimous vote to approve of its relinquishment did not hinder Japanese propaganda efforts as Japan continued to harp against American exclusion policy. Thus, Hamilton echoed longstanding “yellow peril” fears in stating that China’s continued involvement on America’s side was “the best insurance that the present war not become a race war.”¹⁷⁹

In discussing the potential repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act, members of the U.S. State Department became increasingly conscious of the perceived offensiveness of

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 351

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 362.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 376.

¹⁷⁸ Ma, “A Democracy at War,” 133.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 132-33. This sentiment was also expressed by Walter Judd to Congress in support of repealing exclusion. See Ma, “Democracy at War,” 135.

U.S. immigration policy as it related to race. Assistant Secretary of State Breckenridge Long spoke of a lecture delivered by Alfred Sze—a former Chinese ambassador to the U.S.—and was struck by his emphasis on the “discriminations which American law imposes upon Chinese as a race.”¹⁸⁰ Interpreting this lecture as a statement of China’s official position, Long quickly resolved to talk to the Speaker of the House in order to seek the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts.¹⁸¹ Political adviser Stanley K. Hornbeck agreed with Long on the urgency of the issue, as he recalled how the late Japanese Admiral Yamamoto became radicalized by America’s Japanese exclusion policy.¹⁸² Concerned that China was increasingly being animated by a “spirit of nationalism” and “taking stock of the potentialities of their huge manpower,” Hornbeck decided that a bill repealing exclusion would need to pass both houses of Congress with minimal opposition to safeguard America’s reputation with China.¹⁸³

The Repeal Pitch

After Spinks’ article got published in *Asia*, many people wrote letters in response offering to provide help to with the exclusion repeal effort. Among those who wrote in were Congressman and longtime “China hand” Walter H. Judd, Monroe Sweetland of the C.I.O., and Julean Arnold of the China Council for Berkeley.¹⁸⁴ Most were optimistic

¹⁸⁰ US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, China 1943* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1957), 773.
<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015002134529>.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 773-74.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 777.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 777-780.

¹⁸⁴ Riggs, *Pressures on Congress*, 48.

about repeal's prospects; after talking to labor leaders and Congressmen from the West Coast, Sweetland believed that the "coolie labor menace" had vanished as thousands of Asian people had joined the ranks of organized labor. Therefore, he concluded that the C.I.O. and elements of the A.F.L. might come around in support of repeal.¹⁸⁵ Other interested people were more skeptical. Julean Arnold believed that workers on the West Coast would be strongly opposed to ending Chinese Exclusion, and later found that key political figures in California would be the main bulwark for the opposition.¹⁸⁶ In response to these misgivings, the repeal advocates agreed to wait until after the Congressional elections to take further action.¹⁸⁷

Immediately after the elections took place, Richard J. Walsh spoke at the Town Hall Round Table and urged the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts.¹⁸⁸ The initial group of respondents to *Asia* magazine became active again shortly thereafter, as they held meetings, debated which of the exclusion repeal bills to support in Congress, and considered whether or not the bill should deal more broadly with Asian exclusion. After Walter Judd decided not to submit his more comprehensive bill to repeal Asian exclusion—as efforts in this direction had failed to gain momentum—Walsh sent out a letter on May 7 asking people to become members of a Citizens Committee in order to specifically push the repeal of Chinese exclusion.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 54.

The Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion finally coalesced on May 25, 1943, whereupon its members elected Richard J. Walsh chairman and discussed their strategies moving forward. As Fred W. Riggs explained in *Pressures on Congress*, this group was formed specifically as an ad hoc “catalytic group” to specifically pressure Congress on the Chinese question, which made for an efficient organizing strategy.¹⁹⁰ They agreed to work towards repeal of the exclusion acts, a quota for Chinese people, the right to naturalization, and committed themselves to rejecting all the bills that had been previously introduced.¹⁹¹ The committee also published over 30,000 copies of a booklet titled “Our Chinese Wall” which contained facts related to the repeal effort, distributing them to religious, social, political and labor organizations.¹⁹² Churches, labor groups, and women’s clubs subsequently became crucial to the effort for repeal, and the effort soon caught the attention of major media outlets.¹⁹³

Even amid these encouraging developments, members of the committee remained cognizant that prevailing racist attitudes could torpedo their movement. Walsh believed that any effort in the direction of broader Asiatic exclusion would be a mistake and hired Geneva Cranston— a legislative assistant—to ensure that his contacts in Washington stuck exclusively to the Chinese exclusion issue.¹⁹⁴ Cranston interviewed each witness before they testified and confirmed in a letter that she “[used] red pencil on phrases like

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 56.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 57-58

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 54-55.

‘racial equality’ [and] ‘all orientals.’”¹⁹⁵ Additionally, the Committee deliberately barred Asians as members for fear that they would provide ammunition to their opponents, as the organization had already been accused of being a front for Chinese interests. Only two Chinese Americans were brought before the House Committee to speak on behalf of repeal—Dr. Li Min Hin of the American Legion and engineer Paul Yee of the War Department—and both were summoned as demonstrations of Chinese American assimilation and patriotism.¹⁹⁶

During the hearings, repeal advocates showed a willingness to differentiate Chinese from Japanese people, and even played on existing “yellow peril” fears. In her testimony, Pearl Buck said of the Chinese that they were “among our best citizens—they do not go on relief; their crime record is very low; they are honest and industrious and friendly.”¹⁹⁷ She also reiterated her belief that the Chinese were democratic, stating that their emperor had always been “the servant of the people,” and contrasted this with the Japanese emperor who “has represented Heaven, or a totalitarian conception of that thing.”¹⁹⁸ Recalling how previous exclusion policy had represented “the death blow of

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 128.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 112. In his testimony, Yee emphasized the fact that his Chinese coworkers were not working as coolie laborers and referred to their production within the war industry as “unequaled.” See *Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act: Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization*, H.R. 1882 and H.R. 2309, Bills to Repeal the Chinese Exclusion Acts, day 4, 78th Cong., 1st Sess., May 27, 1943, 203-4, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015019961872>.

¹⁹⁷ *Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act: Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization*, H.R. 1882 and H.R. 2309, Bills to Repeal the Chinese Exclusion Acts, day 2, 78th Cong., 1st Sess., May 20, 1943, 69-70, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015019961872>.

¹⁹⁸ H.R. 1882 and 2309, *Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act*, 74-75.

liberalism” in Japan and enticed the country to war, she warned that the Chinese exclusion policy would “be in the nature of that...if we should not take a definite step.”¹⁹⁹ These fears were utilized more shamelessly in the “Our Chinese Wall” pamphlet, which stated that “without Chinese good will, we shall incur the risk of another war in which white supremacy may be openly challenged by the Oriental races.”²⁰⁰

By defining the repeal movement within such narrow parameters, the Citizens Committee hoped to appeal to a broader segment of American society. Speakers at the House Committee hearings repeatedly referred to the repeal as a limited war measure and avoided reference to larger questions of racial justice and social equality. Rather than rebuking racial and cultural distinctions, members of the Citizens’ Committee exploited the increasingly romantic image of China to garner sympathy for its cause. This image was most clearly embodied by Madame Chiang Kai-shek, whose auspicious U.S. tour gave force to the proceedings.

A Tour of Duty

Between China’s three Western-educated “Soong sisters,” Soong Mei-ling would become the most famous among them in the United States. After convincing him to convert to Christianity, Soong married Chiang Kai-shek in 1927 and became known to the world as “Madame Chiang Kai-shek” from that point forward. In 1931, she appeared on the cover of *Time* alongside her husband in Western clothing with her unbound feet

¹⁹⁹ H.R. 1882 and 2309, *Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act*, 76.

²⁰⁰ Scott, *China and the Oriental Races*, 265.

prominently displayed and thus became a symbol of China's seeming path toward Christianity and westernization in the U.S.²⁰¹

Soong's public persona in the U.S. became increasingly prominent throughout the Second Sino-Japanese War. In 1934 she gave an interview to *Forum* magazine and contributed a piece entitled "What My Religion Means to Me." While she was initially reluctant to write the piece, Geraldine Finch—her missionary friend—convinced her that it would help develop sympathy and aid for China within the United States amid the country's ongoing war with Japan.²⁰² Later republished during her 1943 tour as a book, entitled *I Confess My Faith*, the article reflected many of Soong's deepest insecurities and Fitch's dramatic editorial flourishes. For example, Soong wrote how she fell into "spiritual despair, blankness, [and] desolation" as she witnessed Japan's invasion of Manchuria, famine in Northwest China, floods in the Yangtse Valley, and the death of her mother. Regarding her despair, she added that "spiritually I was failing my husband."²⁰³ However, she also wrote of her subsequent Christian awakening, whereupon she realized that "Mother was no longer there to do my interceding for me" and that "It seemed to be up to me to help the General spiritually, and in helping him I grew spiritually myself."²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ "The TIME Vault: October 26, 1931," TIME, Accessed November 25, 2020, <https://time.com/vault/issue/1931-10-26/page/1/>.

²⁰² Leong, *The China Mystique*, 121.

²⁰³ Mayling Soong Chiang, *I Confess My Faith* (New York: The Methodist Church, 1943), 8.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

While Madame Chiang inspired Western reformers and missionaries with her religious conversion, she was also an advocate for reform in her own right. She gained a reputation in the West for being China's "first lady" as she started educational institutions for war orphans, encouraged women to participate in Chinese civic life, and visibly became Chiang Kai-shek's confidant in political matters.²⁰⁵ After America's entry into World War II, she began to demand better treatment of China by the West. In a piece written for *New York Times Magazine*, Soong condemned the West for opening China "at the point of a bayonet" and singled out its policy on extraterritoriality for criticism.²⁰⁶ Shortly after the article's publication, Cordell Hull expressed his frustration with her to British Ambassador Halifax during their negotiations on relinquishment of extraterritoriality. He complained that her influence and popularity made this "virtually a state paper" and that "no credit was given [by her] to this Government for its policy some years ago in favoring its early abolition."²⁰⁷ Acknowledging Hull's concerns, George Acheson Jr. later replied that "we had of course taken note of Madame Chiang Kai-shek's recent magazine and press articles...and we should not be surprised if pressure upon the Department to take action increased."²⁰⁸

Recognizing her influence on U.S. foreign policy, Madame Chiang decided to tour the country and speak on behalf of China. In early 1943, she spoke on national

²⁰⁵ Leong, *The China Mystique*, 119-21.

²⁰⁶ Mayling Soong Chiang, "East Speaks to West" in *We Chinese Women: Speeches and Writings During the First United Nations Year*, (New York: Chinese News Service, 1943), 21.

²⁰⁷ US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, China 1942*, 276.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 280.

television to the House of Representatives and praised the country's diversity, emphasizing that she witnessed "first-generation Germans, Italians, Frenchmen, Poles, Czechoslovakians" interacting in harmony at air bases. She then iterated how this reinforced her belief that "devotion to common principles eliminates differences in race and that identity of ideals is the strongest possible solvent of racial dissimilarities."²⁰⁹ This argument in favor of racial equality would be the basis behind her plea for more assistance to China, and she also demanded unsuccessfully that the U.S. abandon its "Hitler first" strategy.²¹⁰

Congressional representative Martin J. Kennedy timed his Chinese exclusion repeal bill—the first of the various bills introduced in 1943—to coincide with the conclusion of Soong's speech. In his reply, he welcomed her back "as a daughter is welcomed by her foster-mother, to the land where you received an American education," and introduced his bill "as an indication of my unbounded admiration of a nation's courage which has amazed the world."²¹¹ Several editorials were subsequently written in favor of repeal—some of which proposed doing so as a direct tribute to her—and she quickly became a larger than life figure throughout the United States.²¹² Although her manner was considered aristocratic, she made a spontaneous visit to San Francisco union hall—a traditional site for anti-Chinese opposition—and rallied her "fellow workers" to increase war production.²¹³ Perhaps her speech was a calculated attempt to convince

²⁰⁹ Leong, *The China Mystique*, 135.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 135.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 148.

present A.F.L. officials that the working-class would favor the repeal of Chinese exclusion; shortly before her tour ended, she pressed Chinese Ambassador Wei to push for repeal recognizing that “the wave of sympathy for China, as a result of the visit, was at its height.”²¹⁴

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 150.

Conclusion

Madame Chiang represented the culmination of various trends in how Americans viewed Chinese people between 1905 and 1943. As a graduate of Wellesley College, she was an effective advertisement of the fruits of the Boxer Indemnity Scholarship program and America's ability to correct its past wrongs. Her Christianity was a microcosm of the hopes and dreams of missionaries and conservatives like Henry Luce in China, especially as Japan seemed poised to engulf the Pacific, resist the spread of Christianity, replace workers on the West Coast, and raise a pan-Asian army to oppose the West. As Americans became more sympathetic to the China portrayed by Pearl Buck, Madame Chiang could also represent of a longstanding democratic and Confucian tradition in China which bordered on Christianity, such that the efforts of Western missionaries were all but redundant.

As the image of the opium-smoking Chinese laborer became more of a relic, the "model minority" image of Madame Chiang and the aspiring American took its place. China represented the new frontier in the romantic imagination, while its shape, size, and recent revolutionary history lent itself to comparison with the United States. This romantic parallel was captured by "China: A Symphonic Narrative," a Southern California production at the Hollywood Bowl which was timed to occur at the end of Madame Chiang's speaking tour. In the production, Edward G. Robinson voiced Chiang Kai-shek and cried out "Go West! Go to the West!" to millions of Chinese peasants

facing famine and flood from Japan's invasion of the Chinese coast.²¹⁵ As the actors of the production ran west, the music transitioned from atonal sounds to western orchestration. The crescendo of this transition from primitive to modern was the appearance of Madame Chiang herself. The narrator thus spoke: "These two small hands, a woman's hands, have swept the cobwebs from a nation's past...one does not speak of Madame Chiang Kai-Shek unless one speaks of China too, of China's yesterday which was her heritage, China's tomorrow which is her life."²¹⁶

Warren G. Magnuson's bill repealing the Chinese Exclusion Acts passed overwhelmingly on October 17, 1943. Of the few Congressmen who attended the floor debates for the bill, thirty-three representatives voted in favor of it while only twelve voted against it. This ratio approximated popular support for the bill, as a survey conducted by the Office of Public Opinion Research found that sixty-five percent of Americans supported repeal as compared to only twenty-six percent who were against it.²¹⁷ Notably, most representatives from the South and West voted in favor of repeal even as their regions tended to favor limiting immigration.²¹⁸ This can be ascribed to obvious factors: among these were the small quota of 105 that China was granted, the Sino-American alliance in World War II, and the demographic shift from Chinese laborers to Chinese students that occurred throughout the Exclusion Era. However, China was also

²¹⁵ Leong, *The China Mystique*, 141.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 142-43.

²¹⁷ Karen J. Leong, "Foreign Policy, National Identity, and Citizenship: The Roosevelt White House and the Expediency of Repeal," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 22, no. 4 (2003): 3-30, Accessed November 28, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27501347>.

²¹⁸ Riggs, *Pressures on Congress*, 194-95.

consistently viewed as a more reliable ally than both Russia and England in polls conducted by the Office of War Information. By August 1942, eighty-six percent of Americans believed that China could be depended on to cooperate after the war compared with only seventy-two percent who trusted Britain and fifty-one percent who trusted Russia.²¹⁹ This demonstrates the effect that years of media propaganda for Chiang Kai-shek's regime had on attitudes in the U.S., as contrary to illusions of future cooperation, the regime would not outlast World War II by more than four years.

Had Henry Luce reported Theodore White's critiques of Chiang Kai-shek, perhaps the American public would not have been shocked when China was taken over by Communists in 1949. The romantic image of democratic and Christian China proved to be as ephemeral as it was false, and the subsequent backlash to Maoist China caused many Chinese Americans to become victims of the second Red Scare. After China intervened in the Korean War against the United States, vandals attacked Chinese-owned businesses and Chinese Americans feared that they would be put into internment camps. The federal government implemented the Chinese Confessions Program to root out potential Chinese communists in the late 1950s. "Paper sons" and "paper daughters" who had falsified their immigration status were allowed to remain in the country if they turned in others, and Chinese leftists were the most desirable targets of all. This had the effect of

²¹⁹ Ma, "The Sino-American Alliance During World War II," 55.

turning Chinese people against each other, and many would be deported or become stateless throughout the decade.²²⁰

Beyond merely sympathizing with China during World War II, many Americans saw the country as an extension of their own. Parallels between George Washington and Sun Yat-sen abounded in the orientalist literature about China, just as Chiang Kai-shek's march west was made to invoke Manifest Destiny with "China: A Symphonic Narrative." The overarching logic of these shoddy parallels was that China was two hundred years behind the West and that it could only be guided into modernization by the benevolent and paternal hand of the United States. Thus, public figures searched for scapegoats to determine "Who lost China," because they had the hubris to believe that China was America's to lose in the first place.

²²⁰ Charlotte Brooks, "Numbed with Fear: Chinese Americans and McCarthyism," PBS, last modified December 19, 2009, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/mccarthy-numbed-with-fear-chinese-americans/>.

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