

Liberal Imperialism:  
The Rise and Fall of Liberal Internationalism in U.S.-China Relations  
and the Origins of the Cold War, 1898–1945

by

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For my parents

Annie Koh Chang  
and Ricky Wu-nan Chang

and in loving memory of Nikita, best dog ever.

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## A Note on Usage

For romanization of Chinese, I have opted to use both the now defunct Wade-Giles as well as the contemporary Pinyin systems. For famous historical actors, where Pinyin would presumably be less familiar to the reader, I have retained Wade-Giles. For example, I have chosen to use Wade-Giles for Chiang Kai-shek, as the Pinyin form, Jiang Jieshi, would be unrecognizable to most readers outside of the field of Chinese history. In other instances, as with the Chinese Communist leader Mao Zedong, I have used Pinyin, as it is not only more current, but is also as recognizable to most readers as the Wade-Giles, Mao Tze-tung. Most place names have been rendered in Pinyin, except those that remain familiar to most readers in Wade-Giles, like Peking instead of Beijing. In other instances, with less familiar names, I have generally used Pinyin, but list Wade-Giles in parentheses, for example: Zhang Zuolin (Chang Tso-lin).

## Chapter 1

### **Introduction**

This dissertation is a study of one distinct genealogy of the global Cold War, which I locate in the U.S.–China relationship in the years between 1898 and 1945. This might strike some readers as an unorthodox period in which to situate the origins of a conflict that most believe was generated out of the new conditions of global power that emerged in the wake of World War II. While it is true that there are clear historical shifts in the postwar period that attended a new system of international relations characterized by the political and ideological incommensurability of liberal capitalism (led by the U.S.) and communist totalitarianism (led by the Soviet Union), the conditions that underlay those seemingly irreconcilable differences had their foundations in a much earlier period. Indeed, the conflicts of the global Cold War may not have been given voice were it not for the historical contingencies that underwrote much of the U.S.–China relationship throughout the first half of the twentieth century. America’s preponderance of power on the global Cold War stage was a predictable, though not foreordained, outgrowth of the rise of the U.S. from a relatively weak continentally-bound isolationist player in the mid-nineteenth century, to the preeminent global economic and military powerhouse by the end of WWII. The position in which the U.S. found itself in 1945 was not evidence of its divine providence, the logical conclusion of any sort of an errand into the wilderness, as

much as bellicose boosters of a kind of American moralist internationalism—the paradigmatic expression of this was media mogul Henry Luce’s classic editorial in *Time* titled “The American Century”—might have one believe.<sup>1</sup> It was the culmination of a set of historical relationships in which the U.S. found itself wielding increasing influence, and in whose stakes the U.S. found itself increasingly embroiled, as the twentieth century wore on. These relationships rested in large measure upon historical contingency, not destiny. Historian Michael Hunt has argued that

U.S. power did not begin in 1945, with the onset of a policy of Cold War, nor in 1914 as Woodrow Wilson began his fateful encounter with a Europe at war. By the end of the nineteenth century Americans had already behind them a century of making choices that had brought stunning successes. By then they had put in place most of the key elements of American international power.<sup>2</sup>

I agree with Hunt’s contention, and this dissertation seeks to place into historical context one set of important relationships, those between the U.S. and China, that were critical to the foundations of what Hunt has called the ‘American ascendancy’ of the twentieth century.

In many ways this project is a look backwards and an attempt to place a broad historical picture that is suffused with contingency into a narrative arc that illuminates some critical aspects of the global history of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, linking them in a synchronic chain that forms a distinct genealogy of the Cold War. As such, it is also a genealogy which traces the long arc of American empire in the first half of the twentieth century, which happens to also highlight the importance of

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<sup>1</sup> For more on Henry Luce’s ‘American Century’ and its importance to U.S. history and empire, see the special issue of *Diplomatic History* devoted to its reappraisal in light of attempts in the field to turn against U.S. exceptionalism, *Diplomatic History* 23, no. 2, (Spring, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> Michael H. Hunt, *The American Ascendancy: How the United States Gained and Wielded Global Dominance*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 3.

China to American ascendancy in the first half of the twentieth century, as well as the postwar Cold War global order. In this way, the study suggests both a widened historical, as well as geographical, field for thinking the Cold War in a host of its varied expressions. I find myself unable to contemplate the Cold War in a framework that does not attempt to at least in part unearth some of the distinctive, complex, and multiplicitous genealogies of the ideological, political, and military conflict that defined so much of the international scene in the second half of the twentieth century. I find it especially impossible to think the Cold War without situating the conflict within these broader geographical and historical frameworks, ones that don't privilege the end of WWII, or Europe and the Soviet Union, as sites where the conflict took on its deepest, its most important, or its most critical meanings. In short, for me, the interesting aspects of the Cold War reside in its peripheries. I argue that China, and U.S. relations with China, were indispensable to the formation of the global Cold War order, which itself was both the era in which, and the condition under which, the U.S. rose to preeminence as the lone superpower when the Cold War structure collapsed in 1991. Now, however, a resurgent China shows signs of being a legitimate competitor (or ally?) in the dawn of a new international age in which the American ascendancy will either run its course, or maintain its hegemonic dominance in a new web of global relationships. Against this backdrop then, this dissertation is not only an intellectual practice in historical genealogy, but also a project with deep presentist concerns. American empire has reached a zenith in the early-twenty-first century. Never before has one country wielded so much comparable power over the rest of the world. The U.S. national security state, which incubated under the harsh growing conditions of the global Cold War, and under whose auspices an

unparalleled amount of power to control the tidal waves of history was eagerly taken up by the U.S., was birthed in the immediate aftermath of WWII. Its prehistory, however, lies in the more deeply rooted historical formation of what historian Bruce Cumings has called a ‘Pacific ascendancy,’ in which the U.S.-China relationship played a crucial role.<sup>3</sup> The core contention of this project is that the U.S.-China relationship has been relatively overlooked for the importance it played in the development of American power in the twentieth century, and especially for its role in the emergence of the Cold War as the dominant structure of global power after 1945.<sup>4</sup> The relationships and historical formations that I explore in the dissertation exceed those solely configured around late-nineteenth-century U.S. trade patterns and official diplomatic relations with a once wealthy but, by the late-nineteenth century, politically and financially bankrupt Chinese monarchical state. I examine what might traditionally be considered distinctly national historical moments, like the origins of the anti-communist movement in China, or the Chinese anti-Christian campaigns of the mid-1920s, and argue that they have a critical utility for an understanding of how the U.S. built up an architecture of power—especially in the Pacific region—that became a deeply foundational aspect of America’s Cold War base.<sup>5</sup> In this way, these national moments can be reread as part of a global history, and

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<sup>3</sup> Bruce Cumings, *Dominion from Sea to Sea: Pacific Ascendancy and American Power*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> The historical literature is not short on studies that have looked to China’s role in the framing of the most infamous domestic expression of the Cold War, McCarthyism. In particular, contemporary and historiographic debates over the question of “who lost China?” to the communists in 1949 have been oft-repeated, especially in the context of the role of domestic pressures on U.S. foreign policy. These questions, while of some utility in understanding the historical context of the Cold War, do not delve deeply enough into the ways in which China, and its so-called ‘loss,’ were part of a longer-range historical evolution that was tied to the expansion of American global power as far back as the nineteenth century. For the most recent reappraisal of the ‘Lost Chance’ debate in U.S. diplomatic history see the articles by historians Chen Jian, John Garver, Warren Cohen, and Michael Sheng devoted to the topic in *Diplomatic History* 21, no. 1, (Winter, 1997).

<sup>5</sup> This is most clearly articulated in Bruce Cumings’ ongoing work on what he calls the U.S.’ “archipelago of empire” that is embodied in the hundreds of U.S. military bases in the Pacific region, and on whose

as germane to the development of the U.S. in the twentieth century. I'd like to turn now to a lesser-known episode in the history of U.S.-China relations in the early twentieth century, and to rethink it in light of the way it expresses so many of the dynamic aspects of the emergent international scene and the dynamics of an ascendant U.S. global imperialism at the turn of the twentieth century.

Between 1900 and 1911, a colorful cast of mainland and overseas Chinese, and a small group of American businessmen, hatched a complex—but ultimately failed—plot to foment the collapse of the Qing Dynasty, which had ruled China since 1644. This failed revolution has not become a major part of the historiography of turn-of-the-century Chinese political history, or of U.S. history of the same period, likely for reasons of its relatively insignificant causal impact on the course of twentieth-century Chinese or American history. In some ways, that is a fair assessment of the clandestine plotting of a handful of American businessmen and Chinese revolutionaries. However, the plan itself, despite its failure to materialize any kind of meaningful revolutionary change, represents many of the most critical historical formations that constitute our understanding of the history of the global twentieth century itself, and that form the overarching areas under investigation in this dissertation. A number of the overlapping and interrelated phenomena which came to bear on, and were expressed by, the abortive revolutionary scheme, have had a surprisingly long afterlife as distinctive threads in the linked historical processes of twentieth-century nation-making, both Chinese and American, as well as global. The failed revolutionary plot can teach us much about the intense globalism that characterized the ways in which Chinese, Americans, and indeed other

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existence so much of American power during the Cold War (and after) was premised. For his most recent writing on the subject see *Dominion from Sea to Sea*, 388-423.

peoples undergoing dramatic transformations in the milieu of fin de siècle modernity, thought about their unfolding historical, national, and proto-national yearnings in an increasingly interpenetrative network of nation states and imperial relations.<sup>6</sup>

A recounting of the plot of the so-called “Red Dragon Caper”—a sobriquet given by one of the main architects of the plan, Charles Beach Boothe, a prominent Los Angeles businessman with deep contacts in the Northeastern U.S. banking establishment—traverses important issues that I argue are integral not only to an understanding of the national histories of China and the United States in the twentieth century, but are issues that can be limned for the very ways in which they have structured intimate linkages between the two nations for more than a century, and that have been central to the development of what might be understood as a kind of global history of the contemporary world. To this end, an analysis of the Caper necessarily utilizes a transnational historical approach which, in its explanatory capacity, exceeds those which

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<sup>6</sup> Historian Rebecca Karl notes the complexities of the emergent international scene at the turn of the century and its impact on the thinking of Chinese intellectuals, reformers, and revolutionaries as being a formative aspect of nationalist sentiment in China. She argues that Chinese conceptions of modern nationalism did not coalesce in opposition to Western (and Japanese) imperialist pretensions as the dominant historiographical model has suggested, but rather took shape organically out of an understanding of an entirely new global condition: “This immanent reconfiguration of global structure was made visible through a cluster of events in the colonized and imperialized world that drew Chinese attention from 1898 to 1911. These included the Philippine, Hawaiian, and Cuban struggles against Spain and the United States; the incipient Indian nationalist movement; the Boer struggle in South Africa against Britain; Poland’s; Egypt’s; and Ottoman Turkey’s reformisms, struggles against territorial partition, and attempts to reconstitute themselves as national polities; Vietnam’s struggles against the French; Japanese expansionism into Korea, Taiwan, and Manchuria; and a host of others.” Rebecca Karl, *Staging the World: Chinese Nationalism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 16. Erez Manela, in his study of what he calls the ‘Wilsonian moment,’ (the year leading up to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, where President Wilson, and the United States more generally, symbolized for the colonized peoples of the non-European world the real possibility of self-determination), also touches upon the necessity of understanding anti-imperialist struggle in the early twentieth century in a global framework, and critically examining their roles as the historical context in which the construction of distinct nation state nationalisms unfolded. For Manela, 1919 is a critical year in the formation of a global anti-colonial nationalism, with the almost simultaneous outbreak of world-changing non-European nationalist movements: the May Fourth Movement in China, the beginnings of Ghandi’s resistance movement in India, the March First Movement in Korea, and the 1919 Revolution in Egypt. Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 3-13; 55-135.



are available in the more traditional uni-national narratives that have dominated the practice of history—especially the history of U.S. foreign relations—for so long. A transnational historical approach to the study of the U.S.’ role in the collapse of the Qing Dynasty at the turn of the century cannot merely explore each national history as a discrete entity, and then tell the stories that emerge from such a pairing side by side. Something broader than a strictly comparative methodology needs to be employed in order to capture the effulgent dynamism of the U.S.-China relationship and its pivotal role in the emergence of world history in an age of ascendant modern internationalism. By examining the transnational aspects of the Red Dragon Caper as “not simply...a theme or motif but as an analytic set of methods [that explores how]...historical processes are constructed in the movement between places, sites, and regions,” I hope to make the case that the interrelation and overlap of the historical formation of the U.S. and China in the first half of the twentieth century (and indeed before as well) constitutes a critical piece in our developing understanding of race, nationalism and empire in the twentieth century world, of which the global Cold War was arguably the defining aspect from 1945–1991.<sup>7</sup> While a lot of the literature on the transnational turn in the humanities in general has focused on its role in denationalizing or deterritorializing the primacy of the nation state in its various analytic iterations, my own inclination is to follow the example set by the historian Eiichiro Azuma in his study of race and Japanese American

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<sup>7</sup> Quote is from Isabel Hofmeyr in “AHR Conversation: On Transnational History,” *American Historical Review* 111, no. 5, (Dec., 2006), 1444. This conversation provides invaluable insight into how historians across various areas and fields (though all participants teach in elite Western universities) are currently thinking about both the critical benefits and potential pitfalls of the transnational turn in historical practice. For examples of this impulse towards transnationalism as expressed in the study of the history of U.S. foreign relations, see Thomas Zeiler, “Just Do It! Globalization for Diplomatic Historians,” *Diplomatic History* 25, no. 4, (Fall 2001), 529-551; and Michael J. Hogan’s 2003 SHAFR Presidential Address, published as “‘The Next Big Thing’: The Future of Diplomatic History in a Global Age,” *Diplomatic History* 28, no. 1, (Jan., 2004), 1-21.

transnationalism, in which he articulates a new distinction, a so-called “inter-National perspective” which “stresses the interstitial (not transcendental) nature” of historical experience as it unfolds between two discrete global entities.<sup>8</sup>

The Red Dragon Caper, while focused on the close relationship between a number of revolutionary and reformist Chinese, and their benefactors qua exploiters in the U.S., is a story that illustrates the complex ways in which transnational relations between the U.S. and China in the early years of the twentieth century remained driven by the historical forces of nationalism, and as such distinctly reproduced nation-state-based identifications while simultaneously expressing the expanded ways in which we as historians must learn to view the history of the global twentieth century.<sup>9</sup> In this way, the story of the complicated relationship between China and the United States, indeed, a major part of the story of the emergence of the twentieth-century ‘international,’ can be told by making explicit the multiple articulations between the details of the planned coup d’etat and their relationships to the larger structuring historical forces of political revolution; economic imperialism and early transnational capitalist expansion; Western liberal modernity and cultural imperialism; and the emergence of the global as an idea and unit of historical analysis.

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<sup>8</sup> Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 5. Azuma’s work is critical in its firm grounding in empirical research in both Asia and the U.S., but also for its fidelity to a transnational method that firmly situates “the potency of the national in the transnational.” (14)

<sup>9</sup> In thinking about the U.S.–China relationship in these terms I am indebted in particular to historian Rebecca Karl’s concern with examining “the simultaneous growth of nationalism and a *global historical logic* in China, through which the seemingly arbitrary co-temporality of events around the world and in China came to be seen as held together by their shared contemporary historical relationship in and to global modernity.” Karl, *Staging the World*, 8. Italics mine.

## **The Red Dragon Caper**

Under the leadership of late-nineteenth-century Chinese reformers like Kang You-wei, and his protégé Liang Qichao, China convulsed under the whipping winds of historical change, and was battered into a rethinking of the political life of the state itself. The imperial monarchy had been failing as a model of governance in a period where global changes in the relationships between nation states had left China destitute in both political and real capital. A series of costly and humiliating military and consequent diplomatic defeats at the hands of Western imperial powers, like England and the United States, resounded across the emergent international community and signaled the need for an intense reorganization of China's social, economic, and political prerogatives. Under the influence of Western ideas, mostly through schools set up by a growing network of Christian missionaries from America, ideas about a liberal state—a constitutional monarchy perhaps, or maybe a republic—spread across the urban centers of China. In 1898, a movement now known as the 'Hundred Days Reform' spread through the imperial court with the imprimatur of the Guangxu Emperor, and paved the way for revolutionary change in China, though stopping far short of revolution itself. The reform movement was suppressed by a coup d'état orchestrated by the Empress Dowager Cixi, with the backing of future President of China, Yuan Shikai. In the aftermath of the reform movement, Kang You-wei's brother was executed, and Kang and Liang Qichao fled to Japan where they formed the Protect the Emperor Society (PES), and set to work on creating a constitutional monarchy in China.

In 1900, under the auspices of the PES, Kang You-wei enlisted the aid of a young American named Homer Lea, a supposed military genius, and “the only consulting world strategist who ever lived.”<sup>10</sup> Lea was, by all accounts, a unique character. He was born in Denver, Colorado, in 1876, but moved to Los Angeles to finish high school, graduating from Los Angeles High School in 1896. He began university study at Occidental College, but transferred to Stanford University to study pre-law. While at Stanford, Lea developed an intense interest in military strategy, and

while other young men pinned upon their walls their girls’ pictures or reproductions of athletic stars, Homer hung up maps of varying sizes [upon which] he waged with colored stickers a vast war, the Japanese and Germans on one side, China and America on the other.<sup>11</sup>

Lea’s intense desire to become a great general was not diminished by the fact that he had suffered a terrible spinal injury as an infant and never grew over five feet in height. His injury left him with a severely hunched back, and a degenerative ocular condition that would leave him blind at the time of his death in 1912, at the age of 36. While at Stanford, his diminished eyesight had not yet become a debilitating handicap, and he read voraciously about both China and matters military. Lea became somewhat of a problematic presence on campus, an intense militarist on a campus run by a pacifist president. There is evidence to suggest that Lea was expelled from Stanford by the

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<sup>10</sup> Harry Carr, “The Story of Homer Lea,” reprint from the *Los Angeles Times Sunday Magazine*, November 15, 1931, Box 3: Fol. 29, Joshua Powers Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University. Henceforth Powers Papers.

<sup>11</sup> Justin G. Turner, “General Homer Lea,” *Manuscripts* 22, no. 2, (Spring 1970), 97. Article can be found in Box 3: Fol. 27, Powers Papers.

university president, David Starr Jordan, due to his displays of “excessive militarism” while on campus.<sup>12</sup>

After Stanford, Lea migrated to San Francisco, where he became active in the Chinese immigrant community, and passed his time as a military consultant to exiles there plotting the overthrow of the Qing dynasty. It was in San Francisco that Lea met Ng Poon Chew, the famed editor of the Chinese American newspaper *Chung Sai Yat Po*, and Dr. Tom She Bin, the head of the San Francisco branch of the PES. It was they who provided the recommendation to Kang You-wei, suggesting that Lea’s services might be indispensable to bring about the collapse of the Chinese imperial court. Lea traveled to China and convinced Kang to appoint him a lieutenant general, which he did, and granted him command over a small group of volunteer troops. Lea failed to distinguish himself as an actual field commander, and after some small skirmishes, Kang’s rapidly diminishing authority, combined with Lea’s inability to operationalize his vast book knowledge of military strategy, caused him to leave his post and head to Peking. He arrived in the capital city just in time to witness first-hand the final days of the Boxer Uprising. He joined up with the international forces engaged in suppressing the uprising, and even led a small group of soldiers in pursuit of the fleeing imperial army. Once out of range of the support of Western armies, Lea’s small group of soldiers were quickly forced into retreat. With Kang You-wei’s power base now almost fully vanquished, and the idea of establishing a constitutional monarchy in China eclipsed, Lea had little support in China, and began making his way back to the U.S. via Hong Kong and Japan. While in Japan,

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<sup>12</sup> Julian Hartt, “Americans’ Plot for Chinese Revolt Revealed,” reprinted from the *Los Angeles Times*, Thursday, October 13, 1966. Reprint can be found in Box. 2: Fol. 12, Charles B. Boothe Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University. Henceforth Boothe Papers.

Lea's luck turned when he met Sun Yat-sen, who was himself gathering resources for the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty, in favor of establishing a republic, modeled after the United States.

Sun was impressed with Lea's apparent knowledge of military matters, and at Lea's insistence, he promised to appoint him his chief military advisor. When Sun and Lea met again, in San Francisco in 1904, they began drawing up plans for the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty. Lea, likely due to his intense desire to be a part of a 'real' military campaign, soon found himself embroiled in a conflict of interest. While planning the establishment of a republic with Sun, Lea was still affiliated with Kang You-wei and the reformist groups, like the PES, who wanted to establish a constitutional monarchy in China. Indeed, in 1905, Lea and Kang even had a meeting with President Theodore Roosevelt, during which the President "listened sympathetically, [but] promised nothing."<sup>13</sup> By 1908, Lea had come to favor a plan being hatched that involved himself, Kang You-wei, Yung Wing (a Chinese Christian and first Chinese graduate of an American university, Yale class of 1854) and the financial backing of a number of prominent American businessmen.

Lea had been greatly disturbed by the Chinese boycott of American goods in 1905.<sup>14</sup> It was a response to a number of international indignities suffered by the Chinese at the hands of the United States, including the extension of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Lea feared that trade interests between the U.S. and China might be heading down

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<sup>13</sup> Key Ray Chong, "The Abortive American-Chinese Project for Chinese Revolution, 1908-1911," *The Pacific Historical Review* 41, no. 1, (Feb., 1972), 56.

<sup>14</sup> For more on the 1905 boycott, see Guanhua Wang, *In Search of Justice: The 1905-1906 Chinese Anti-American Boycott*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Yong Chen, *Chinese San Francisco, 1850-1943: A Trans-Pacific Community*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), esp. 148-161. See also this dissertation, chapter 6.

the path of irredeemable disaster. He began to seek not just a clandestine military solution to the internal problems of China, but a diplomatic and business one as well. The United States had long been fascinated with the trade potentials embodied in the vast populations of China, and much of the U.S.' imperialist impulse had historically been figured around the significance of China to the wealth of America.<sup>15</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century, even the Christian impulse towards evangelicism was tempered with the taint of commerce. In a pamphlet titled "Motives in Foreign Missions," the Revered Griffith John wrote,

the mission is the friend of legitimate commerce always and everywhere...it joyfully welcomes the honest and honorable trader and prepares the way for him. Missionaries are pioneers of trade and commerce. They are the promoters of civilization, learning, and education wherever they may be, and these things breed new wants which commerce supplies.<sup>16</sup>

Lea was wary about the diminishing returns to the U.S. that would be occasioned by a severe staunching of the China trade. He was unable to secure much support from the government or the general public, as China was not the most important Asian factor in the calculus of the U.S. diplomatic establishment at the time. That role fell to Japan, a

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<sup>15</sup> For more on this history see John Eperjesi, *The Imperialist Imaginary: Visions of Asia and the Pacific in American Culture*. (Lebanon: Dartmouth University Press, 2005), esp. 1-57, and 86-104. The high tide of the U.S.-China trade was in the mid-nineteenth century; in 1840 alone \$6.6 million in tea and porcelain arrived in the U.S. from China, and only France and England had greater trade with China than did the United States. Many of the most storied fortunes in U.S. history were built upon this substantial trade, those attached to familiar names like Lowell and Astor. These colossal fortunes were not always based in legitimate foundations either, especially not as the trade in Chinese tea and porcelain became more expensive for Westerners: "John Jacob Astor, Caleb Cushing, Abeil Abbot Low, and other American traders all loved free trade, but they did not scruple to spurn importing opium to China, mostly from Turkey, which helped them to balance their trade just as it did the British; American traders even reaped windfall profits by selling opium *during* the Opium Wars." Bruce Cumings, *Dominion from Sea to Sea: Pacific Ascendancy and American Power*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 8-9, italics in original.

<sup>16</sup> "Motives in Foreign Missions," 4-5, n.d., Record Group No. 42, Series VII, Box 556: Fol. 6523, Archives of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, Yale Divinity School Library, Special Collections, Yale University. Henceforth SVM Papers.

nation rising in the ranks of world power.<sup>17</sup> Not to be deterred by a government disinterested in the diplomatic salience of China, Lea turned to some prominent businessmen in America who believed almost prophetically in the possible riches that China might generate for American capitalism.

The primary agent provocateur from the business side of the new plot to overthrow the Qing Dynasty was Charles Beach Boothe. Boothe, born in Connecticut in 1851, had worked in the New York financial world until his retirement to Los Angeles in 1892, where he remained active in various business ventures. Boothe's bi-coastal business contacts were perfect for orchestrating the financial backing for a transnational revolutionary joint-U.S.-Chinese scheme to overthrow the Qing Dynasty. In September of 1908, Boothe made his first trip to the east coast in order to drum up support for the plan he and Lea had been working on. It was during this trip, in his home state of Connecticut, that Boothe first met Yung Wing.

Yung Wing was an important figure in the history of late-nineteenth-century U.S.-Chinese relations. He had been one of the earliest transnational Chinese students in the U.S., and was the first to earn a degree from an American university, graduating from

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<sup>17</sup> Lea was not ignorant to the importance of Japan's rising military and industrial strength. Indeed, part of his enduring, if limited, fame rests upon the publication of two rather prescient works of geopolitics, *The Valor of Ignorance*, and *The Day of the Saxon*. In *The Valor of Ignorance*, published in 1909 by Harper and Bros., Lea predicted the rise of Japan as a Pacific power, and predicted a surprise attack on the U.S. that the country would be unprepared for. The details of the Japanese strategy, and the fidelity with which the actual attack against the U.S. in 1941 and subsequent Pacific War unfolded along lines sketched out by Lea over three decades earlier, are rather ominous. Despite its relative unpopularity in American circles (Douglas MacArthur tried without success to make the book required reading at West Point), *The Valor of Ignorance* was widely read in Japan and Europe. Similarly, *Day of the Saxon*, published in 1912, also by Harper and Bros., argued that the zenith of British Empire had arrived, and predicted the rise of a belligerent German adversary that would spread across Europe until defeated by the Russians, who were inevitably destined to rule Europe. At the time of his death, Lea was at work on a third book, tentatively titled *The Swarming of the Slav*, that laid out his argument about the rise of Russian power on the European continent.



Yale in 1854.<sup>18</sup> In 1872, Yung convinced the Qing government to establish the Chinese Educational Mission, which Yung led, that brought 120 Chinese students to the Northeastern United States to study in Western subjects. Many of these students later returned to China and made significant contributions to the modernization of that country across fields in the sciences, politics, and education. By 1908, after a long and interesting career that included being a Chinese diplomat to the United States, Yung was living in retirement in Hartford with his American wife, with whom he'd had two sons, Morrison and Bartlett Yung.

Yung Wing had been a life-long supporter of Western-oriented reform in China, and had even unsuccessfully thrown in his lot with the putatively Christian Taiping Rebels in the 1850s. By 1908, in the twilight of his life, Yung still hoped to play a part in the modernization of China, and cast his lot with Boothe and Lea. Yung's tendencies still leaned more towards reform, rather than revolution, and he continued to believe that,

if the leading minds of China at this juncture knew her true interest, they would not head the nation for a constitutional government, nor a parliament, but stick rather to a limited monarchy modified by certain well defined reforms of finance; weight and measure; salaries of officials; rotations of office by competitive examinations; the most able and the purest in moral worth to occupy the most responsible positions. A limited monarchy, to be established on such a basis, would be worth more to train

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<sup>18</sup>For Yung's own account of his extraordinary transnational life see his *My Life in China and America*. (New York: H. Holt & Co., 1909). For a historical study of Yung's life in the U.S. see Edmund H. Worthy, Jr., "Yung Wing in America," *Pacific Historical Review* 34, no. 3, (Aug., 1965), 265-287. For more on the Chinese Educational Mission see Thomas LaFargue's pioneering study, *China's First Hundred: Educational Mission Students in the United States, 1872-1881*. (1942; reprint, Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1987); Charles Desnoyers, "'The Thin Edge of the Wedge': The Chinese Educational Mission and Diplomatic Representation in the Americas, 1872-1875," *Pacific Historical Review* 61, no. 2, (May, 1992), 241-263. For an examination of the large role played by the CEM's original interpreter, Zeng Laishun, and his thoroughly transnational life story (Zeng was educated in Singapore and the U.S., worked as a missionary assistant for a time, and later taught in a Chinese military academy) see Edward J.M. Rhoads, "In the Shadow of Yung Wing: Zeng Laishun and the Chinese Educational Mission to the United States," *Pacific Historical Review* 74, no. 1, (Feb., 2005), 19-58.

up a republican polity than any political experiment which may plunge the nations into a chaotic revolution like that in France in 1788, and 1790.<sup>19</sup>

During the same trip east where he met Yung Wing, Boothe also managed to convince a childhood friend of his, W.W. Allen, to sign on to the plan.

Allen was an integral member of the cabal, and his connections in the American Northeastern business elite ran even deeper than Boothe's. Allen had previously "organized the Guggenheim Exploration Company and been associated for many years with some of the largest financial houses of New York and London."<sup>20</sup> The original outline of the Red Dragon Caper had been drafted by Boothe and Lea. It involved bringing Kang You-wei and other Chinese reformers to the Los Angeles area to form an 'Advisory Board' that would be made up of American business interests and Chinese reformers. Lea was to be their military point man. He had already begun training young Chinese Americans in Los Angeles and San Francisco with the aid of deactivated U.S. military personnel, into a kind of rag-tag army, the so-called "Chinese Reform Army."<sup>21</sup> "Suddenly the boys in [San Francisco] Chinatown began drilling; they had cut off their queues; wore uniforms."<sup>22</sup> Lea had managed to raise one million dollars in cash, as well as pledges of another million dollars, and Kang had collected \$500,000, mostly from Chinese living in the U.S.<sup>23</sup> The fact that Lea and Kang had secured a significant amount of money from the Chinese communities of Los Angeles and San Francisco infused the plan with a shimmer of feasibility. It was still thought, however, that at least \$5,000,000 was needed to ensure success, and Allen was a little hesitant about his ability to secure

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<sup>19</sup>Yung Wing to Mr. and Mrs. Charles Boothe, November 10, 1910, Box 2: Fol. 1, Boothe Papers.

<sup>20</sup> Chong, "The Abortive American-Chinese Project for Chinese Revolution, 1908-1911," 59.

<sup>21</sup> Carr, "The Story of Homer Lea," Box. 3: Fol. 29, Powers Papers.

<sup>22</sup> Carr, "The Story of Homer Lea," Box 3: Fol. 29, Powers Papers.

<sup>23</sup> Chong, "The Abortive American-Chinese Project for Chinese Revolution, 1908-1911," 59.

the necessary financial commitments from his contacts in the U.S. without some kind of further guarantee of success. Allen, unlike Lea, did not believe that the 1905 boycott had been quite so devastating to the interests of American capital. Allen also doubted the political power of the reformers. Kang had already shown himself to be rather imprudent with money. He had taken \$800,000 that had been raised by Chinese in the U.S. to support the overthrow of the Qing, and invested it unwisely in a railway line in Veracruz, Mexico, under the name of his daughter, who was a student at Barnard College. This caused Allen to cast doubt on the fiscal responsibility of the reformers as well.<sup>24</sup> He hesitantly agreed to try to negotiate a loan on behalf of the plan, but in return asked Boothe to conduct more research into the profitability of such a venture to help gain potential investors' "cooperation in a project of such great magnitude."<sup>25</sup> Boothe and Lea promised Allen that any potential investors would be paid back within six months, and that they would be granted rights to the new China's railways and mining industries.<sup>26</sup>

Yung Wing offered to send his son Bartlett to China to take the pulse of the reformers there, and to help allay any of Allen's reservations. Additionally, under pressure from both Allen and Yung, Lea and Boothe decided to drop Kang You-wei from their plans, believing it might increase their chances of securing substantial financial aid from American capitalists. As early as January of 1909, Yung was fairly adamant about the kind of dead weight Kang might represent for the plan. "I must say in brief, and without further qualification, that we must eliminate Kang Yu Wei [*sic*] in our reckoning. I shall have nothing to do with him. He is not a safe man to be associated with in big

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<sup>24</sup> W.W. Allen to Charles Boothe, January 21, 1909, Box 2: Fol. 2, Boothe Papers.

<sup>25</sup> Allen to Boothe, November 25, 1909, Box. 1: Fol. 2, Boothe Papers.

<sup>26</sup> Ching, "The Abortive American-Chinese Project for Chinese Revolution, 1908-1911," 60.

enterprise.”<sup>27</sup> With Kang out of the picture, Yung hoped to secure himself a larger role in the unfolding enterprise. While no doubt an ardent Chinese patriot, Yung was also hoping to raise a significant investment for himself in the Chinese ramie market.<sup>28</sup> Earlier in the year, Yung had to pitch his ramie business plan to Boothe with the additional inducement that a \$100,000 loan from Boothe to help establish Yung in the ramie market would also allow him

ample time to find out the true temper of the people; the political situation of the government; the probable outcome of the late death of the Empress Dowager and the Emperor; the dismissal of Yuan Shikai and its effect upon the political parties in Peking and in the provinces; and finally the temper of the new regency.<sup>29</sup>

Allen failed to see Yung in as positive a light as Boothe did. Allen found Yung to be in “a dense state of ignorance” regarding current events in China, to have selfish motives as with his ramie venture, and to harbor pretensions to imperial power himself. “The imperial bee is buzzing in his bonnet,” Allen wrote Boothe.<sup>30</sup> Boothe promised Allen that Yung was in fact in the “forerank...of the best known men in his country” (by which he meant China, not the U.S., where Yung had become a citizen in 1852, before doing so was declared illegal in 1878), and that he had “no personal ambition whatever, except to accomplish for his people that which he believes most beneficial to them.”<sup>31</sup> Boothe also responded to a racist generalization Boothe made about Yung Wing regarding his lack of forthrightness when speaking of money matters. Allen wrote Boothe,

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<sup>27</sup> Yung Wing to Charles Boothe, January 4, 1909, Box 1: Fol. 1, Boothe Papers.

<sup>28</sup> Ramie is a natural plant fiber that is sometimes used in textile production, but only rarely, because the processing of it is often rather costly and difficult. Yung Wing was seeking capital to invest in a “new discovery for the degumming of ramie fiber, and a further refinement which would make it suitable for the adulteration of silk, to an immense profit...to be sold as silk, or ‘near silk’.” W.W. Allen to Charles Boothe, February 1, 1909, Box. 2: Fol. 2, Boothe Papers.

<sup>29</sup> Yung Wing to Charles Boothe, February 22, 1909, Box 1: Fol. 1, Boothe Papers.

<sup>30</sup> W.W. Allen to Charles Boothe, February 1, 1909, Box 2: Fol. 2, Boothe Papers.

<sup>31</sup> Charles Boothe to W.W. Allen, February 3, 1909, Box 2: Fol. 2, Boothe Papers.

in one respect, at least, the Oriental is like a woman—the important point of his letter will develop itself in the postscript, or the vital point of his conversation will crop out when you have your hand on the door knob in parting. This was made clear enough in my first conference with Hartford [the code name used for Yung Wing in ‘Red Dragon Caper’ correspondence] when, just as I had him by the hand to say good-bye, he remarked: “If it should fall on me to expend (pay out) [sic] this money [,] the Syndicate may rely that it will be honestly done, etc.” This remark was my first introduction to the idea that an Oriental would ever be called upon to disburse the money of an Occidental and I confess that I am not yet on bowing acquaintance with the idea.<sup>32</sup>

Boothe cautioned Allen not to rush to judgment regarding Yung’s character, “the Oriental mind proceeds very, very cautiously to unfold its purposes and you will notice that I then [in a previous letter] cautioned you not to expect to be fully advised of the situation in one or two conferences.”<sup>33</sup> Unable to convince Allen of Yung’s fundamental integrity through his own unpersuasive and racist generalizations, Boothe gradually reduced Yung’s role in the plan.

With Yung Wing less at the center of things, Allen approached some representatives of J.P. Morgan to try and secure the \$9,000,000 (up from the \$5,000,000 proposed by Lea and Boothe) he believed would be necessary to get the ball rolling on the ground in China. Likely alarmed by the audacity of Allen’s overture—essentially a privately financed coup d’etat of a foreign government—contacts at J.P. Morgan responded by saying, “[we are] ready to do business with any established government on earth but [we] cannot make a government to do business with.”<sup>34</sup> Smarting from this curt refusal, Allen instructed Boothe and Lea to draft a new proposal with increased

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<sup>32</sup> W.W. Allen to Charles Boothe, February 1, 1909, Box 2: Fol. 2, Boothe Papers.

<sup>33</sup> Charles Boothe to W.W. Allen, February 3, 1909, Box 2: Fol. 2, Boothe Papers.

<sup>34</sup> Chong, “The Abortive American-Chinese Project for Chinese Revolution, 1908-1911,” 64. Chong cites a letter from Allen to Boothe dated February 6, 1909, but from what I could discover in the course of my research in the Boothe Papers in 2008, this letter has been misplaced and is no longer locatable. I do not doubt that it was once there, as it was also cited in Hartt’s piece for the *Los Angeles Times* of October 13, 1966.

concessions for potential investors, and promised to take the issue up with J.P. Morgan himself.

With Kang You-wei out of the picture, and with Yung Wing to play a dramatically diminished role in the plan, Lea and Boothe needed a new Chinese leader who might be able to pull off the caper. Although they had not been in contact since 1904, Lea thought that Sun Yat-sen might just be the person for the job. Allen agreed, writing that he was “considered to be the most reliable of all. Twice he has nearly taken Canton in his attempts to organize a rebellion.”<sup>35</sup> Sun was a good choice for the changing political climate in China as well. By 1909, many reformers, including Yung Wing, were moving away from the idea of a constitutional monarchy for China, and towards the establishment of a republic, which was Sun’s goal. Lea and Boothe contacted Sun, who was then in exile in New York, and invited him to Los Angeles to discuss his potential role in their plan. Sun was happy to oblige, as he’d had little success raising adequate capital from Chinese living in the U.S., and Lea and Boothe seemed to him to offer a more reliable source of funding. On March 14, 1910, Sun met with Lea and Boothe in Los Angeles. What transpired is critical for understanding the complex ties that conditioned the relationships between emergent nations, like China, and the increasingly global capitalist powerhouses, like the United States.

At their meeting, Sun, Lea, and Boothe decided to dispense with the failed ‘Advisory Board’ in favor of the creation of a ‘Syndicate’ to be jointly headed up by Lea and Sun. Sun, who was then president of the Federal Association of China (an underground revolutionary organization), was to be president of the Syndicate as well,

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<sup>35</sup> W.W. Allen to Charles Boothe, January 21, 1909, Box 2: Fol. 2, Boothe Papers.

and he appointed Lea the “Commanding General” over all military forces under Sun’s control, which they estimated to be about 10,000,000 men strong. Sun also signed a document in which,

By the authority and consent of the Council of the Federal Assn. of China, I hereby appoint Charles B. Boothe...sole foreign financial agent for said association, and hereby delegate to the said Boothe full authority to act for and in the name of said association, in the matter of negotiating for loans and receiving monies; also, disbursing same in such manner as may be authorized and agreed upon by the president of said association, and to enter into engagements of any nature, as shall be directed from time to time by the president of the association.<sup>36</sup>

At the meeting, Sun also promised Boothe and any potential American investors a number of significant rights in China should the Syndicate succeed in fomenting a revolution overthrowing the Qing dynasty, including the right to finance railroads, and control of Manchurian mining interests.

The following month, as the revolutionary tide seemed to turn in favor towards the insurgent forces, Sun, through Yung Wing, asked Boothe to increase the loan amount from an initial figure of \$3,500,000 to “\$10,000,000 gold,” that he promised to return in five installments of \$2,000,000 over the course of ten years, with an interest rate of fifteen percent.<sup>37</sup> As further inducement to Boothe and any potential American investors who might join the Syndicate, Sun pledged to

appoint members of the Financial Syndicate to be commissioners of customs for the collection of duties on imports and exports...for fifteen years...as a further recognition of the invaluable services which the Financial Syndicate will have conferred upon a transformed China, the New government assumes the responsibility of granting the following concessions:

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<sup>36</sup> Quoted in Hartt, “Americans Plot for Chinese Revolt Revealed,” Box 2: Fol. 12, Boothe Papers.

<sup>37</sup> Yung Wing to Charles Boothe, March 28, 1910, Box 2: Fol. 1, Boothe Papers.

1<sup>st</sup> The monopoly of the Ramie Trade

2<sup>nd</sup> The Monopoly of the Spruce Wood Pulp

3<sup>rd</sup> The Monopoly of the Petroleum Trade

4<sup>th</sup> The Monopoly of the Telepost Business

These concessions shall have a life of fifteen years, to commence from the day the New Government is in a condition to justify their initiation.<sup>38</sup>

The new Sun-Yung plan also laid out the structure of the New Government, in which Lea would be the Secretary of War, and

made Field Marshall of all land forces belonging to the New Government...such a move would at once settle all doubts into positive confidence that the Loan would not only be likely to be squandered through ignorance and incompetence [I suspect Yung meant to write that Lea's appointment should be proof that the loan would not be squandered], but be utilized by one who knows how an army is to be organized.<sup>39</sup>

The Secretary of the Navy in the new government “must be a graduate of the Naval Academy at Annapolis, and selected not so much for being a naval genius, as for his substantial and solid qualities of mind, character, and give undoubted evidences if a great heart and soul.”<sup>40</sup> For Secretary of the Treasury, Yung could “think of no other young man who is better fitted to fill the post than Bartlett G. Yung, albeit he is my son.”<sup>41</sup>

Despite Sun and Yung's heightened sense that epochal events were just over the horizon, Allen remained non-committal. In fact, Allen had come to believe that Sun was not disciplined enough to carry out the revolution as planned. Allen feared that Sun was not “anything like as near the top of that project as he has represented himself, or allowed

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<sup>38</sup> Yung Wing to Charles Boothe, March 28, 1910, Box 2: Fol. 1, Boothe Papers.

<sup>39</sup> Yung Wing to Charles Boothe, March 28, 1910, Box 2: Fol. 1, Boothe Papers.

<sup>40</sup> Yung Wing to Charles Boothe, March 28, 1910, Box 2: Fol. 1, Boothe Papers.

<sup>41</sup> Yung Wing to Charles Boothe, March 28, 1910, Box 2: Fol. 1, Boothe Papers.



himself to appear to be.”<sup>42</sup> Allen believed that the Chinese were not yet ready to for a republican government, Sun was “childlike,” and

the scheme he advocates and the manifesto already drawn up are Utopian in the last degree and that is to be applied among a people just newly introduced to such ideas...it is only fair to say that there are some good elements in the scheme, but they are not enough to make it safe.<sup>43</sup>

Allen believed the plan was doomed to failure, “not for the want of few or many dollars, but for the want of discipline, without which no such project can live for a moment.”<sup>44</sup>

Allen closed his letter to Boothe warning his friend that

[u]ntil a definite organization and discipline is established and in full operation, it would be an insult to the intelligence of any capitalist to ask him to risk his money in this project, and the man who would propose it would be damned for all time...In its present condition it cannot be undertaken, but if it could be put in the right shape it would be the opportunity of a lifetime.<sup>45</sup>

Lea and Boothe continued to try to persuade Allen of the plan’s feasibility. They cited a document sent to Boothe by Sun, “written in Chinese and embellished with the great seal of the Federal Association of China and 17 provincial seals, with the signatures of the general president (Sun) and the 17 provincial presidents,” which they believed illustrated the scope of Sun’s political power in China.<sup>46</sup> Allen tried once again to secure the financial backing of the house of Morgan, but failed, telling Boothe that “a trip across the water will be necessary before the proper position can be secured.”<sup>47</sup> Allen was essentially bowing out of the plan. Sun continued to write Boothe and Lea, attempting to secure funding for a revolution he thought was imminent. Boothe, having lost Allen’s

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<sup>42</sup> W.W. Allen to Charles Boothe, March 14, 1910, Box 2: Fol. 2, Boothe Papers.

<sup>43</sup> W.W. Allen to Charles Boothe, March 14, 1910, Box 2: Fol. 2, Boothe Papers.

<sup>44</sup> W.W. Allen to Charles Boothe, March 14, 1910, Box 2: Fol. 2, Boothe Papers.

<sup>45</sup> W.W. Allen to Charles Boothe, March 14, 1910, Box 2: Fol. 2, Boothe Papers. Italics mine.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in Hartt, “Americans Plot for Chinese Revolt Revealed,” Box 2: Fol. 12, Boothe Papers.

<sup>47</sup> W.W. Allen to Charles Boothe, June 23, 1910, Box 2: Fol. 2, Boothe Papers.

support, remained evasive with Sun. As the situation in China grew more critical, Sun threatened to dissolve the Syndicate and secure funding from other sources. In February of 1911, Boothe approached his friend Charles B. Hill, a lawyer from Montclair, NJ, in an attempt to raise some money for Sun. Despite Boothe's assurances that Sun was "the real ruler of China," and that the potential financial rewards to be reaped by the Syndicate went "*beyond the dream of avarice,*" Hill would not commit.<sup>48</sup>

Sensing that the Syndicate was a dead end, Sun requested the return of the document he had sent Boothe that included the seals of the seventeen provincial governors. Boothe agreed to do so, and could offer Sun only his apologetic resignation, "there have been obstacles in the way of accomplishing what we wanted to accomplish, which it has been impossible to overcome."<sup>49</sup> Seven months later, in October 1911, after the Wuchang Uprising (which had little to do with the schemes of the Red Dragon Caper or the Syndicate), which occurred while Sun Yat-sen was in the United States trying to secure funding for his revolutionary plans in southern China, the weakened Qing regime collapsed. Sun returned to China in December, and was elected provisional president of the Republic of China, and he appointed Lea his Chief of Staff. Because Yuan Shikai continued to control superior military force, and was unhappy with Sun's election, Sun ceded the presidency to Yuan in an effort to stabilize the political situation in China and to create the conditions under which work could begin on establishing a modern republican China. With the veteran militarist Yuan at the nation's helm, Lea resigned his position in the government, and soon fell ill. He returned to California, and in November of 1912, having completely lost his eyesight, and almost fully paralyzed, died in Ocean

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<sup>48</sup> Chong, "The Abortive American-Chinese Project for Chinese Revolution, 1908-1911," 68. Italics mine.

<sup>49</sup> Charles Boothe to Sun Yat-sen, April 13, 1911, Box 1: Fol. 3, Boothe Papers.

Park. Yung Wing had died in April of 1912, at the age of eighty-three, but had lived long enough to see a republic established in his native country. Charles Boothe died a year later, on April 22, 1912, of a cerebral hemorrhage, at the age of sixty-two.

### **The Red Dragon Caper, the Legacies of Empire, and the Emergence of a Global Idea**

The so-called Red Dragon Caper, though ultimately failed, and despite its reading like the plot of a dime-store thriller, is important to history, and to this study, for several important reasons. The audacity embodied in its specificities: the concession of Chinese industrial rights to a group of American businessmen by a handful of Chinese revolutionaries; the hubris that attended the belief that a cabal of American capitalists, and their personal wealth, could orchestrate the collapse of the Qing Dynasty and secure vast personal riches for themselves; and the racist expression on the part of the American members of the Syndicate that the Chinese were as yet, for reasons of their short-lived familiarity with the principles of liberal governance, incapable of self-rule, illustrate quite clearly some of the most salient issues circulating around the ideas of race, nation, civilization, capitalism, empire, modernity, and liberalism, in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The elements of the caper itself cross several important historical formations that are central to the overarching argument embodied in this dissertation: the evolution of Chinese political thought, from one centered on dynastic and circular conceptions of time, to one steeped in the developmentalist logics of linear time and a Western liberal world view; the centrality of American capitalist interests to the emergence of Chinese political modernity; and the traces of Western imperialist domination inherent in the boundaries of the Chinese revolutionary program. The

interwoven nature of these components of Chinese and American twentieth-century modernity suggests that they need to be examined in conjunction with each other in order to reach a conclusion that is more expressive of the truly global nature in which the contemporary world took shape.

The Red Dragon Caper illustrates clearly one of the core contentions embodied in this dissertation; that the United States, in its dealings with China—but other emerging states throughout the twentieth century as well—used the rhetorics of liberal internationalism, i.e., their support of Chinese territorial integrity, political sovereignty, individual rights, capitalist expansion, and so on, as a smokescreen for the expansion of their own imperial designs in China, and the Pacific region more generally. The caper is an extreme example of this dynamic, as it was a plan hatched by private citizens, and not the U.S. government (which did in fact refuse to participate), but it should not be seen as an exception to what was a normative set of behaviors conventionally taken by the U.S. state towards non-Western peoples emerging from colonial domination. Contemporary examples of U.S. actions in Cuba, the Philippines, and Hawai'i easily refute any such claims. Instead, the caper illustrates the ways in which American liberalism has always had a difficult time conforming to its own projections of universality and equality, and this is clearly illustrated in the Chinese example.<sup>50</sup> My argument is not that this was

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<sup>50</sup> My thinking on the limitations of liberal discourse, and its relevance to historical study, have been deeply influenced by the political philosophy of Wendy Brown, especially her books *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), and *Politics out of History*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). Brown makes a convincing case for the utility of thinking abstractly, and broadly, about certain transhistorical traits of liberal discourse over the last two centuries or so: “Liberalism is a nonsystematic and porous doctrine subject to historical change and local variation. However, insofar as liberalism takes its definitional shape from an ensemble of relatively abstract ontological and political claims, it is also possible to speak of liberalism in a generic fashion, unnuanced by time or cultural inflection. . . without distinguishing among the liberalisms of Locke, Tocqueville, Bentham, Constant, or Rawls, between liberalism in France or in the United States, or between liberal political claims in 1848 and 1988.” Brown’s critique itself remains relevant for historians because the contradictions she

always a unified or conscious plan on the part of the U.S., but that situating the history of U.S.-China relations in the twentieth century within the framework of liberal internationalism, and mapping its rise and fall, generates new ways of seeing how China was integral to the emergence throughout the period of a new globalized modernity, evolving forms of American empire, and a key element in the development of the global Cold War, which was arguably the single most salient factor shaping international relations in the second half of the twentieth century. The caper is a particularly revealing example, because it is not hard to see the ways in which, had the plan succeeded, it would have represented a clear case where the intersection of American capitalist interests and Chinese nation formation would have reproduced the relations of coloniality between China and the U.S., while simultaneously aiding in the emergence of a nominally sovereign Chinese state.

The period in which the Red Dragon Caper came to fruition, and the era in which the Qing Dynasty actually collapsed—independent of the underground machinations of the Syndicate—were fundamental years in the construction of what one might call a global modern. They were the years in which the chaos of the burgeoning international system would lay the foundations for the diplomacy of Woodrow Wilson, which would

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identifies in the articulation of liberalism as a theory were clearly reproduced in the instrumentalization of liberalism as a set of historical practices. Brown, *States of Injury*, 141. U.S. historians have also written about the flexibility of American liberalism. Gary Gerstle's article, "The Protean Character of American Liberalism," *The American Historical Review* 99, no. 4, (Oct., 1994), 1043-1073, explores the rise to prominence of economic liberalism during the New Deal era, over the more moral and cultural liberal reformisms of the Progressive era. He suggests that the shift cannot be reduced to the mere fact that the crisis of the Depression necessitated economic responses. The shift hinges on the fundamental "malleability of the 'liberal tradition.' Far from being a Hartzian creed etched in Lockean stone, liberalism in twentieth-century America has emerged as a variable, somewhat tractable, political philosophy." (1045) Indeed, this dissertation is one attempt to map the particular capaciousness of American liberalism in the first half of the twentieth century.

frame the architecture of U.S. foreign relations for decades.<sup>51</sup> It was a period in which the U.S. would complete its journey to becoming the preeminent imperial power in the world, and remake global discourses of race, gender, and civilization in the process.<sup>52</sup> It was also, I argue, the period in which the genealogy of the Cold War finds its origins.

The Red Dragon Caper illustrates well the interconnections between several critical global historical formations of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. This dissertation takes as a fundamental methodological presupposition the imperative to think internationally about the history of the United States.<sup>53</sup> A U.S.-centered approach to

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<sup>51</sup> See Frank Ninkovich, *Modernity and Power: A History of the Domino Theory in the Twentieth Century*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 37-68, in which he develops his idea that the origins of the domino theory lie in the transformation and internationalization of U.S. foreign policy under Wilson from a realist one to one distinctly more concerned with what he calls 'world opinion.' He argues that, "much of American foreign policy in the twentieth century, which is marked by an obsession with credibility and a neglect of the traditional realist concern for matching means with ends, is inexplicable unless one recognizes that the preoccupation with world opinion seemed an unavoidable solution to certain novel geopolitical problems." (xiv). Ninkovich traces these ideas further in *The Wilsonian Century: U.S. Foreign Policy since 1900*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). Erez Manela's, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), examines how precisely it was that Wilson's discursive abstract internationalism could be rearticulated by anticolonial nationalist movements as a foundational discourse for their aims, despite Wilson's general neglect of anti-imperialist movements outside of the West.

<sup>52</sup> For the pathbreaking essay on the importance of empire to the making of U.S. history in the twentieth century see Amy Kaplan, "Left Alone with America: The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture," in Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease, eds., *Cultures of United States Imperialism*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 3-21. For a contemporaneous expression of the need to jettison American exceptionalism in the practice of U.S. history see Joyce Appleby's OAH Presidential Address from 1992, published as "Recovering America's Historic Diversity: Beyond Exceptionalism," *The Journal of American History* 79, no. 2, (Sep., 1992), 419-431. Donald Pease's latest work deals with American exceptionalism in the post-9/11 period. See Donald E. Pease, *The New American Exceptionalism*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009). For more on gender and American imperialism, and evidence of the fruitfulness of the cultural turn in diplomatic history, see Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998). For examples of work in American Studies that place questions of U.S. empire, race, and gender at the center of their analysis see Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001).

<sup>53</sup> For a useful collection of essays on this turn in U.S. history, see Thomas Bender, ed., *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), although it should be noted that the volume fails to include the work of American ethnic studies scholars whose voluminous work has transformed the way U.S. historians think the transnational. Presumably, Bender addressed this

the study of American history reproduces analytic categories that fail to comprehend the multiple expressions of change across time in a transnational global framework. Indeed, the transnational turn in U.S. history has produced much generative work that makes use of multinational and multilingual archives in an effort to reframe what have traditionally been uni-national narratives, and more often than not ones overdetermined by a concern with state actors and the primacy of foreign policy decisions.<sup>54</sup> However, while working with government archives of different national states undoubtedly provides a more nuanced and transnational account of history, it nevertheless privileges and reproduces the nation state as the primary ontological category through which one might understand foreign relations historically. I don't want to suggest that the nation state isn't an

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oversight in his perception of what constituted transnational U.S. history when he contributed commentary to the *Pacific Historical Review's* Asian American History Forum in 2007. See his "Commentary: Widening the Lens and Rethinking Asian American History," *Pacific Historical Review* 76, no. 4, (Nov., 2007), 605-610. Another published conversation that usefully clarifies the transnational as an interpretive framework, analytical category, and critical methodology in U.S. history can be found in "AHR Conversation: On Transnational History," *American Historical Review* 111, no. 5, (Dec., 2006), 1441-1464. For a survey of the impact of the transnational on the practice of U.S. immigration history, especially the ways in which it has de-exceptionalized the subfield, see Matthew Frye Jacobson, "More 'Trans-,' Less 'National,'" *Journal of American Ethnic History* 25, no. 4, (Summer, 2006), 74-84. For a genealogy of the impulse towards transnationalism in American Studies, begin with Jane C. Desmond and Virginia R. Dominguez, "Resituating American Studies in a Critical Internationalism," *American Quarterly* 48, no. 3, (Sep., 1996), 475-490. To see how the field has embraced many of the critical reorientations suggested by Desmond and Dominguez, and to take a fairly current reading of the work the field can still do in fully transnationalizing both its practice as well as its methodologies see Shelly Fisher Fishkin's ASA Presidential Address from 2004, published as "Crossroads of Cultures: The Transnational Turn in American Studies—Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, November 12, 2004," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 1, (Mar., 2005), 17-57.

<sup>54</sup> For excellent examples of recent such multilingual and multinational studies see Mark P. Bradley, *Imagining Vietnam and America: The Making of Postcolonial Vietnam, 1919-1950*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); and Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005). I have been influenced greatly by studies like these in what is often called the field of new Cold War studies, which proceeds briskly apace alongside the continual opening of once closed communist state archives. However, while I believe in the importance of broad multiarchival and multilingual research, and agree that it is a necessity for telling more complete narratives of the global Cold War, I do not think the utility of U.S.-based source driven historical studies has run its course. To that end, this project is firmly rooted in U.S. archives, but seeks to revisit some of these materials with the new ways of seeing the global scope and interpenetrative nature of the years leading up to and including the Cold War.

important, if not the most important, category of analysis when doing transnational history—indeed, the idea of the nation is implicit in transnationalism itself—but I do want to offer an account of the history of U.S.-China relations that treats categories like the political, the social, the intellectual, the revolutionary, the reactionary, the economic, and so on, less as autonomous categories that constitute a national or transnational system in which we find coherence, than as a web of interrelated phenomena that can be combined in various ways to give expression to something both national and global.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> I have been particularly influenced by the outpouring of transnational studies coming out of the field of Asian American history in the last decade or so. While Asian American history has, since its founding, and by dint of the very nature of its subject of inquiry, always been transnational, the field has undergone some especially fruitful transformations in its analytic approach in conjunction with the general turn towards transnationalism that has affected historical studies in the U.S. more broadly since the mid-1990s. Historian Mae Ngai has hypothesized that this transformation in Asian American history has been an effect of the graduate training of a second generation of Asian American historians having taken place outside of the traditional centers of Asian American history, that is, in California and the West Coast more generally. As this new generation of scholars completed doctoral dissertations at universities in the Midwest and Northeast under the guidance of historians not trained in Asian American studies, they had to justify their work to non-specialists, and in so doing brought Asian American history into the broader crosscurrents of mainstream U.S. history, and also incorporated some of the core analytical and interpretive questions dominating that field. See Mae Ngai, “Asian American History—Reflections on the De-centering of the Field,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 25, no. 4, (Summer, 2006), 97-108. Eric Foner took note of the productive ways in which Asian American history was transforming the American exceptionalist narrative that had underwritten so much of U.S. historiography as early as 2001 in his AHA presidential address when he said, “recent work in Asian-American studies has begun to develop what might be called a Pacific perspective that moves beyond an older paradigm based on immigration and assimilation to examine how continuing transnational cultural and economic interactions shape the experience of minority groups within the United States.” Foner’s address was published as “American Freedom in a Global Age,” *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 1, (Feb., 2001), 1-16. Quote is from 3-4. The conversation regarding the impact of Asian American history on U.S. history more broadly is carried further in the essays in the special issue of *Pacific Historical Review* 76, no. 4, (Nov., 2007), especially dedicated to a forum on Asian American history. Exceptional studies that express this transnational turn in Asian American history are: Madeline Y. Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration between the United States and South China, 1882-1943*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Yong Chen, *Chinese San Francisco, 1850-1943: A Transpacific Community*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Weili Ye, *Seeking Modernity in China’s Name: Chinese Students in the United States, 1900-1927*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); John Kuo-wei Tchen, *New York before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture, 1776-1882*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Erika Lee, *At America’s Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Adam McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks and Cultural Change: Peru, Chicago, Hawaii, 1900-1936*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), idem., *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Catherine Ceniza Choy, *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Dorothy B. Fujita-Rony, *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919-1941*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Moon-Ho Jung, *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins



Strong nationalist currents, as with the Chinese participants in the Red Dragon Caper, were often the core elements in the constitution of a transnational identity, and this was especially the case with the Chinese since their full participation in the fruits of American citizenship was legally denied. However, these nationalist tendencies were formed against a backdrop of a deeply transnational revolutionary milieu.<sup>56</sup> In this way, this dissertation is an attempt to reframe and place into conversation some of the critical concerns of scholars in both Asian American history—with regard to how China’s historical development in the twentieth century impacted and shaped, but was in turn itself reformed, through the interactions between both state and non-state actors in China and the U.S.—and historians of U.S. foreign relations broadly construed. By doing so, I argue that the global Cold War, as it came to be understood and acted upon in the U.S., was critically shaped by events in China in the first decades of the twentieth century. Replacing these elements of Chinese national history, like the origins and rise of the Chinese Communist Party, into an expanded global optic breathes new life into our understanding of the international foundations of twentieth century nationalism, both U.S. and Chinese. Also, situating the U.S.-China relationship in the first half of the twentieth century into a trajectory of liberal internationalism’s rise and fall allows us to see the emergence of the postwar Cold War in the U.S. not solely as a sui generis response to a dramatically changed international situation, especially the success of a

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University Press, 2006); Karen J. Leong, *The China Mystique: Pearl S. Buck, Anna May Wong, Mayling Soong, and the Transformation of American Orientalism*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, *Doctor Mom Chung of the Fair-Haired Bastards: The Life of a Wartime Celebrity*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

<sup>56</sup> Eric Foner argued that even studies of the U.S. that are not explicitly transnational in their outlook need to be situated in an international framework: “The institutions, processes, and values that have shaped American history—from capitalism to political democracy, slavery, and consumer culture—arose out of global processes and can only be understood in an international context.” Foner, *American Freedom in a Global Age*, 3.

communist revolution in China, but as part of a longer historical retreat from a liberal internationalist position that can be found in the U.S.' actions in China as far back as the 1910s. Such steps require creative periodization as well. For instance, this dissertation is critically interested in the Cold War, but looks for its origins in the late-nineteenth century, and finds crucial linkages between the origins of Chinese anti-communism and a globalized conception of the Cold War. Stretching this relationship further yields deep connections between the American missionary enterprise of the nineteenth century, the emergence of an indigenous Chinese anti-Christian movement, and the rise of communism in China, without which there would have been no Communist Party in China against which the U.S. would align itself after 1945. Viewing the U.S.-China relationship as a historical continuity from the late nineteenth century through the middle of the twentieth, rather than as a relationship that can be discretely divided into neat historical blocs characterized by conformity to dominant historical categories like war, system of government, relative modernization, etc., crucially reframes the end of WWII and allows us to view it less as the decisive moment in the emergence of a Cold War dynamic that was fundamentally new, than as a serious collapse of a historical commitment the U.S. had to certain ideals in their relationship with China—however flawed in application these ideals may have been. Mapping genealogies like these, is my attempt at producing a global history of the origins of the Cold War that focuses on the complicated relationship between the U.S. and China throughout the first half of the twentieth century, and how the rhetorics of liberal internationalism were often used to justify what increasingly became more patently imperialist designs.

What may have begun in the late-nineteenth century as a series of decisions that conformed to a generally more ideological foundation for U.S. foreign policy, became by the end of WWII a distinctly more realist set of policy concerns that sought to guarantee American ascendancy in a postwar international system.<sup>57</sup> The transition of the U.S. stance towards Chinese sovereignty from one based on a fundamentally moral ideology, though not a morality unhinged from presumptions of Chinese racial inferiority, to one instrumentally focused on means and ends, is a critical linchpin in the larger picture of the origins of the global Cold War. I argue that not only is this relationship of critical importance for an understanding of the origins of the Cold War in a global framework, but that it cannot be separated from a history of the emergence of the idea of the global

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<sup>57</sup> The most comprehensive study of the ideological underpinnings of American foreign policy can be found in Michael Hunt's classic study, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), esp. 1-18, where Hunt lays out his framework for analysis. For Hunt, the ideology of U.S. foreign policy consists of a tripartite set of ideals that ultimately paved the way for what he explores in his later work on the 'American ascendancy,': the promotion of an elastic notion of 'liberty' abroad that could be achieved through direct U.S. intervention; a national ideology of white racial supremacy, which could be used to justify the subordination of non-white peoples both domestically and internationally; and a counterrevolutionary tendency to suppress forms of dissent that took shape in ways alien to the U.S.' conception of its own break from British colonialism. This latter tendency could be used to both support and suppress the same insurgencies, as was the case with U.S. intervention in Cuba and the Philippines in 1898, where the American government supported the rebellion against Spanish colonialism, but brutally suppressed that same insurgency when it turned against the U.S. as it took over Spanish interests in the Pacific and Caribbean. For an excellent study of race and U.S. actions in the Philippines see Paul A. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006). The transition in U.S. foreign policy from one characterized by Hunt's tripartite order, to the *realpolitik* of George Kennan's doctrine of containment and the rise of the national security state should not be seen, however, as a supercession. There are clear elements of the promotion of 'liberty,' the institutionalization of racist doctrine in U.S. foreign policy, as well as illiberal counterrevolutionary tendencies in the U.S.' Cold War policies. For more on this see Odd Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), where he too argues for the primacy of ideology as a motive force in both U.S. and Soviet foreign policy during the Cold War, especially as it was expressed in their third world interventions. But unlike Hunt, Westad's focus is on the overarching similarities between the U.S. and Soviet impetuses during the Cold War, and the importance each one placed on their respective guiding ideologies—liberal capitalism in the case of the U.S., and state communism in the case of the Soviet Union—as the correct global ideology of postwar modernity. Westad views the Cold War contest between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. as essentially a "conflict over the very concept of European modernity—to which both states regarded themselves as successors." (p. 4) See also Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America*. Second edition, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993). LaFeber's framework is an extension of the economic determinism found in William Appleman Williams' field-changing *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1959), against which both Hunt's and Westad's books are revisions.

itself in the twentieth century. To this end, the dissertation is structured according to both a linear chronology, as well as chapters delineated according to discrete transnational formations that traverse the bounds of politics, economics, and culture.

The dissertation begins, in chapters 2, 3, and 4, by examining some of the cultural, intellectual, and political origins of the U.S.-China relationship that was later navigated through diplomatic and military means. The development of the intellectual and political foundations of Chinese republicanism, and then communism, were indelibly influenced by the impact of American Christian missionaries in China, and the teachings they brought with them, not only of the bible, but of modern Western disciplines like political science, Anglo jurisprudence and economics. The importance of the American missionary apparatus to the origins of a modern Chinese consciousness that found expression in the intellectual and political life of fin de siècle China simultaneously exerted a strong pull on the sentiments of Americans, many of whom looked forward to reports in church of the activities of missionaries sent to China from their own congregations. This connection underlay the persistent sentimental attachments Americans had towards China, which could at times exert serious pressure on U.S. foreign policy decisions. This became especially true during the height of McCarthyism, when allegations that the U.S. State Department had been soft on communism in China created a populist anti-Chinese anti-communist panic that resulted in both a harsher diplomatic stance towards China, as well as more draconian immigration regulations within the U.S.<sup>58</sup> The development of an autochthonous Chinese Communist movement,

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<sup>58</sup> Indeed, despite the occurrence of U.S.–China rapprochement under Nixon/Kissinger in 1971, the vestiges of a powerful China Lobby in Congress managed to delay the normalization of relations between the two countries until 1979, under the Presidency of Jimmy Carter.

and the rise of an indigenous Chinese anti-communism are outlined here in order to illustrate their significance to the inability of the U.S. to find a reliable settlement to this civil problem during WWII. A failure on the part of the U.S. to understand the deeply nationalist impulses of the conflict resulted in an ultimately confused approach to the situation, which led directly to the aggressive U.S. anti-Chinese anti-communism of the early postwar Cold War. The intellectual, political, and cultural formations that I explore in chapters 2, 3, and 4 in the dissertation are complemented by the remaining chapters, and placed into a larger framework that elucidates the ways the intellectual and political formations that emerged out of the intensely global Chinese experience of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries can be explicitly linked to U.S. foreign policy and military aims in China both during WWII and in the postwar years. America's diplomatic failure in China between 1941–1945 had a clear antecedent cause, which lay in the construction of the various political Chinese nationalisms that emerged through a powerful current of international exchanges like treaty port colonialism, the missionary apparatus, and the diffusion of Western learning throughout the urban Chinese landscape. These contact zones were the perfect environment in which to evolve fundamentally new, modern, and indeed global, notions of Chineseness that were still deeply rooted in a nationalist philosophy of sovereign Chinese statehood. Reformers and revolutionaries, including those Chinese involved in the Red Dragon Caper, constructed competing, but often overlapping, conceptions of Chinese statism that were deeply imbued with the knowledge they had gained of the global scene of the previous fifty years, and it was a scene overwhelmingly characterized. Despite the global vision of many Chinese in this era of extraordinary change, the nationalism it informed remained fairly narrow in scope.

The primacy of a strong-state kind of nationalism in the thinking of the Chinese revolutionary cohort was probably an excessively optimistic characteristic of the movement. The relatively weak international position of China in an emergent new global imperial system probably doomed any Chinese political formation to a subordinate status in the new nation state food chain. The tension that inhered in this dialectic—of Chinese political ideals, and the realities of early-twentieth century globalism—generated a large set of political, military, and intellectual conundrums whose irresolvability laid the foundations for much of the Cold War contest between China and the U.S. But it was also the grounds upon which the U.S. continually attempted to remain relevant to the Chinese political scene, whether it was fighting for Chinese hearts and minds that attended the global spread of the Christian gospel, or fighting to save Chinese and American lives in the struggle against Japanese fascism. I argue that the global foundations laid for the struggle for Chinese nationalism in the first three decades of the twentieth century generated unique historical conditions that the U.S. failed to understand in its mission in China during WWII. These conditions, and Americans' overwhelming failure to comprehend them, were in no small measure ones of their own making—like the backlash against the missionary apparatus, and the anti-foreign sentiments invoked by treaty port colonialism—and the U.S.' often ill-conceived responses—like the bankrolling of Dai Li's forces of terror, the commitment to sustain the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek regardless of its political costs, and the decision to forsake relations with Mao's communists—can be linked directly to their turn away from the liberal internationalism that characterized much of their earlier interaction with China and the move towards a kind of illiberal realism that underwrote the majority of the U.S.' global

Cold War policy from the late 1940s through the 1990s. The gradual collapse of American liberal internationalism in China between 1941 and 1945 is a critical transitional moment in history that clearly lays the foundation for much of the hard-line policies of the Cold War that followed immediately in the wake of the internationalism of the war. The fall of U.S. liberal internationalism in China was more than just the end of a loosely organized policy, it was a nadir that represented the systemic collapse of an entire U.S. world view. Understanding the ways in which the U.S. approached its relations with China from a deeply ideological and substantially liberal internationalist standpoint in the early decades of the twentieth century, and to be able to trace the shift from a liberal internationalist stance to a decidedly more realist and illiberal one by the end of WWII, and linking that transformation with the American imperial ascendancy that took full expression during the height of the global Cold War, is to produce a clarifying genealogy of the global Cold War. It is my hope that this dissertation achieves this task.

### **Chapter Outline**

The first chapter of this dissertation, “Empire of Time: Emergent Chinese Modernities in *The Republican Advocate* and Kang You-wei’s *Da Tong Shu*,” argues that the reform period and the early-Republican period in China in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century marked a critical transformation in how Chinese intellectuals and political leaders thought about time itself, and in ways that were central to the emergence of a modern China into the nascent global system of nation states. I argue that the influence of Western liberal thinking about individual rights, national sovereignty, and a dynamic public sphere changed the very ways in which the Chinese culturally thought

about the passage of time, and enabled them to think of themselves in the temporal framework that constituted global modernity. Traditional modes of thinking about Chinese history as cyclical, and determined by the destiny of the Mandate of Heaven, gave way to revolutionary thinking about time as linear, and events as determined by the will of the people. In the early years of the Chinese republic, the limited influence of this new linear conception of time instigated the need for certain retrogressive political reforms that ultimately resulted in the collapse of the republic, and the ensuing period of political instability that lasted throughout the 1920s. This chapter situates the emergence of Chinese modernity in the early-twentieth century in a distinctly global framework, and illustrates the transnational nature of nationalism during the era.

The following chapter, “The Missionary Apparatus, American Liberalism, and Chinese Anti-Imperialist Nationalism,” examines the history of the American missionary enterprise in China from the mid-nineteenth century until the late 1920s. I argue that the missionary influence in China was simultaneously liberatory and imperialist, and always illustrative of the inextricability of Western ideas and power on modern Chinese nationalism. The stability of the missionary enterprise was always underwritten by the presence of American gunboats in Chinese waters. The terms under which the presence of American missionaries in China was initially negotiated unfolded in an environment of deeply asymmetrical relationships of power, on the heels of China’s military defeats at the hands of the British in the two Opium Wars, and the signing of unequal treaties with most of the Western nations, including the United States. But the missionaries also provided their flock with the education in Western liberalism that laid the foundations for the internal Chinese political and social revolutions that would unalterably shift the



course of history for China and the world in the twentieth century. The continued humiliation of China in the international community, especially at Versailles in 1919, energized many young intellectuals into organizing a number of political movements aimed at destroying Western imperialism in China, including a strong anti-Christian movement that had ties to both the emergence of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the rise of the Kuomintang Party (KMT). The rise of the two dominant Chinese political parties out of a global anticolonial milieu in the early-twentieth century deserves our scrutiny for its illustration of the interactive—as opposed to reactive—nature of anti-imperialism in the years prior to WWII, and the dynamic globalism out of which emerged many radical nationalist movements—in Asia and the Middle East in particular—that continue to shape the contours of U.S. history to this day.

Chapter four, “The Rise and Fall of Sino-Soviet Relations, and the Origins of Chinese Anti-Communism,” traces some of the consequences of the failure of the United States and other Western powers to offer support to Sun Yat-sen in the wake of the collapse of the Qing Dynasty. The organization of the CCP in the early 1920s, and the turning of Sun Yat-sen’s KMT towards the Comintern during the same period, illustrates the failures of the West to bolster its rhetorics of liberalism with genuine anti-imperialist activity. Instead, a leadership vacuum was filled by the Soviet Union, and the tensions and political divides between the KMT, CCP, and Comintern, that ultimately resulted in a civil war, and that played such a significant role in the global Cold War, developed. Tracing a genealogy of indigenous Chinese anti-communism during the 1920s and 1930s illuminates how U.S. attempts to broker a truce between the two factions during World War II were doomed to failure. The evolution of Chiang Kai-shek’s pathological anti-

communism is placed in historical context as well, and we clearly see the development of a political leader with whom the U.S. was closely affiliated for much of the Cold War, and who served as a kind of ur-example of the U.S.-backed anti-democratic dictator of the Cold War era.

The fifth chapter, “The Dixie Mission, SACO, and the Foundations of the Cold War Dynamic,” examines two wartime projects of the United States in China, the Dixie Mission (a U.S. army observer group sent to Chinese Communist territory to gather intelligence regarding the desirability of increased U.S. aid to the CCP), and Sino-American Cooperative Organization (SACO), and the different ways in which they contributed to the tensions that ultimately constituted the global Cold War. I argue that the two projects operated at intense cross-purposes, the Dixie Mission being critical of Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT and supportive of increased U.S. aid to the Chinese Communist forces, and SACO being under the near-total control of Chiang Kai-shek’s top secret police and intelligence officer, Dai Li. It is my contention that a failure on the part of the United States to have a clear mission in China beyond the absolute defeat of Japan, and vague pretensions towards supporting Chinese unity and protecting China’s territorial integrity, combined with a lack of communication across the various intelligence gathering agencies operating in China, ultimately backed the U.S. into a corner by the end of WWII in which they found themselves unalterably committed to Chiang Kai-shek, and intervening in a civil war in the immediate aftermath of the Japanese surrender. The decision to back Chiang also signals the final collapse of liberal internationalism in the U.S.-China relationship. The chapter draws explicit linkages between SACO and the later U.S. tendency to bankroll insurgent anti-communist

paramilitary organizations via American training camps like the School of the Americas, for which SACO provided the model. In this way, it explores how much of what happened during the war in China prefigured the fundamental architecture of the U.S.’ waging of the global Cold War.

Chapter six, “‘International Solidarity of the Indestructible Type’: Race, Internationalism, and the Two Chinas in the Debates over the Repeal of Chinese Exclusion,” explores the international context of the debates over the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943. It situates these debates in a global environment of concerns over American racism in the midst of a war against fascism. In particular, I explore how the dominant media representation in the U.S. over the benefits of repealing exclusion presumed that the KMT and its leader Chiang Kai-shek represented China, and how they failed to consider the very real ways in which the State Department and Roosevelt himself were considering the potentiality of an alliance with an ascendant CCP in the postwar period. Infusing the historical narrative with a more complicated image of a politically dynamic, but fractured, China sheds new light on the twinned roles of race and internationalism during WWII. I also explore the impact of the war on the racial formation of Chinese in the United States. This chapter illustrates the deeply transnational nature of debates over domestic American legislation, and how events abroad deeply shaped the lived experiences of a racial minority in the U.S.

The final chapter, “The Failures of U.S.-China Diplomacy and the Road to McCarthyism,” examines in greater detail some of the dynamism embodied in the Dixie Mission, and how its ultimate failure paved the way for the kind of anti-communism that eventually led to McCarthyism. I push further the argument begun in chapter five

regarding the overlapping and often contradictory objectives of U.S. war aims in China, and how they resulted in a chain of unfortunate decisions that pushed the U.S. further into the embrace of the reactionary KMT forces in China. I argue that the so-called “lost chance” debates over U.S.-China policy and the fall of China to communism in 1949 are less important for allocating blame than they are useful in terms of the fact that they highlight what is too often an overlooked presupposition of the debates themselves, which is that China was instrumental to the formation of the Cold War. The ‘loss’ of China to communism was, if nothing else, an outgrowth of the U.S. retreat from liberal internationalism. The collapse of an American world view guided by the moral suasion of the legitimacy of protecting a broad conception of liberalism in China, led directly to the populist CCP defeat of KMT forces in the Chinese civil war, and its subsequent retreat to Taiwan, where it continued to benefit from the protections of an increasingly powerful global U.S. military empire during the Cold War. General Patrick Hurley, later ambassador to China, was sent by President Roosevelt to China towards the end of WWII to broker a peace between the warring KMT and CCP, and when he failed in his mission, he blamed individuals in the State Department for his own shortcomings and lack of understanding of the political situation in China. Five years later, a junior Senator from Wisconsin named Joseph McCarthy would pick up right where Hurley had left off, and inaugurate one of the most grossly illiberal episodes in U.S. history. This final chapter makes explicit the deep continuities between the role of the U.S. in China in the late-nineteenth century—as missionaries, businessmen, and denizens of the colonial treaty system—and the emergence of the global Cold War. As such, it hopes to illustrate the centrality of the U.S.-China relationship to the history of the twentieth-century world.

## Chapter 2

### **Empire of Time: Emergent Chinese Modernities in *The Republican Advocate* and Kang You-wei's *Da Tong Shu***

In the inaugural issue of the *Republican Advocate* (henceforth RA) dated March 30, 1912, the editors of the Chinese Shanghai-based English language pro-revolution weekly declared as their primary aim the creation of an international journal that sought to create a clearer understanding between “China and the World.” They would achieve this by “giving first-hand expressions of Chinese thoughts and views,” and disseminating them in a transnational context in order to bring China into the folds of a newly emergent system of nation-states. The days of Chinese isolationism and beliefs in Chinese cultural superiority were over, exclaimed the editors of the RA. They sought the creation of a dialogue across national borders which would increase the “appreciation of each other’s ideals,” and communicate the principles of liberalism and republicanism to nations that were rapidly joining the modern family of nations. They would work towards the inevitable goal of “broader sympathy and interest,” between the world’s peoples and seek to destroy the previously prevalent “evils of racial hatred and prejudice.” The RA would devote itself to a politics of *cooperation* and not antagonism, and thus situate itself as a leading journal in the struggle towards creating an international community where independence, individualism, rationality, and reciprocity were the motors of ‘civilization.’ This China was one in control of its own destiny, and one that would itself

contribute greatly to the fuller emergence of an inchoate global modernity. This China was modern, stable, and politically progressive, and would serve as a model to all nations then emerging from an antiquated ‘premodern’ world-view into the global currents of an interconnected transnational world.<sup>1</sup>

Nineteenth months later, in its last issue of November 8, 1913, the editors’ expressed optimism and confidence had waned little, but the language they used to articulate their goals and successes had changed drastically. Rather than taking a leading role in the formation of a new internationalism, the RA had successfully *taken part* in “hasten[ing] the recognition of our republic.” Through the publication of letters and articles from individuals across the globe the RA had “received naught but encouragement and sympathy” from the other nations of the world, particularly those in Europe and the United States. The editors quietly congratulated themselves on their role and participation in an international print culture that was wide-reaching and effective in creating an expanded sense of international community. The RA closed its final pages by asserting that “[a]s an ‘Advocate’ for our Republic we have achieved our end, and it is felt that this paper has served its purpose.”<sup>2</sup>

Surely the RA had played a role, however minor, in the struggle towards China’s recognition as a member of the family of nations. However, the sense of certainty regarding China’s participation in the advance of a global civilization that permeated the early issues of the RA—expressed through its vision of itself as a model of successful liberal democratic republicanism—was gone by the end of 1913. Rather than a controlled

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<sup>1</sup> RA 1, no. 1: 1.

<sup>2</sup> RA 2, no. 32: 1307-8.

and independent decision to “cooperate” in the goal of an increasing internationalism, the RA was by its close resigned to seeing itself as one mouthpiece of a China which received the foreign “sympathy” and “encouragement” and sought the “recognition” of more firmly established nations like England, The United States, Russia, and Japan, a relationship founded on a dependency upon the bonds of empire. This declension of confidence was an effect of the failures of China to command the respect and recognition it thought it deserved after the successful anti-imperial revolution in 1911. The dawn of republicanism in China had reached its twilight in less than a decade. Three years after the cessation of the RA, President Yuan Shikai declared himself emperor of China in a failed attempt to reinstitute the monarchy, and by 1919 the era of republicanism in China was defunct. How and why was the confidence of the editors of the RA so thoroughly unsettled throughout the journal’s brief lifespan? In what ways was the China that was imagined with the pages of the RA already a fictional and fantastic apparition even before its contributors set pen to paper? How could such an optimistic vision of China be itself thought in 1912 when all evidence to its contrariness was already plain?

I want to suggest that the literal and figurative intercession of time and space between the first and last issues of the RA are pregnant with interpretive openings, opportunities and representational fissures that shed light onto the ruptured and discontinuous logics of global (though not globalized) space in the early years of the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> The semantic slippage of the editors’ articulation of the RA’s

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<sup>3</sup> I am using the term ‘global’ as intentionally divorced from current conceptions of globalization as being defined as an effect of the deterritorializing logics of late capitalism. Instead, my usage of the term global suggests a sense of geographic connectedness that was invoked as a modality through which political units—in this case late Qing and early Republican China—in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century came to imagine themselves as participants in a modern capitalist project of collective nationhood, specifically in an era of ascendant U.S. imperialism. The idea of the global, as used here, has everything to

instrumental purpose in the staging of early republican China's performance of nation-centered geographic modernity from a rhetoric of "co-operation" in its premiere issue, to the differently inflected tone and language of "recognition" in its final issue is one that demands closer scrutiny.<sup>4</sup> While both cooperation and recognition are part of the recognized ontologies of nation state centered globalism, their definitions and consequent relationships to sites of power can be clearly limned as engendering very different positionalities within late-nineteenth-century capitalist modernity.<sup>5</sup> China's cooperation in the project of the 'progress of civilization' presupposed Chinese power to decide on such an action; and China's quest for recognition suggested that the previous discourse of cooperation's will to power was diminished, if not altogether erased. In this chapter I will use the term 'being-in-the-world' to suggest a uniquely Chinese inhabitation of modernity that was distinct from those modes in Europe and the U.S., but critically informed by its interactions with the core modern Western nations states that formed the

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do with territoriality rather than its putative exhaustion as an organizing logic. That is to say, that in the context of early Republican China, the formation of a distinctly modern Chinese nationalism was contingent upon global relationships that still held as their core belief the idea of a nation state centered and hierarchical international system. It was a global moment to be sure, but definitely not one where the concept of borders and state power had much sense of the "flows," that characterize the writings of some contemporary theorists of transnationalism and globalization. See for instance Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), esp. 1-88.

<sup>4</sup> Here I'm borrowing Rebecca Karl's excellent metaphor of the emergence of modern Chinese as a staged and/or performative event, though no less real or material for that. Rebecca Karl, *Staging the World: Chinese Nationalism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

<sup>5</sup> My usage of being-in-the-world to describe a new Chinese consciousness of its relationship to a spatial and temporal world outside itself, that is outside its erstwhile self-definition whose conceptual limits encompassed "all under Heaven," is similar to Rebecca Karl's formulation of China in this period as undergoing a process of "conceptual incorporations" that yielded a narrowed and historicized set of discourses that constituted Chinese nationalism in this period. As she states the problematic "[M]y focus on the historical formation of a non Euro-American consciousness of globality from the Chinese perspective [i.e., Chinese being-in-the-world] is intended to bring into view a recognition of modernity that leads to a different staging of the world—that is, a staging that makes visible a world of synchronic temporality emphasizing historical identification and spatial proximity." Karl, *Staging the World*, 3-25.



center of early-twentieth-century capitalist modernity.<sup>6</sup> It is within the spaces of the linguistic slippage between cooperation and recognition that the intellectual and political project of articulating a sense of Chinese being-in-the-world that was coterminous with the interior and exterior limits of a late-nineteenth- and early- twentieth century global capitalist modernity was shaped and unfolded.

To be sure, I am not suggesting that all the expressive functions of China's uneven attempts and successes at incorporation into the temporal and spatial logics of capitalist modernity can be exhausted through a careful mining of the spaces of linguistic instability that I have pointed out above. Rather, I am pushing for a deeper and more nuanced comprehension of *how* those new temporal and spatial logics were articulated, performed, and accreted within the vibrant and generative context of late Qing<sup>7</sup> and early Republican Chinese political, cultural, and intellectual life, and *against* different practices of modernity found in Europe and the U.S. by examining one of a host of journals dedicated to the project of articulating Chinese modernity to an educated audience.<sup>8</sup> The discourse of cooperation as it is articulated within the pages of the RA is rooted in an older sensibility of Chinese civilizational supremacy that by the mid-nineteenth century,

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<sup>6</sup> This is my attempt to operationalize the project of “provincializing Europe,” or in this case, ‘provincializing EuroAmerica’ that Dipesh Chakrabarty articulately urges us to undertake in our work as historians who seek to place our work outside the logics of a Western centered historicism. See Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). I am also using ‘being-in-the-world’ in a common-sense way, contrary to Heidegger’s theorization of the term, to suggest a certain dynamicism and openness to new ways of thinking about China’s position in a world system that was still then in a certain kind of infancy. Less than a decade later, the hegemony of Europe as the seat of global power was slowly being relinquished to the U.S. after total war had given lie to the promises of European modernity as the apex of civilization.

<sup>7</sup> The Qing was China’s last imperial dynasty and ruled from 1644-1911. The Qing were Manchu ‘invaders’ from the north, and had displaced the predominant Han Chinese ethnics who had traditionally constituted the Chinese ruling classes.

<sup>8</sup> For more on the proliferation of the Chinese press during the Republican period see Stephen R. MacKinnon, “Toward a History of the Chinese Press in the Republican Period,” *Modern China* 23, no. 1, (Jan., 1997), 3-32.

after China's defeat in the first Opium War, had ceased to be an effective conceptual 'real' against which to imagine its being-in-the-world, and had by the early-twentieth century contained only the faintest whispers of legitimacy in constituting a configuring logic of China's relationship to an increasingly modern world, and as a sovereign country itself.<sup>9</sup> That is, its rhetorical construction was one where China retained the 'choice' not to cooperate with the U.S. and other Western powers. Civilizationist supremacy is a discourse of equivalence; that is to say that its semantic purpose is to bring the West into a realm of Chinese meaning, a meeting on equal terms. It is also a discourse within which the space-time of global modernity is strikingly absent, it presupposes the transhistorical dominance of China in/as the world. Dramatic shifts in China's relative power in relation to the changing Western imperialist landscape in the nineteenth century produced the immediate need for the Chinese state to rethink its place in the world. A new kind of globalism, one in which the West and advances in global capitalism refuted the possibility that China could continue to exist in a cultural vacuum divorced from world historical change, generated new conditions under which China had to engage with the world, and from a subordinated position and under the duress of Western colonialism.

The alternative discourse of recognition as it is expressed within the pages of the RA is a decidedly more subjugated discourse, one whose very articulation places it in a relationship of subordination to those entities from whom China sought recognition, which, in the context of the RA was primarily the U.S. and England. To be sure, this was also a discourse whose articulation was a patent attempt at assuring China's insertion into

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<sup>9</sup> Joseph Levenson has treated this shift as that from Chinese "culturalism" to "nationalism," but my goal here is to both complicate and penetrate the spaces between these changes. Joseph R. Levenson, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and the Mind of Modern China*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

the time-space of global modernity. In between these two, however, there unfolded a discourse which maps a course from the antiquated civilizationist discourse of late Qing China, to the more modern discourse of China in a temporal and spatial relationship to the geopolitical realms of capitalist modernity, in particular the U.S. and Western Europe. It is this shift from a psychic position of both real and imagined domination within late imperial Chinese discourses of self-making, to the necessary configuration of China as a subject entity seeking recognition from nations whose legitimacy within the early-twentieth-century world was beyond question, that must be explored as more than a traversal from one conservatism to another.<sup>10</sup> Instead, it is the site where a range of issues regarding projections of Chinese and U.S. nationalisms and modernities emerge. The discursive transformations that unfolded in these psychic domains highlight spaces in which China's uneasy, and often incomplete, interpellation into the logics of a globalist modernity erupted into contradictions. These contradictions can be mined for a deeper understanding of the ways in which the structuring logics of modernity itself—liberalism, rationalism, nationalism, i.e., the varied tactics of governmentality—proved impossible to realize in a context of the colonial articulation of the dyadic configuration Domination/Subordination, particularly as scholars of postcoloniality like Ranajit Guha have brilliantly mapped it.<sup>11</sup> To dismiss this shift as being from one form of Chinese

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<sup>10</sup> For a more in-depth treatment of 'conservative' intellectual and political movements in late Qing and early Republican China see Charlotte Furth ed., *Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976).

<sup>11</sup> Guha is writing specifically about the context of Colonial South Asia. But his assertion that the colonial context in India produced complicated ruptures in the dynamics of hegemony as they were found in the coercive nature of the state in the metropole is insightful for a study of late imperial China as well. As he argues further, in the Indian colonial context the inability of the colonial apparatus to instantiate a meaningful state hegemony (and here state is obviously not coterminous with the nation form), and their recourse to a colonial politics of pure domination through the constant threat and actuation of violence against the native population is indeed, as I will highlight below, instructive in the Chinese context as the dynamics of power in the Qing dynasty slipped from a coercive and persuasive mode of state control in the

traditional conservatism to a more modern Western politico-philosophical one would be to erase a site of critical inquiry into the formation of modern being-in-the-world between two temporo-spatially distinct geographic sites (though not geographies delineated in hemispheric terms as in the Monroe Doctrine) dialectically articulated within the spaces and times of this transition as East/West; or, as Edward Said put it, between Western conceptions of ‘Self’ versus an Orientalist construction of the anti-self, expressed in this instance as China itself.<sup>12</sup> Put simply, this would be an erasure of the complicated modes of nationalism and being modern in the context of *parallel* global processes. To do so would surely foreclose one chapter in the broad narrative of capitalist modernity and the attendant promises and perils of economic, political, and intellectual imperialist domination as they were actualized within the putatively emancipatory rhetorics of liberal state-making. Also, as with the unfolding of all history, the shift in this discourse from Chinese civilizationist supremacy and cooperation to that of seeking recognition was an often uneven one. Indeed, the RA itself constantly hashed out this interpretive battle from within its pages.

It is my contention that the conjunction of historical forces that came to bear on the moment of the global late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries (what Rebecca Karl describes as a classic Jamesonian ‘historical problematic’) is a necessarily complicated and messy one. It is not enough to locate this time-space as the site of the emergence of new political formations and insurgent nationalisms; instead we must critically map the terrain and generate a cartography of the elemental global concretions

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early nineteenth century (again, state here disassociated from the modern nation form), to one of total violence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ranajit Guha, *Dominance Without Hegemony* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), see esp. 1-99.

<sup>12</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*. (New York: Vintage, 1977).

that were the constitutive forms of capitalist modernity itself in that very particular moment. These were nationalisms and political ontologies that were mutually constituted, whose trajectories were parallel and not distinct from each other. While the nationalism thus produced was fully Chinese, it could not have been formed outside of the context of early-twentieth-century globalism. At its broadest level, the following chapter attempts to situate the emergence of modern Chinese nationalism, and the dialectical tensions inherent in its formation—between the national and traditional, and the international and new—as a historical moment that needs to be understood as both deeply Chinese and American, indeed, as central to our understanding of twentieth century global history. The real and imagined relationships that this cohort of Chinese republicans and revolutionaries felt they had with the U.S. and other nations of the modern West was central to the formation of their own conceptions of what it meant to be Chinese in an international system of nation states. Recalling the Red Dragon Caper from the introduction, the various compromises and asymmetries of global internationalism—which privileged and reproduced the accomplishments and global power of the Western nations—in this period highlight the real ways in which Chinese nationalism was constructed out of a deeply transnational set of linkages that could not have evolved without the influence of Western ideas and their intimate interweaving with traditional Chinese ones. Because of the history of imperial relations that Western nations, including the United States, had with the Chinese, no anticolonial nationalist movement could emerge in China that did not fundamentally engage with the lived political, cultural, and economic traces of that colonialism.

In this chapter I want to highlight a number of various forms of Chinese being-in-the-world, or inhabitations of modernity, that were expressed within the late-nineteenth-century Chinese reform movement as well as the pages of the RA. These forms emanate from a range of geographic and intellectual locations. Each location is situated in an epistemic domain which forms the locus of its subsequent articulation of Chinese modernity as either in, becoming, or beyond the temporo-spatiality of its defining capitalist modernity.<sup>13</sup> No single one of these expressions of Chinese modernity situates China anywhere but in the contemporary world (although there are certainly visions of Chinese futurity), and yet each one places China in a different relationship to the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century global moment, understood in this project primarily through the optics of declining European and ascendant U.S. imperialisms, and determined by the evolutions of capital itself. Additionally, each expression posits a different form of temporo-spatiality that exceeds the capacities of an ossified historicist analysis. My approach to writing these various modes of Chinese being-in-the-world will be through a hermeneutic of configurations of *relationality* in the context of early republican China. These differently configured relationships each illumine different modes of conceptualizing the contemporary global currents constructing Chinese modernity and nationalism in the moment of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century

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<sup>13</sup> My use of in, becoming, and beyond here are not merely temporal designations. For instance, in my analysis China in a state of becoming is not coterminous with Johannes Fabian's astute observation that anthropology locates its subjects in a temporal realm which denies the idea of "coevalness." Fabian's insight is decidedly situated within a historicist frame, and rests squarely upon an epistemological foundation in which the narrative unfolding of history is both progressive and teleological. While I recognize, as did Fabian, that the organizing logic of academic disciplinary practice is an effect of the rationalizing logics of the Enlightenment, my goal is to suggest that there were ways to be in, of, and beyond the global moment of capitalist modernity without necessarily capitulating totally to the logics of Enlightenment conceptions of a foundational ontology; indeed there were ways of being that lay completely beyond the demarcations of historicism itself as I will show in the dissertation below. See Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

global capital and highlight their uneven and, at times, even contradictory, expressions of how to navigate the complex terrain of the modern. As Rebecca Karl and others have argued, this moment must be understood and articulated in forms that exceed the traditionally event centered approach to history.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, my goal is to “move beyond such utilitarian and functionalist notions of the relationship between past and present and, rather, to note the larger historical context” within which my subject unfolds.<sup>15</sup>

The first configuration, which constitutes the first portion of the chapter, will be the reform-minded Chinese intellectual elite of the late-Qing and the late-nineteenth-century Qing dynastic state, and will focus on the contexts surrounding the aborted reform movement of 1898, specifically through an examination and textual reading of the work of Kang You-wei, and his *Da Tong Shu* in particular.<sup>16</sup> The most well-known reformer of the late Qing, Kang had, for a brief moment, the ear of the emperor himself, and it was on his advice that numerous 1898 imperial reform edicts were authorized and operationalized.

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<sup>14</sup> See Rebecca Karl and Peter Zarrow eds., *Rethinking the 1898 Reform Period: Political and Cultural Change in Late Qing China*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>16</sup> My deployment of the Qing state as both distinct and delinked from the conceptual geographies of modern nation states is indebted to Rebecca Karl’s articulation of Chinese self-making in this period as not entirely constituted against the structuring logics of EuroAmerican nation formation. As she argues in a critique of the work of Prasenjit Duara (specifically his work *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996].)—as well as other progressive critics of a Chinese historiography defined by an limited articulation of the national qua nation and state—national histories of emergent nationalism in China must secure a foundation that is distinct from EuroAmerican imaginings of nations and nationalisms which in their deconstructions of the national as a coherent conceptual category through local case studies “...see nationalism as essentially irrelevant to local practices, thus tending to reinforce the synonymity of nationalism and the central state (or the pursuit of one). In the end, nationalism is reduced to statism even when both become absent presences marked by either the presence or the absence of the state.” As such the emergence of alternative nationalisms, or ways-of-being in global modernity, exist at levels and spaces that resist categorization within EuroAmerican traditions of nation formation. This is akin to Guha and other members of the Subaltern Studies Collectives’ critical insight that there existed in the Indian colonial context a wholly autonomous political domain of national belonging and political organization that was organic to the subaltern classes. Karl, *Staging the World*, 19.

The second portion of the chapter will explore the RA and will be built around the following configurations. The first will be the configuration of a foreign class (though some Chinese-born) sympathetic to Chinese sovereignty and modernity, and the revolutionary Chinese intellectual elite of the early Republican period.<sup>17</sup> This will be illustrated through an examination of the different spatio-temporalities that each group placed China within in relation to the establishment of the early Republic. The foreign class consisted mostly of missionaries, the Chinese born children of missionaries, and ‘old China hands’ who had spent a significant portion of their lives living and working in China as teachers, businessmen, bureaucrats, foreign government technocrats, and so on. Most of these foreigners did not mention their nation of origin in the letters and articles they wrote to and for the RA, and when they did most were from England with a few from elsewhere in Europe and the U.S. What is clear, however, is that they seem to represent a singular ideological position in relation to the political and economic future of China that is worth exploring. They all saw economic inequality and its attendant human suffering as fundamentally a part of the EuroAmerican inhabitation of capitalist modernity and sought to alter ‘the course of history’ through a form of imaginary piloting of the inchoate Chinese republic through the stormy perils of capitalist exploitation by returning to a fantasy of imagined Chinese cultural idealism. The second relationship will explore the configuration of the early Republican state, the revolutionary intellectual elite, and foreign powers—particularly the U.S.—and the complicated and contradictory effects of empire on the early formations of Chinese modernity through the messy

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<sup>17</sup> This latter group is part of what Michael Gasster has argued is the emergence of a “new intelligentsia” in the early years of the twentieth century who were educated in Western ideals, and whose approach to political modernity was seasoned by a revolutionary world view. Michael Gasster, *Chinese Intellectuals and the Revolution of 1911*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969).



process of national recognition. Finally, I will briefly examine the triangular configuration between the Republican state, the revolutionary intellectual elite, and the subaltern classes (though unfortunately only in narrow forms as they don't really 'speak' in the records as much as others) by examining the limits of each group's conception of the modern nation, and the strange ways in which modernity was itself articulated through president Yuan Shikai's monarchical attempt in the summer of 1916. Each of these relationships outlines the ways in which the emergence of a Chinese global modernity in the early-twentieth century was critically informed and influenced by its contact—both physical and intellectual—with the West. Not only were new ideas about China's place in the world being informed by renewed visions of China as but one part of an international system, but this vision was itself accompanied by an entirely new reimagination of Chinese temporality and history. Chinese dynastic notions of time as cyclical and predetermined gave way to thinking about the emergence of a modern China as part of a shared global experience of historical change that proceeded in a linear mode. Chinese modernity was from its inception a deeply transnational affair.

### **The Reformist Intellectuals and the Qing Dynastic State: Kang You-wei and the Da Tong Shu**

[China's] literati language, the classical written style, had no provincial life; it was the language of no province, only of a past...this same Chinese literary language, a very model of the more-than-provincial on its own historic ground, was arraigned as provincial: inadequate for world expression, when the world was not its own.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Joseph Levenson, "The Province, the Nation, and the World: The Problem of Chinese Identity," in Albert Feuerwerker, Rhoads Murphey, & Mary C. Wright, eds., *Approaches to Modern Chinese History*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 271.

Between 1839 and 1895 China suffered a series of shattering military and political defeats at the hands of foreign powers that had in their sheer unsettling force engendered a powerful movement for reform among a segment of the literati intellectual elite by 1898. The hundred day reform in the summer of 1898—which was a prematurely aborted effort at bringing the Qing dynastic state into the orbit of the global modern—is the moment around which I both configure and interpret the relationships between the reform-minded intellectual elite and the Qing dynastic state.<sup>19</sup> The first severe Chinese military defeat in the nineteenth century was in the face of the guns of the English naval fleet in what is now known as the First Opium War.<sup>20</sup> The shock of this, coupled with the concatenation of continued defeats, brought the Chinese intellectual elite, and the Qing Dynasty itself into a period of prolonged crisis that laid the foundations for the subsequent intellectual currents which sought to reformulate a conception of Chineseness that was no longer rooted in a ‘world’-view that constituted China as the cultural, political, and intellectual epicenter of *the* moral and ethical universe; a universe in which degrees of ‘barbarism’ were formulated through a complex arithmetics of distance from all things Chinese. Within this conception of a comprehensive cultural totality Chinese self-making was incorporated under the sign of *tien xia*, literally ‘all under Heaven’. It was within this particularly isolated—and isolating—cosmology, and through its attendant practices that a sector of forward thinking intellectuals in China began to

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<sup>19</sup> I want to make it clear here that my use of reform is not to suggest its un/antiradical tendencies. Much of the historiography about 1898 has read it as antirevolutionary and a failure to boot. It is therefore explored as a less important ‘event’ than the revolution of 1911, or at best a foiled antecedent to 1911. Indeed, as I will show below, the ideology of reform in the late nineteenth century was in many ways much more radical in its social utopianism than the revolution of 1911 ever was.

<sup>20</sup> For more on the First Opium War see Peter Ward Fay, *The Opium War, 1840–1842*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975).

imagine, formulate, and attempt to bring about reform in late Qing China. The Qing state's inability to keep China strong in an increasingly modernizing world caused the literati elite to begin to question and reject the dynasty's legitimacy.

These intellectuals were driven not so much by a desire to become-in-the-world in a new relationality to an increasingly globalizing capitalist moment, but more so by a fear that the failure to do so would result in the 'carving up' (*gua fen*—literally to 'split the melon') of China as the Western powers had successfully done in so many other parts of the world. This fear was not entirely born out of a sense that the fate of other precapitalist countries (and here I deliberately invoke the term country/countries so as to avoid any confusion with my particular articulation of nation) signaled the inevitable dissolution of China itself, but its potential yielded a vigor for reform the likes of which had not been seen before. The very spectre of the possibility of such a decline against a backdrop of Chinese civilizationist supremacy could barely be comprehended as a conceptual real for many Chinese elites of the time. Nevertheless its indisputable injection into the psychic geographies of these intellectuals as a haunting force is beyond question. Indeed by the summer of 1898, when the reform movement reached its zenith in the 'hundred days' of reform enacted through imperial edicts from the Guanxu emperor, China was in a moment of profound crisis. James Pusey, in his astute work on the introduction of Darwinian concepts into the Chinese intellectual and political culture of the reformists in the late 1890s, explains some of the dynamism of the period:

That message [social Darwinism, which in many ways departed from the cosmological fatalism of much of earlier Chinese moral philosophy], even with its "scientific backing," was shocking, but it was also electrifying—because many Chinese intellectuals wanted to fight. If Darwinism had been introduced to China in an age of peace, in a secure age of inner and

outer harmony, there might have been an immediate moral hue and cry somewhat more akin to the instant *odium theologicum* so loudly voiced in the West. But in the charged atmosphere following the Sino-Japanese War, traditional moral aversion to the word *struggle* was momentarily put aside.<sup>21</sup>

Surely, the speed at which the discourse of Herbert Spencer's articulation of social Darwinism flashed through the intellectual centers of China is proof that the reformist intellectuals were groping for new theories of Chinese being-in-the-world that could adequately address the quagmires of modernity they now found themselves mired deeply within. Indeed, the double meaning of 'race' within social Darwinism, as both contest and the distinctions of mankind, infused the reform cause with increased urgency as the fate not only of China, but of Chineseness itself, were at stake.

The reformist ferment that reached its apogee in 1898 was the result of so many decades of decreasing Qing state legitimacy in both China and the rest of the world.<sup>22</sup> But the first real fillip that produced the fault line that spread through the cultural and political geography of late Qing China was the unequal treaty of Nanjing that China was forced to sign with England as a result of its shameful defeat in the First Opium War. The treaty was signed aboard the British naval vessel *Cornwallis* on August 29, 1842, as it sat moored in the Yangzi River. It consisted of twelve articles whose primary functions were to disrupt Qing social and economic life. The treaty opened China up to international trade by forcing the opening of five cities (Canton, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Ningbo, and Shanghai) to foreign residence and mercantilism, and thus partially incorporating China

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<sup>21</sup> James Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 62. Italics in original.

<sup>22</sup> The summer of 1898 is known as the "Hundred Days Reform" because of a series of imperial edicts issued by the Guanxu emperor in an effort at instituting some form of political modernity in China. It came to an end in September when the Empress Dowager Cixi orchestrated a coup d'état which resulted in the house arrest of the emperor and the execution of several reformers (including Kang You-wei's younger brother) and the exile of others such as Kang and Liang Qichao.

into the circulatory logics of capitalist modernity. It demanded that foreign concessions be established in these cities within which British subjects were to be granted the rights of extraterritoriality.<sup>23</sup> It forced China to cede the island of Hong Kong to England “in perpetuity” and to be ruled as the English “s[aw] fit.” China was forced to pay an indemnity to the English in the amount of \$21 million silver over the period of the next three years in four installments. Additionally, the Qing court was forced to abandon its rituals of foreign subjugation at official meetings and interactions between representatives of the British Crown and the Emperor:

Instead of terminology such as “petition” and “beg” that foreigners had previously been forced to use, nonderogatory and nonsubordinate terms of address such as “communication,” “statement,” and “declaration” were to be used in future official correspondence between Britain and China.<sup>24</sup>

Clearly the terms of the Treaty of Nanjing were an incredible blow to China’s sense of civilizationalist supremacy. It was a distinctly embarrassing set of obligations to carry out, and were only made worse by the fact that their enforcement was a crystal clear illustration of China’s *diu lian* (literally, to lose one’s face) in the immediate region in which China had for millennia been dominant (Japan, Korea, modern Vietnam, and so on), and by extension the larger global network to which China was beginning to have to

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<sup>23</sup> Extraterritoriality granted the British immunity from being subject to Chinese laws in the foreign concessions. Other Western powers soon followed suit, signing similar unequal treaties with China. The United States forced the Chinese to sign the Treaty of Wangxia in 1844, which granted the U.S. the right of extraterritoriality, among other things. For more on the importance of the abolishment of extraterritoriality to the rise of Chinese nationalism in the twentieth century see Edward S.K. Fung, “The Chinese Nationalists and the Unequal Treaties 1924–1931,” *Modern Asian Studies* 21, no. 4. (Oct., 1987), 793-819.

<sup>24</sup> Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: Norton, 1990), 158-64. Spence’s comprehensive synthesis of Qing and early Republican China is indispensable for any reader who wants to gain a cursory understanding of the complex political, cultural, and intellectual history of early modern China.

see itself in relation to. To be sure, this was a shameful and inauspicious entrance onto the stage of global diplomacy and cutthroat capitalist modernity.<sup>25</sup>

Adding insult to injury, and in the vein of America's sense of ascendant hemispheric supremacy, U.S. president John Tyler dispatched Massachusetts congressman Caleb Cushing to China to secure a similar unequal treaty between the U.S. and China. In February of 1844, China signed the Treaty of Wanghia with the U.S. which conferred upon the U.S. a number of the same rights ceded to England in the Treaty of Nanjing. Additionally, the U.S. was granted a number of stipulations that strengthened the Protestant missionary apparatus in China. They were given the right to rent sites for the construction of "hospitals, churches, and cemeteries" and the right to hire Chinese teachers to teach Americans how to speak and write in the Chinese language—a privilege that had previously been denied them.<sup>26</sup> A string of similar concessions followed granting the French, Germans, and Russians treaty rights throughout China. However, *the* signal moment that marked the terminal limit of Chinese intellectuals' capacity to forestall change was China's defeat by the Japanese in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> I am consciously using the rhetorics of shame and shaming here because it is the structural articulation of how the Chinese themselves—as country, intellectuals, and subalterns—viewed their treatment in the global arena in that moment. Much of the language describing China in the world at this time is in relation to its shameful treatment at the hands of foreign powers, this is especially the case when the Qing state begins to intercede on behalf of Chinese laborers abroad who, in the U.S. and Australian context, were excluded from immigration and barred from citizenship.

<sup>26</sup> Spence, *Search*, 160-1.

<sup>27</sup> Between the Treaty of Nanjing and the Sino-Japanese War a number of intellectual movements within China sought methods of reform that were delimited by the bounds of the traditional dynastic structure. Most dominant was the notion of Chinese "self strengthening," which heralded the first wave of Westernization through industrial advancement and technical education in China. A sizeable number of Chinese students who had received their education in the West and Japan returned to China at this time to participate in self-strengthening. Perhaps most famously Yung Wing, the first Chinese graduate of an American university (Yale class of 1854), was sent in 1862 on a mission to the U.S. to secure the materials to build a modern arsenal in China. However, this influx of Western learning did not affect the traditional bureaucratic educational system which was based in the mastery of the Confucian classics, a system which was not abolished until 1905. I discuss this shift in greater detail elsewhere in the dissertation. For a more

In the midst of its massive Westernization/modernizing project—the Meiji Restoration—Japan began its bid for regional hegemony, after thousands of years of Chinese dominance in the area, with an attempt to control Korea.<sup>28</sup> In 1894, domestic turmoil in Korea erupted into open rebellion and both China and Japan jumped at the opportunity to protect the Korean royal family, and thus guarantee its status as the future reigning power. After a series of costly—in both lives and money—Chinese naval defeats a treaty was signed with the Japanese and made final in April of 1895. The Treaty of Shimonoseki was the straw that broke the camel’s back for the reform-minded Chinese intellectual class. The treaty’s claims on Chinese power and sovereignty, and the fact that it made painfully visible China’s increasingly weakening position in both the region and the world, spurred reform-minded literati to both urge and demand change. Dynastic legitimacy had by this time worn itself threadbare. The treaty itself forced China to declare “the full and complete independence and autonomy of Korea” which, if not in word then in deed, named Japan the *de facto* protectorate of Korea. Four new treaty ports were opened to Japan in which they could build up both small and large industry; Taiwan and the Pescadores were ceded to Japan; and China was forced to pay war indemnities of 200 million silver taels—a task made ever more difficult because of the weakening Qing’s decadence.<sup>29</sup> Many Chinese intellectuals who were gathered in Peking for the *jinshi* examinations (the highest level of examination within the Chinese bureaucratic

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comprehensive overview of the self-strengthening movement see David Pong, *Shen Pao-Chen and China’s Modernization in the Nineteenth Century*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>28</sup> The Meiji Restoration began in 1868 and effectively ended in 1905 when the Japanese handily defeated the Russians in the Russo-Japanese War and became globally recognized as a Western(ized) power.

<sup>29</sup> The paradigmatic expression of this decadence was the construction of the Empress Dowager Cixi’s summer palace--which was built to replace the old palace burnt down by the British after the Second Opium War—financed by funds redirected from their intended purpose of modernizing China’s antiquated navy. The new palace included a boat made entirely out of marble aboard which the Empress Dowager could command a grand view of the grounds.

educational system) spoke out against the demands placed on China as a result of the treaty and began the road to reform that would reach its denouement in the hundred days reform of 1898.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, the reformists' anger and fear in this moment was not so much over the possibility that the West (which at this point did not yet include Japan) was poised and ready to usurp China's sovereignty and eclipse its civilizational grandeur, but that it had been defeated, quite handily, by the "puny Japan[ese]." Surely this was an ominous and unsettling portent for China and its stagnant bureaucracy that change was not only necessary for China to be, at best, in step with the developmental trajectory of capitalist modernity; but that that change was going to have to come from within China itself, change in its archive of Confucian knowledge practices, its inhabitation of a believed transhistorical moral and ethical perfection, its imagined forms of metaphysical transcendence, and so on.

One of the most fundamental conceptual barriers against China's attempts at generating a coherent set of practicable modes of being-in-the-world lay in its relationship to time and space which fell outside of EuroAmerican imaginings of spatio-temporality. Prior to the late nineteenth century, most Chinese intellectuals saw China's time and history as spinning out in cyclical fashion, with moments of decline coupled with the inevitability of regeneration. Epistemologies of 'enlightened' reason, progress, liberal individualism, and citizenship were slow in becoming part of the Chinese conceptual landscape. Indeed, by 1895 only a few Chinese intellectuals—even among those who protested against the shaming of China in the Treaty of Shimonoseki—had the intellectual resources to instrumentally imagine reform in China within the frameworks

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<sup>30</sup> Spence, *Search*, 221-4.



of Western liberalism and global modernity. As Yen Fu (who introduced Charles Darwin and Spencerian social Darwinism to China), who certainly did have that imaginative capacity, put it:

[t]he greatest and most irreconcilable difference between Chinese and Western thinking is that the Chinese love the past and neglect the present, while the Westerners strive in the present to surpass the past. The Chinese believe that to resolve from order to disorder, from ascension to decline, is the natural way of heaven and of human affairs. The Westerners believe, as the ultimate principle of all learning and government, in infinite, daily progress, in advance that will not sink into decline, in order that will not revert to disorder.<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, as Charlotte Furth has pointed out, “the new Darwinian view that adaptation to the times was a necessity...soon made the demand for institutional reform almost universal among the literati.”<sup>32</sup> This illustrates quite perfectly one of the central claims of this chapter, that it was because of alternative temporo-spatial reals that China emerged into global modernity in a unique, if ‘belated’, (according to Western progressive space-time) fashion. Yen Fu precisely articulates the central dilemma in China’s delayed entrance into the modern. In many ways, as far as the Qing state was concerned, late nineteenth century China *was its past*. What it had achieved centuries or millennia ago was evidence for its rightful inheritance of supremacy in the ‘now’ of the emerging global modern. In those past effects were the compositional fragments of China’s transhistorical being at the center of the world. *Zhong guo* (the name for China, literally meaning the Middle Kingdom), was a center that didn’t necessarily presuppose a geographical outside, but rather a conceptual and imaginative outside that conditioned the

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<sup>31</sup> Quoted from James Pusey’s translation in his, *China and Charles Darwin*, 51. Yen Fu also went on to translate into Chinese Thomas Huxley’s, *Evolution and Ethics*; John Stuart Mill’s, *On Liberty*; Montesquieu’s, *Defense of the Spirit of the Laws*; and Adam Smith’s, *Wealth of Nations*. Spence, *Search*, 239.

<sup>32</sup> Charlotte Furth, “Culture and Politics in Modern Chinese Conservatism,” in Charlotte Furth, ed., *The Limits of Change*, 25.

realms of *meaning itself*—i.e., China. It had no teleologies to which it turned in order to induce ‘progress’, China was always ascendant, dominant, hegemonic, etc., because it was always an effectively singular entity. Its constitutive outside had little recognizable impact on its self-definition. To be sure this was a decidedly difficult conceptual and (obviously) oneiric cosmology to jettison in the face of rapidly unfolding global modernity. Posed as a question the dilemma reads: how could China possibly hope to emerge into the global modern if the very historicist conditions of progress that were modernity’s presuppositional logic were not a constitutive part of China’s self understanding? Indeed this is the question that this chapter attempts to, if not answer, then to at least place within a new set of configurations that may help to situate and determine the historical moment within which these processes unfolded.

It is within this distinctively overdetermined context that the development of late Qing reform and intellectual change must be understood. In these earliest moments of reform the intellectual elites were not revolutionary in the sense that they sought the overthrow of the reigning government and/or political system. They merely sought reform within the Qing state itself. They were not ready to excise the dynastic form from their new attempts at self-making, because to do so would not only undermine their own claims to legitimacy—since they were all elites within the dynastic bureaucracy by dint of their education within the traditional system—but to do so posed too frightening a shift in an entire universe of meaning, one which formed the very ontology of China itself. Some sought the constitution of a new dynasty, and saw as barbarian and illegitimate the Qing ruling house whose ‘racial’ ancestry was Manchu and not Han Chinese, the

dominant ethnic group in China. Traditionally, this fact was rhetorically elided by asserting that China

was not in danger, because no conqueror could kill her. She had been conquered by alien races before [most recently the Manchus] and yet still survived, for inevitably her culture conquered her conquerors. It swallowed them up while they were still in power.<sup>33</sup>

However, what all of these reformers shared in common was a faith and devotion to China (as culture, geography, time, knowledge, and so on) that would not let them abide its *gua fen* at the hands of ‘barbarian’ races. The roots of dynastic legitimacy lay deep within the Chinese literati consciousness, and it was with no small amount of intellectual intrepidity that they were able to formulate critiques of dynastic legitimacy.

The most famous reformer of the 1898 period, Kang You-wei, situated the dynastic context within a Chinese cosmology of rulership and articulated the emperor’s legitimacy as sovereign on the grounds

not because of China’s huge territory or its large population or its abundant natural resources, but because of its unique respect for imperial power. This respect was indeed not stolen from circumstances, nor was it teased out of profit; rather, it was achieved through the accumulation of the benevolence of the founding emperors, the righteousness of the Han, Tang, Song, and Ming dynasties, and the promotion of honorable rewards by millions of sages and worthies over millions of years.<sup>34</sup>

As Peter Zarrow and other scholars have noted, Kang and other intellectuals of the 1898 reform period (most famously, aside from Kang, his disciple Liang Qichao) saw China’s salvation not in its performance or adoption of Western political systems, but in a new

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<sup>33</sup> Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*, 68. Pusey uses the term ‘race’ here because he is situating this particular strain of legitimating argument within the context of Yen Fu’s introduction of social Darwinism and its (and Yen’s as well) focus on the category of race.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted from Peter Zarrow, “The Reform Movement, the Monarchy, and Political Modernity,” in Karl & Zarrow, eds., *Rethinking the 1898 Reform Period*, 26.

approach to the old practices of, and connections to, rulership. This was not entirely an effect of outmoded affiliations with the dynastic structure, but was in many instances a complex hermeneutic approach to reimagining China's being-in-the-world in a context that could be consistent with the shifts of the global modern, but that did not parrot (Western) global modernity itself. That is, it was a configuration of Chinese modernity that could retain a sense of fundamental Chineseness. Kang's approach to reform did not recast China as an instantly modern nation purely because of its rich archive of cultural achievement. Instead he foresaw China's change as occurring, and perhaps it could only be possible as such, within the interpretive logics of the old dynastic system, but only to get beyond them. As an unintentional result, Kang's reform ideologies incorporated the subaltern through his insistence on the resignification of traditional cultural symbolic systems within which they were already inured, but he himself "did [not] treat the *people* with any great respect."<sup>35</sup> He did not attach false celebratory appendages to the legacy of dynasticism, but articulated a new form of rulership that was rooted in a tradition of "benevolence" and "righteousness" that would produce a new political formation that was, importantly, Chinese, but also one that was compatible with modernity. Indeed, Kang knew, as did his reformist cohorts that reform in the context of the late nineteenth century was necessarily going to be a top-down affair because of a "lack of alternatives[.] [Y]oung literati intellectuals could scarcely lead bottom-up reform capable of changing the entire system, nor could they imagine a popular revolution at this point."<sup>36</sup> As Rebecca Karl argues, it was not until an affiliative relationship was developed relative to the revolutionary non-West, particularly around the Cuban and Philippine revolutions,

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 29. Italics mine.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 22.

that the modern concept of revolution was itself incorporated into the reformists' lexicon. The incorporation of the revolutionary idea would ultimately end up splitting proponents of political modernity into radical reform and revolutionary camps.

Kang You-wei's most important contribution to the reform movement and the foundation of Chinese political modernity was his masterwork *Da Tong Shu* (most commonly translated as The Great Unity—although in the English translation I use it is translated as One World), a utopian treatise outlining a quasi-Confucian democratic project for China, and the world.<sup>37</sup> Kang can be credited for participating in a major shift in Chinese philosophy in his turn from a cyclical view of time to a more progressive one.<sup>38</sup> This discursive shift from a predetermined sense of temporality, what Walter Benjamin called 'messianic time,' where "a simultaneity of past and future in an instantaneous present" is how the passage of time is figured (which was the temporality of the Qing dynasty), towards the new potentialities within a progressive temporality as it was articulated by Kang and other reformists, was crucial for the inhabitation of new forms of modernity.<sup>39</sup> In the early Qing and before, dynastic legitimacy was derived from a 'mandate of heaven' and the mandate's universality and truth was beyond question. Its cyclical determinism was the presuppositional framework against which Kang and other reformers labored. Within the mandate time unfolded according to a predetermined

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<sup>37</sup> The Confucian concept of *Da tong* is an old one. It is to be found in the "Li Yun" section of the *Li chi* (Book of Rites). The "Li Yun" section is itself only 744 characters long, and only 107 of those describe the *Da tong*, which has itself been interpreted in innumerable ways. It's been "the professed goal of both Reformers and Revolutionaries, of Republicans, Anarchists, Socialists, Communists and Constitutional Monarchists alike, the one and only classical concept that was to gain and maintain an almost universally esteemed position of the ideological rhetoric of the late Ch'ing and republican China." Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*, 31.

<sup>38</sup> Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*, 15-27.

<sup>39</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nation States*. (London: Verso, 1983), 24.

figuration of dynastic rulers descended from Heaven itself. What Kang did was (re)apply a conception of rulership that he argued had been overwritten by the passage of centuries and the canonization of false Confucian texts. It was a return to a ‘progressive’ minded Confucianism that Kang called for, a renewed articulation of the “New Text Confucianism” of eighteenth century China.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, as Benjamin Elman argues, as early as 1780 there were New Text Confucianists in China who were fusing the scholastic with the political in ways that historians have traditionally characterized as being particular to the 1898 period and distinctly after fairly widespread Western contact.<sup>41</sup> Kang’s call was for a conception of rulership that demanded an activist sovereign devoted to the people and with an idea of change that would be towards the benefit of all of China in a rapidly ‘progressing’ world. Kang introduced, on a large scale, a progressive teleology to Chinese temporality which induced the Chinese to reformulate their relationship to China, the Qing state, and the larger international community. They were no longer idle subjects in a predetermined cosmology of dynastic rulership, but participants in a larger system of political and social relations in which their sovereign was responsible for their, and the nascent nation’s, well being. As Benedict Anderson has succinctly argued,

[w]ith the ebbing of religious belief [and there was surely much religiosity to the mandate of heaven], the suffering which belief in part composed did not disappear. Disintegration of paradise: nothing makes fatality more arbitrary. Absurdity of salvation: nothing makes another style of continuity more necessary. What then was required was a secular

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<sup>40</sup> For a detailed study of New Text Confucianism prior to 1898 see Benjamin A. Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship: The Ch’ang-chou School of New Text Confucianism in Late Imperial China*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, xviii.

transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning... few things were (are) better suited to this end than an idea of nation.<sup>42</sup>

So what Kang effectively did was bequeath to China a conception of temporal progress that would become central to China's inhabitation of modernity, akin to Benjamin's 'empty homogenous time' where "simultaneity is, as it were, transverse, cross-time, marked not by *prefiguring and fulfillment*, but by temporal *coincidence*, and measured by clock and calendar."<sup>43</sup>

With a progressive and developmentalist sense of China's future in hand, Kang proceeded to compose the *Da Tong Shu*, an intensely humanist utopian tract that rivaled in its sense of shared humanity and universal justice even the most poetic prose of the early humanist Marx. Passages like this one:

When the Great Way [the essential interpretive Confucianism of the New Text School] was practiced, our land belonged to all men together. The good and the able were chosen to govern, and men valued honesty and strove to live as brothers. Thus people did not treat only their parents as parents or their own sons as sons. People hated to see things thrown away and wasted, but felt no need to hoard things for themselves. When there was work to be done, people loved to be the first to do it, but did so not for their own rewards. Hence there were no plotters or crooks, no thieves or brigands, and people never locked their gates. Such was the *Ta t'ung* [I have left the older Wade-Giles phonetic transliteration of *Da Tong* here because that is as it appears in the original text being quoted], the Great Unity.<sup>44</sup>

A more similar locution of Marx's own utopian visions of species being and ideal communism might not be found anywhere else in the late-nineteenth-century Chinese context. To be sure, Kang was a utopian, but he was not delusional. His own desire to change China, and the world, and subsume it under the Great Unity (which was still

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<sup>42</sup>Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 11.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid, 24. Italics mine.

<sup>44</sup>Pusey trans., *China and Charles Darwin*, 34-5.

derivative of a Confucian Chineseness) was motivated not so much by a sense that China needed to modernize in order to avoid *gua fen*—though that was surely a concern—but out of a deep compassion for human suffering that was an effect of capitalist modernity on the world. Indeed, the first fourteen pages of the Great Unity unfold as one great panorama of human suffering in the modern world. Kang lists six forms of human suffering, each with its own list of the forms through which they manifest themselves: “sufferings from living (seven in all); “sufferings from natural calamities (eight in all); “suffering from the accidents of human life (five in all); “sufferings from government (five in all); “sufferings from human feelings (eight in all); “suffering from those things which me most esteem (five in all)”—which includes “suffering due to wealth,” and “suffering due to being an emperor.”<sup>45</sup> As Kang argues, all of these forms of suffering can only be abolished by achieving the Great Unity. The Great Unity is an idea born of Confucius’ “godlike perception,” and is the third stage in his Three Ages of mankind; “following the Age of Disorder, the world will change to the Ages, first of Increasing Peace-and-Equality, and finally, of complete Peace-and-Equality; following the age of Little Peace-and-Happiness, the world will advance to the Age of One World [i.e., the Great Unity].”<sup>46</sup> The turn of the twentieth century is part of the Age of Disorder, which is also parallel to the age of capitalist modernity. The Three Ages are, in Kang’s interpretation, a sign of Confucius’ own sense of progressive time. Indeed, the Great Unity is utopian teleology taken to the extreme; and yet it is in its utopianism that its

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<sup>45</sup> Quoted from Laurence G. Thompson’s translation of Kang You-wei, *Ta T’ung Shu: The One World Philosophy on K’ang Yu-wei, translated from the Chinese with Introduction and Notes*. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1958), 74-5.

<sup>46</sup> Thompson, trans. *One World*, 72.



radical nature lies. Kang's visionary text is in almost every way far more radical than the liberal political ideologies of the following generation of revolutionaries.

Kang You-wei's sensitivity to the crippling effects of capitalist modernity on the expression of human potential—in politics, the arts, philosophy, etc.,—is far more prophetic than the often-times conservative, and indeed even reactionary, political culture of the later revolutionaries. Kang saw the state (and nation, I suspect) form as the ultimate barrier to human freedom from suffering. Much of his work lays out the diminishment of suffering that would result from the abolition of national boundaries and federated states. For Kang it is

because of the existence of opposing states [that] there arise such calamities as war...[e]ven the Good and Upright cannot help but be partial to his own state...they consider fighting for territory and killing other people to be an important duty...they engrave these deeds on tripods, carve such exploits on stone tablets, cast statues and write histories of their victories. They are called great by later generations throughout the world because they have thus conferred upon themselves posthumous titles of 'brilliant.'<sup>47</sup>

Abolishing national boundaries, states, and statist formations (like the Qing dynasty) is the first order of business for the realization of Kang's Great Unity, a kind of literal postmodern utopia. The erasure of these boundaries diminishes antagonisms between collectivities that are organized around these spaces (i.e., nationalisms, culturalisms, ethnocentrisms) and frees up more time towards the goal of the Great Unity. It is through the transformation of the relationship of the Chinese polity to the Qing state that the state is itself finally superseded as *the* political formation. It should not be violently overthrown, because that is antithetical to the achievement of the Great Unity, rather it

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 82.

will run its own course and, like a vestigial organ, cease to be of use and will eventually disappear. Perhaps even more radical is Kang's later move in the inevitable march towards his utopian world—the abolition of the family structure as a whole. The family represents a fundamental institution of the Age of Disorder because it is necessary, as the elemental site of nurturance, to forge the system of humanist relations that will be regenerated indefinitely within the Great Unity. However, it cannot be countenanced in the Age of Increasing Peace-and-Equality as it would be “the most detrimental thing to attaining to the [*sic*] Age of Complete Peace-and-Equality” because it presupposes a system of relations between filiated individuals (rather than a holistic community) that would only interfere in achieving the Great Unity. For instance, the family system subordinates women because its structure is to preserve the construction of male-descent, these double standards can only be abolished through abandoning the family as the unit of social relation.<sup>48</sup> As Kang puts it “[t]o have the family and yet to wish to reach Complete Peace-and-Equality is to be afloat on a blocked-up stream, in a sealed-off harbor, and yet to wish to reach an open waterway.” In a final directive in the chapter on abolishing family boundaries Kang forcefully asserts “if we wish to attain the beauty of complete equality, independence, and the perfection of human nature, it can be done only by *abolishing the state, only by abolishing the family.*”<sup>49</sup> To be sure, such radical notions of human development are strikingly absent in later movements for change in turn-of-the-century China.

What's important here is not only the radical utopianism of Kang's vision (although there is much to be said about his visionary politics), but the power of his

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 157.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 183.

rhetoric in relation to the messianic time of the Qing state. Throughout the *Da Tong Shu* Kang retains his focus not only on the progressive temporality of the Great Unity, but the real-time of the *everyday* in achieving the Age of Complete Peace-and-Equality. The abolition of human suffering through the dissolution of nations, families, races, bureaucracies, classes, and sexes, is all part of the project of achieving the Great Unity; but the Great Unity is in itself inevitable—it is part of the natural teleological time of Kang’s Confucian conception of the world. As Kang writes,

[i]t is certain that One World will eventually be reached...Confucius’s Era of Complete Peace-and-Equality, the Buddha’s Lotus World...Darwin’s utopia [sic], are realities of the future, and not empty imaginings.<sup>50</sup>

Although the progressive nature of Kang’s temporal world-view is a step removed from the messianic and cyclical time of the dynastic system, it is his insistence on the efficiency of everyday time that is of interest here.

It is Kang’s belief in *change* as the generative element in his reformist politics that illustrates his radical break with tradition. Never mind that he believed that the Great Unity was inevitable, it is the fact that he believed the Chinese could do something about it in their own lives that made all the difference. The Chinese were no longer subject to the whimsical rulership of the inevitable successions of heavenly appointed dynastic heads of state, be they benevolent or repressive. It was written in the cards that the world was headed toward an era of Complete Peace-and-Equality (that looks suspiciously derivative of Chinese culture), and it was up to the Chinese to do their part by playing their aces. Any more inactivity, any more *wasted time* was just putting off the inevitable—the bond that human suffering would no longer be a plague on the world

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 84.

body politic. The *Da Tong Shu* is liberally peppered with proscribed activities because they waste time, human energy, and human productivity. In describing the benefits of a universal spoken and written language Kang writes:

...it would transform useless years [spent learning multiple languages] into useful years, wasted mental energy into productive mental energy. If we take all the people of the world and try to figure out the surplus of mental time and energy which would be derived therefrom, the amount is incalculable.<sup>51</sup>

A universal decimal system to calculate and measure “will save much time and energy.”<sup>52</sup> Women’s relegation to the home “restrict[s] their usefulness [which] is contrary to their rights and responsibilities as human beings.”<sup>53</sup> Women’s “talents...have been *wasted* throughout history” because they have been barred from education which is “a violation of human rights; it is [a form] of enslavement.”<sup>54</sup> A privatized agricultural marketplace is an “incalculable waste of time, labour, and produce.”<sup>55</sup> Indeed, if this echoes the Marx of the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* it is because their parallel visions of utopia were both based on an ecumenical and millennial vision of the future, and both rooted in the failures of capitalist modernity *qua* the Age of Disorder. Kang You-wei and the other reformists’ seismic shift in conceptions of temporality, in both global and everyday time, were instrumental to the later revolutionaries’ ability to imagine revolution, and to topple the antiquated Qing state (as was the non- Western insurgency of the Philippines and Cuba, as Karl has argued).

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 94.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 101.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 154.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 154-5.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 216.

My goal has not been a shameless celebration of Kang You-wei's utopian schemes at creating a world free of human suffering and injustice. To be sure, the *Da Tong Shu* is redolent with reactionary Social Darwinian conceptions of racial hierarchy, schemes for wholesale racial resettlement that would result in the sped up process of lightening the darker races' skin, and many other such atrocious suggestions. The book even concludes with the vision of a Bellamy-esque authoritarian socialist utopia where "people will shave off all their hair except for that in the nose which fulfills the function of straining dust and impurities from the air," "people will eat their food in a liquid form—the essences extracted from solid matter...[t]here will be vapours inhaled to give a joyful intoxication," and work will be done not by servants, but by machines "shaped like birds and beasts."<sup>56</sup> Rather, my goal has been to highlight the ways in which the very context within which Kang was able to formulate such a scheme was significant because it suggested a dramatic change in conceptions of temporality itself that were more consonant with imaginings of a new inhabitation of modernity, a mode of being-in-the-world, that was central to the later projects of the revolutionaries—and even the activists of the May Fourth Movement of 1919<sup>57</sup>—in creating a global consciousness for modern China. The clash between the cyclical and messianic temporality of the waning Qing state (and of the dynastic system more generally) and the progressive, though teleological, temporality of the reformists led by Kang You-wei—the time of 'clock and calendar'—was one that ultimately resulted in a reformulation of the Chinese polity and its

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 273. Edward Bellamy's utopian novel had been published in paraphrased serial form in China between 1889-90 and must surely have influenced Kang's visions of the Great Unity. See Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*, 21.

<sup>57</sup> The May Fourth Movement was a popular revolt against the Eurocentrism of the Versailles Treaty. It is historiographically the paradigmatic expression of a final break with the "traditional" intellectual and political tendencies in China.

relationship to the Chinese state, whether dynastic in this case, or proto-fascist and communist later in the century.

## **Part 2: The Republican Advocate**

The U.S. figures in the following section as well as the rest of the chapter in several important ways. First, it is one of the conditioning sites of a revolutionary worldview for the Chinese students in Japan and elsewhere in the diaspora. Their idealization of that historicized moment, ‘1776,’ lent an aura to the students’ movement that infused it with the same impassioned spirit of liberty and patriotism that they imagined those early American republicans to have possessed. The U.S., and its revolutionary and anticolonial origins, provided the exterior example of an idealized political limit against which the students were to constitute their new revolutionary interiority and identity. Second, the fact that the U.S. represented one ideal model of political modernity for the revolutionaries was at times undermined by American’s insistence on white racial supremacy and Western cultural temporality. In this usage of temporality, as will be made clear below, I’m arguing that many Western supporters of the revolutionary government harbored sentiments that are reflected in their writings that suggest that it is China’s *premodern* ontology—i.e., an idealized cultural Confucianism, more static than the dynamic Confucianism of Kang You-wei—that it should turn to in order to construct its own styles of political modernity. Through their idealization of China, the Chinese, and Chinese culture, many of these Westerners ended up trying to isolate and freeze modern China within a static temporality. I argue that this palimpsestic imagination of China, with an idealized, and often Christian, worldview superimposed on

top of a layer of a reified and imaginative Chinese culturalism, is part of a larger framework of imperial power against which the revolutionaries had to contend in their own vision of China's political future. This serves as an interesting site of investigation not least because it demonstrates the ways in which sympathetic Americans still managed to produce and effectualize various techniques of power and to illustrate latent sensibilities about white racial superiority despite their support of republicanism in China, and at times, even their own close associations with China itself. And third, the very fact that the revolutionaries sought recognition from the U.S. in order to legitimize China's status as part of the family of nations necessarily set the two in a relationship of uneven power relations. As a result of China's weakened political and economic system after the fall of the Qing, the revolutionary government was in many ways dependent upon the U.S. not only as the instrumental site of its own national legitimacy, but as a potential source of economic aid, both of which, if attained, would increase an already existent U.S. imperial presence in China. In other words, for China to succeed as an 'independent' and 'sovereign' nation it had to compromise that very independence and sovereignty through a form of dependency upon the U.S. I will explore the paradoxical nature of this dynamic in more detail below.

### **Sympathetic Foreigners and the Revolutionary Republicans: Time and Space in Imperialist Modernities**

The China of the past is dying. But in the ashes of her death there is the leaven of a greater life, a magical spirit of modernization. And this leaven, this spirit, are rapidly regenerating and revitalizing the whole populace of the Orient. A fairer China rises from the debris of that disintegrated

dynasty. A new race is born, a new nation emerges from the Womb of War.<sup>58</sup>

The Wuchang uprising of 1911, which eventually led to the toppling of the Qing dynasty, was the denouement of over a decade of intellectual and political activity among the reformist intellectuals and the radical revolutionaries.<sup>59</sup> The core distinction between the revolutionaries and the reformists was their relationship to the Manchu dynasty. The reform agenda, as I outlined above, was more conservative in so far as it attempted to constitute reform within the reigning formations of political ‘legitimacy’—the dynastic system. The revolutionaries, on the other hand, despised the antiquated and congealed traditions of the Qing dynasty and sought the revolutionary overthrow and psychic dismantling of the older Chinese worldview—that of *tien xia*—in favor of a more modernized and global national state apparatus. Debates surged within the revolutionary camps about whether China should follow the paths of social democracy, constitutional monarchy, constitutional republicanism, or some combination thereof. In many ways the revolutionaries were less radical than some of the reformists—particularly Kang You-wei and his student Liang Qichao (though they had diverged intellectually and politically by the first decade of the twentieth century)—as far as their visions for social justice and universal human equality were concerned.<sup>60</sup> That said, however, neither camp sought anything other than the stability of China in a rapidly modernizing world. While many

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<sup>58</sup> From “The Dawn of Truth,” a manifesto of the Chinese-American League of Justice announcing the emergence of China onto the scene of global modernity. RA 2, no.5: 190.

<sup>59</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the Wuchang uprising see Spence, *Search*, 263-8.

<sup>60</sup> For more on Liang’s thought and importance in the Reform Period see Joseph R. Levenson, *Liang Ch’i-ch’ao and Mind of Modern China*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967); Philip Chung-chih Huang, *A Confucian Liberal: Liang Ch’i-ch’ao in Action and Thought*. (Ph.D. dissertation: University of Washington, 1966); Y.C. Wang, *Chinese Intellectuals and the West*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 193-229; and Hao Chang, *Liang Ch’i-ch’ao: An Intellectual Transition in China, 1890-1907*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971). For an insight into Liang’s writings see Liang Qichao, *Intellectual Trends in the Ch’ing Period*. trans., Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959).



revolutionaries lambasted the reformers for their faithful allegiance to the Qing, the reformists were themselves not necessarily ardent supporters of the foreign Qing, but were for a supposedly simpler and more practicable mode of change that would be the result of dynastic reform versus revolution. Indeed, Liang's thought just weeks after the Wuchang uprising were certainly not waxing nostalgic about the demise of the Qing, rather "Liang asserted that he would not take second place to the T'ung-meng Hui [the revolutionary party of Sun Yat-sen] in his hatred of the Manchus."<sup>61</sup> In the period following the aborted reform movement of 1898 the rhetoric of radical reform and revolution increasingly took form in the racialization of the Manchus as 'barbarian' invaders who had disgraced China during their reign. Indeed, the rallying cries of many of these early revolutionaries were slogans such as, "restore the Chinese," and "avenge the national disgrace."<sup>62</sup> This transition to a racialized rhetoric as a fundamental justification for revolution is surely indicative of a shift in conceptions about both China and the world. A more 'modern' framework to justify revolution would be hard to find.

The radical revolutionary class drew much of its energy from new learning that was outside of the traditional Chinese Confucian domain. Indeed, the majority of the revolutionaries who comprised the "new intelligentsia" had studied at Western style schools in Japan.<sup>63</sup> After China's defeat in 1895, Chinese studying abroad increased from nearly zero to several hundred. By 1905, the year the traditional Confucian examination system was abolished, the number of Chinese students in Japan had topped 2000. By

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<sup>61</sup> Ernest P. Young, "The Reformer as a Conspirator: Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and the 1911 Revolution," in *Approaches to Modern Chinese History*, ed. Albert Feuerwerker, Rhoads Murphey, Mary C. Wright (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 241.

<sup>62</sup> Spence, *Search*, 263.

<sup>63</sup> For a detailed study of the impact of Japan on the Chinese revolutionaries see Douglas R. Reynolds, *China, 1898-1912: The Xincheng Revolution and Japan*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

1908, estimates suggest that that number had increased to 17,000.<sup>64</sup> As the numbers show, these were obviously years of great intellectual ferment. Young Chinese (mostly men, but some women)<sup>65</sup> immersed themselves in these new domains of knowledge and thirstily drank in new ideas about progress, nation, liberty, freedom, and so on. Student societies and vernacular journals flourished, and many journals were even smuggled back to China for distribution. The journals express some of the dynamism of the moment, often with articles and translations pieced together willy-nilly, “an extract from Aristotle might be followed by a story from an obscure European newspaper, or an article by a noted Japanese historian might be sandwiched between a story by a minor French writer and an eyewitness account of Russian atrocities in Poland.”<sup>66</sup> Despite their eclectic nature, what these journals and their text represent are an increasing awareness of the *global* as the geography of world events, and more specifically awareness about China’s role in this global sphere. At one student meeting in 1901 “Wu Lu-chen, in a burst of revolutionary ardor, likened their meeting place to Independence Hall in Philadelphia.”<sup>67</sup> Indeed, by the turn of the century the mythology of American independence had become a part of the Chinese revolutionary vocabulary.

The large intellectual force represented by these Chinese students abroad in producing revolutionary change in China should not be underestimated. Indeed, by all accounts, their intellectual and political activity in this moment had a directly traceable

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<sup>64</sup> Gasster, *Chinese Intellectuals*, 31-2, n. 11.

<sup>65</sup> For an interesting essay about the role of educated women in the reform movement see Hu Ying’s essay, “Naming the First ‘New Woman,’” in Karl & Zarrow, eds., *Rethinking the 1898 Reform Period*, 180-211. Incidentally, this first “New Woman,” so named by Liang Qichao, was none other than Ida Kahn, a graduate of the University of Michigan’s Medical School in 1895.

<sup>66</sup> Gasster, *Chinese Intellectuals*, 34. Interestingly this moment of nationalist ferment represented many of the aspects that Benedict Anderson has argued are central to the conceptualization of a national imaginary—a developed print culture, a linguistic vernacular, a new sense of progressive time, etc.

<sup>67</sup> Gasster, *Chinese Intellectuals*, 34.

lineage down to the revolution of 1911. It should be made clear, however, that these students' desire for mass revolutionary change was not entirely a bottom-up affair. Surely the Chinese 'masses' were a part of the students' revolutionary vision, but they were still part of an intellectual elite. Although many of the students were from family and class backgrounds that would have made entry into the bureaucratic exam system an impossibility before 1905, they were

still an elite, like the Confucianists—no distinction there—for the nationalism had to be preached first by men who knew the world, at least more of the world than “provincials” would ever know...goaded by provincial unawareness, they were hortatory and lofty, to make provincials *see* the nation which the elite could not but see.<sup>68</sup>

Indeed as will be clear below, the revolutionary government, and many revolutionaries themselves, were deeply out of touch with the so called “provincials.” In “The Returned Students and the Coolie,” by Yale student Hyne Sun, Hyne writes in a self congratulatory mood about the indispensable role played by foreign Chinese students in building a “modern powerful state,” for the benefit—and because of their innate capacity—of the “coolie...a class for whose general misery and direful ignorance we can find no equivalent in any modern country, except India.”<sup>69</sup> It was within this comparatively narrow discursive space of political modernity that the RA took its form and reached its audience.

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<sup>68</sup> Joseph Levenson, “The Province, the Nation, the World,” 271, italics in original. See also John Fincher’s essay, “Political Provincialism and the National Revolution,” as well as Mary B. Rankin’s essay, “The Revolutionary Moment in Chekiang: A Study in the Tenacity of Tradition,” both in Mary C. Wright, ed., *China in Revolution: The First Phase 1900-1913*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 185-228, and 319-364.

<sup>69</sup> RA 2, no. 18: 735-7. The figuration of India as somehow always worse off than China is fairly common throughout the RA, and seems to illustrate quite clearly the need for the Chinese to define their own condition against that which is always already some form of lack—in this case India. In the U.S. this can be seen quite clearly in the consolidation of poor white racial identity in contradistinction to black racial identity.

The RA was a Chinese-run English language weekly printed out of Shanghai devoted to the cause of republicanism in China and disseminating news from both within China and from the rest of the world. This global perspective, necessary if the republic was to succeed, can be seen in the structure of the RA itself. Each issue followed essentially the same format: it began with editorials that discussed issues both in China and abroad, followed with a section called “Notes and Comments” which consisted of brief bits of news regarding world events—usually involving China or greater East Asia in some form, then moved on to a section reprinting articles from various vernacular newspapers across China, had a section devoted entirely to domestic news, ran new Presidential mandates and resolutions, printed notes from correspondents in other areas of China as well as abroad, solicited and reprinted lengthy articles revolving around the political situation in the new republic, gave statistics on “finance, industry, and commerce,” and ended with “News of the week,”—which could be from China or elsewhere in the world. The following section will deal primarily with letters and articles to and for the RA from sympathetic Westerners (some whose nationalities are unidentifiable, and others like C. Spurgeon Medhurst, the most frequent interlocutor by far, who was English, though in many ways considered himself to be a ‘part of China.’) and responses, both direct and indirect, from the Chinese whose views ranged from those rooted in Chinese civilizationist supremacy, to those who would dispense with all things related to the ‘old China,’ and even those whose view was a seemingly contradictory conflation of these two currents. My goal is to illustrate the complicated imaginings of China’s political future from both foreign and Chinese perspectives, particularly the ways in which each group constructed an immanent Chinese modernity.

In the very first issue of the RA, C. Spurgeon Medhurst<sup>70</sup> published an article titled “The Coming Age of Machinery in China.”<sup>71</sup> In it he argued, in language frighteningly similar to Marx’s own on alienation, that the perils of industrial modernity were in short sight of China’s future, and that in order to avoid the moral and spiritual ruin that the West had succumbed to, China must “review...[its]...past centuries with a re-statement of the teachings of her best men [sic] in light of present day problems.” The ruin of modernity was expressed through claims such as the fact that science had already “crushed...handicrafts...out of existence,” in the West, the mechanization of labor would alter “[t]he patient handworker [who had] filled the Orient with poetry,” into a mere cog who had been pushed into “the hideous and unnecessary blunder of turning life...into prose. Production should always be an expression of the people’s life, but machinery has made it a self-contained business managed by professionals.” Medhurst goes on to lament the inevitable introduction of machinery and mechanization into China, and cautions against the fantastic visions of what industrialization might reign in:

[I]ncreased production ought to mean increased comfort for everyone, and for children, leisure from all labour other than the labour of education. It *will* mean this is wealth rank and power recognize their duties, and if the Public Conscience be so trained that it will make all feel that Patriotism consists in each contributing to the common good according to his [sic] ability.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Medhurst has proved an elusive character for me to locate. His contributions to the RA are numerous, he certainly shared the radical utopian visions of Kang—though with a more distinctly Marxist worldview (although he never mentions Marx specifically)—he had been a resident of China for nearly thirty years, was a radical Christian—but not a missionary. At points Medhurst seems to identify himself as English, but he has also “lived...in America, in Africa, in India and in China.” Despite his relative imbrication in the intellectual life of early republican Shanghai, if not China itself, I have been unable to find any biographical information whatsoever. The possibility does exist that Medhurst was a pseudonym, but for whom I can’t guess.

<sup>71</sup> RA 1, no.1: 22-3.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 22-3. Italics and odd capitalization in original.

Medhurst then goes on to assert, in a moment of prognosticatory projection, that not only China, but indeed the whole world, will benefit from China's alternative trajectory to capitalist modernity and political modernization. The U.S. and Europe cannot "give Asia a very strong lead in the matter" of how to inhabit the potential nightmare of modernity, instead, it is China whose modernity will be a model for the rest of the world. Various trajectories of modernity become the laboratory of political experimentation in which Medhurst places China. China's "not yet," to borrow an appropriate phrase from Dipesh Chakrabarty<sup>73</sup>, is here constructed as a "now," but a now that must turn backwards to the premodern past in order to "become," in modernity. Surely this is a strange temporal trajectory. Perhaps radical in its unconscious moves against the historicist grain, Medhurst nevertheless prohibits a 'real' vision of modern China from emerging (at least within his own mind) even though the exact Chinese modernity that he cautions against was in fact unfolding around him in the days of the early republic.

In this moment Europe and the U.S. were the modular *sine qua non* for the nascent republic's own visions of its political future. For Medhurst this represents a logistical lacuna in his relationship to China, although not necessarily to *his* China. I would like to bracket this expression of power—the ability to cast China into a rhetorical past in order to create an imaginary present—for the moment and return to it later in the chapter. For now, I will turn to some other examples of this and similar forms of strange temporality.

Five weeks later the RA printed "The East and West and their Search for the Common Truth," a copy of a lecture given by the German Count Hermann Keyserling at

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<sup>73</sup> Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, esp. 3-23.

the International Congress of Philosophy in Bologna. In his lecture (which is printed in its entirety throughout several issues of the RA) Keyserling engages in some interesting discursive acrobatics through his use of China as a conduit to recognizing and perfecting the Western self. He begins by noting the trendy Western fascination with things Chinese, a kind of collectors impulse or anthropology of difference is what Keyserling argues to be the basis of this form of Orientalism (though he does not use the term). This “is nothing more than curiosity,” and one suspects that he attributes it to the quotidian fetishization of Chinoiserie and so on. A second form of Orientalism that Keyserling points to, which is decidedly more ‘authentic’ in its purpose, and the form in which he participates, is a “serious...interest...” born of “thoughtful-minded[ness]” motivated not so much by “the East as a particular empirical phenomenon, it is, as it is the case with every true interest, because of themselves [ Western philosophers of the East].” The Western philosopher of the East is interested, or ‘curious,’ not because the East, or in this case China, is intrinsically an interesting locus of intellectual inquiry, but because it is a ghostlike doorway into the ancient soul of the Western self—the key to Western philosophy itself. “At the present stage of evolution our [the West’s] success in science, technique, machinery, and so on, has concentrated all our attention outwards, so that the *real thing* is becoming lost amidst the complexity of the apparatus.”<sup>74</sup>

The so called ‘real thing’ is in this case a pure form of Western selfhood (with no distinction drawn between different European nations or the U.S. as constitutive of the West, and so my assumption is that the shared quality of Westernness is whiteness), an essence itself untouched by the modern and the perils associated with the nightmarish

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<sup>74</sup> Italics here are my own.

advance of capitalist modernity so vividly laid out by Medhurst. This self has been lost in the maelstrom of modernity and must now be recovered by looking backwards, towards the “other side of Reality, the reality within, the Spirit, the life,” all things that can now only be found in the East. This is where the East becomes important, because it is the base layer of the palimpsest of humanity whose newest text is the ‘progress of man,’ the story of the ‘fittest’ who had ‘survived’ the turbulent transition to modernity with at least their ‘reality’ intact. To read this base layer, to be ‘curious,’ about its translation, is to be near the key to the puzzle of Western ontology. I quote Keyserling at some length below to give a clearer insight into his argument here:

We suddenly [find] that the East [has] for ages been in possession of the very *truth*, the very realities we [are] just beginning to realize. We could not have made this discovery sooner, because, as I have already explained, it is not possible to understand anything which we [again, ‘we’ as the Western mind] do not already sub-consciously know. *But from the moment that we began to know ourselves, the reality within ourselves, we commenced to understand the East also.* Now you know why all of us—all of us I mean who are really interested in the deep problems of life—are so fascinated by the East; *it presents us with an image, an expression of ourselves, with a key to that which is beyond East and West—the very heart of mankind.*<sup>75</sup>

In reading this piece, one is struck by the shocking absence of the so-called East in its uniqueness: rather it is merely a rhetorical reflection of the West, an obscured mirror image previously blocked by the edifice of capitalist modernity. Keyserling, whose own interest in Asia was born out of a “profound sympathy with the East which first led [him] to first understand India and then China,” and an “ardent desire to obtain a full understanding of those old and magnificent civilizations,” nevertheless is guilty of the near absolute erasure of Asia as itself in his lecture. The conclusion of this first

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<sup>75</sup> All of the quotes from the Keyserling piece are drawn from , RA 1, no. 5: 177-80. Italics mine.



installment of his lecture is, in essence, that the ‘heart of mankind’ is Western, and that somehow it got lost in the unsettling thrusts of EuroAmerican modernity, and the only path to finding it runs through an excavation of the self that explores the deep recesses of a past that can be glimpsed in ‘real time’ only in the laboratory of Asia—which one must assume is a representation of what mankind was like ‘back then.’ Again, although Keyserling’s arguments and conclusions are quite different from Medhurst’s, the articulation of China in both articles serve similar functions. It is as a *tabula rasa* upon which to narrate a utopian vision of modernity that repairs the chaos and degeneration that each author sees Western modernity having wrought in the West, a utopia that may include China within it, but a China that is surely divorced from its own origins as the site of ‘truth,’ utopia, or some other form of an idealized modernity.

In a speech delivered to the World Chinese Students’ Federation in Shanghai on April 21, 1913, titled “Regeneration through Education,” the German educator Alfred Westharp gave an ominous appraisal of the perils that faced China if she were unable to resist the illusory lure of Western education, what the Japanese thinker Okakura Kakuzo named “The White Disaster.”<sup>76</sup> Again, as with Medhurst and Keyserling before, Westharp is urging China to avoid the inevitability of capitalist modernity—at least the inevitability of the form it took in the West—by returning to the teachings of her ancient sages Confucius and Mencius. Westharp exclaims that China has already succumbed too deeply to the seductive allure of the West, “[i]s China still China enough to have the courage to ask herself: What from our Chinese point of view, is this foreign ‘education?’” Indeed his usage of the possessive pronoun “our” is interesting and instructive here

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<sup>76</sup> All quotes in the following section are drawn from the transcript of Westharp’s speech as reprinted in the *RA* 2, no. 6.: 223-26, and *RA* 2, no. 7: 264-9.

because Westharp considered himself Chinese, if not racially, then certainly culturally—“your, and if you will allow me, my China”—and yet illustrates a deep outsider’s elegiacism for an imagined China that many of his revolutionary audience members could do without. In addition, Westharp’s fears about whether China will remain “China enough” do not appear to be motivated by a sense of imminent partition as many Chinese contemporaries’ worries were. His insistence that the past constituted the site through which China should (re)articulate its inhabitation of modernity was premised on a totally idealized vision of China’s storied cultural past—one with no violence, bloodshed, crises of legitimation, and so on—one overflowing with abundant aestheticism and metaphysical truths. If China would only “look a little nearer at what makes you now so blind, you would find that the most advanced Europe comes back to K’ung Fu-tzu [Confucius], whilst you, Mother of K’ung Fu-tzu abandon your hero,” she might still be able to enter the future (i.e., global modernity) differently. If she would only avoid the “intoxica[tion]” of her “soul” by resisting the “inviab[le]” temptations of Western technology and modernization, then she might avert a disaster worse and more “dangerous” than “opium ever did” to China. *Western* learning was “instructive” (i.e., teachable) while Chinese learning was “experiential,” a more organic form of self expression that drew from the reservoir of an essentialized humanity. It was transhistorical, always relevant; Chinese learning did not rely on historical or conditional specificity, nor did it rest on questionable ethical or moral foundations like accumulation, “ownership,” and “materialism,” a social condition where “everybody wishes possessions, [yet] no one possesses... where [y]our riches are not yours, because your neighbour watches, that he may take them from you at the earliest possible moment.”

*Western* modernity was untenable as a living system, it would inevitably implode (as so many philosophers agreed) under the weight of the heavy burdens of history it was creating for itself. Its religio-philosophical foundation was cracked, “European religion, in its pure and sublime essence is... impossible to live after.” Even though those Chinese who wished to modernize and compete in a global economic and political arena believed that the result of Western style modernization was “splendid,” “China ha[d] long enough forgotten to consider reality [i.e., a foundational Confucian world view]; in this moment China must face the facts, and not criticize; China must *act, and not endeavour to understand or even think.*”<sup>77</sup> Indeed, the crises of capitalist modernity in Europe and the U.S. were precisely a result of the kind of “instructive” pedagogy mentioned above. “What the West will have to pay for so bitterly in blood and tears, with national and commercial catastrophes, is just the lack of moral education [i.e., Chinese] which we have mentioned.”

Surely Westharp, Medhurst, and Keyserling, sought a brighter future for China than what they had all in some form another ‘left behind’ in the West. However, it is the uncanny ways in which China figures as a literal *form* (an accreted congeries of meanings) of crisis management that is of supreme interest. It is *not* that China has found some sort of essential and perfected modality of emergence into the global modern, rather, it is precisely that these authors can superimpose the ideation of such a perfection that renders China as important in fundamental ways to their own processes of self-making. The crisis of modernity, and here we mustn’t forget the context of a looming European war, was a political terrain that these authors, and surely many others like

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<sup>77</sup> Italics mine.

them, found nearly impossible to navigate. They wished to recuse themselves from direct action in that domain, and sought instead to reconfigure modernity through the scripting of China's emergence into it. To do so, and surely because of their various degrees of disconnect from China as emergent nation, they were able to, and had to, pass judgment and make claims for Chinese futurity through a creative interweaving of reified and utopian fantasies of Chinese civilizational history with their acute sense of social, economic, and political degeneration in Europe and the U.S. It was precisely because of their liminal positioning within the spaces of an emergent global modern in China, and those of an increasingly dystopian Western modernity that Medhurst, Keyserling, Westharp, and others like them were able to both articulate visions of a more just future and take over (at least in the unconscious projections of their own power) the piloting of China's flight into the perilous though inevitable future of capitalist modernity. Indeed, it was their very ability to express these utopian longings that reflects the existence of an expression of power that they sought to cleanse themselves of.

This next section explores the articulation of a distinctly different conception of Chinese being-in-the-world from the perspective of the revolutionary republicans themselves. In their writings in the RA, the Chinese contributors take the opposite tack and rely on the West, and its "instructive" modes of learning and teaching, for their model of emergence onto the terrain of the global modern. In many ways, the West exists in their writings as the manager of the crises they were struggling with as the actual builders of a new political identity and material state. They were not in a position of privilege to wax philosophic about how the sages' prophetic teachings might guide China out of the stormy winds of industrialization and political modernity. Instead, they sought

to emulate the West because the West was proof positive of how to become modernity itself, whether it was destined for inevitable failure or not. It certainly had not failed yet.

Much of the writing I explore below is in the form of responses to pieces like those by Medhurst, Keyserling, Westharp and many others. The Chinese contributors to the RA were not fooled by the unimplementable utopianism of Medhurst et al., instead they were looking for practicable methods of state formation and a guarantee that China would be both politically and economically solvent for at least the immediately foreseeable future. All the evidence suggests that the RA was a forum for debate (although there is one instance in which a debate about state religion had to be cut off), a site of multiple viewpoints, and of conflicting positions. Indeed the fact that articles like “The Coming Age of Machinery in China,” or another characteristic Medhurst piece, “Western Practices and Eastern Ideals,” in which “China [was]...in the unique position of being able to set the key-note for the new World-civilisation by blending...the... Western idea of Liberty with the eastern conception of obedience,” were run in the RA suggests that its international<sup>78</sup> readership was interested in some ways in Westerners’ celebration of China’s past, while the Chinese themselves could concentrate more fiercely on the more practical task of building a nation from the debris of a collapsed empire.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Letters sent in to the RA from places like the U.S. were fairly common. In *RA* 2, no. 5: 196-7, a letter from P.O. Hannon says that he has two subscriptions, one for himself and one he sends to the U.S. Also in *RA* 2, no.32: 1347, “A constant foreign reader” writes that the RA “is the best paper for giving Chinese news from a Chinese point of view...[and] ought to be widely read and enjoyed by all who are interested in China.”

<sup>79</sup> Medhurst, “Western Practices and Eastern Ideals,” *RA* 1, no. 5: 185-8.

In a letter to the editors of the RA dated Nov. 25, 1912, C. Spurgeon Medhurst made a number of suggestions about China's national defense.<sup>80</sup> He was responding to an earlier article in the RA where calls by Chinese and Japanese to strengthen China militarily as a key strategy for maintaining East Asian regional autonomy were aired—what Japanese Count Okuma, president of Japan's Waseda University, argued was central because of the danger of China “becoming the vortex of international complications.” What the Chinese were concerned with—their military weakness—Medhurst construes as a mistaken location for China to turn to in order to bring itself into national, economic, and political autonomy. Instead he finds the problem in “moral weak[ness],” in the delusions of the original anonymous author's “narrow and personal” vision (by narrow and personal I assume Medhurst means martial and Chinese). Medhurst says to the original author, you “[wrote] in the seclusion of the valley, and the mists that prevail there have obscured your vision. I invite you to accompany me to the mountain top where you will obtain perspective.” He finds the article filled with “half truths, and half truths are the most dangerous form of lies.” The lies are the calls to the Chinese to militarize, to volunteer for the army, to institute a draft, all in the name of a fortified modern nation state. In Medhurst's idealist ecumenicism he calls not for personal or national “vanity or self-love,” but for a return to “[China's] former reliance on justice,” back to her guiding principle “Moral Force [*sic*].” He is saddened by the destruction wrought by imperialism: “I have often wondered if the English people who stay at home would not be better off if their island were not a world empire; in the same way it seems to me that China, excepting in her feelings, would suffer no hurt even

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<sup>80</sup> “The Question of National Defence,” *RA* 1, no. 35: 1399-1401. Medhurst's letter is itself a response to an article in the RA also titled “The Question of National Defence,” in *RA* 1, no. 32: 1249-52.

though all her dependencies were lopped off.” This is surely a grandly humanist vision, and for that it should be lauded in its dedication to the larger goal of human equality and peace, but the reality of the Chinese situation, at least as far as the revolutionary republicans were concerned, was not hurt feelings over the potential loss of its colonies like Manchuria and Tibet, but the fact that China itself might be lopped, not off, but up.

The revolutionaries were not in a position to create a new China as an example to the world of ‘right nationhood.’ Instead, the republicans felt themselves strangled by the world, particularly the Western world, and sensed they had no choice but to try and play the game of statecraft lest China itself vanish. Although it may be true that little has historically been gained in the name of justice by “seizing the sword,” China still felt that if it did not do so, and do so quickly, she might not survive in the new world of global modernity; and if that was the case, she surely wouldn’t fulfill her “Heaven-given mission...to become the great world peacemaker by becoming morally mighty.” Medhurst’s intentions and his heart are unquestionable in their convictions regarding the moral, ethical, and spiritual universe, but the practicality of his visions are verily non-existent. Surely a world free of violence, famine, greed, malice, and so on would be ideal, but the possibility for its emergence in China was not only unreal, but given the context, nearly farcical.

Medhurst’s letter aroused the patriotic and martial sentiments of many Chinese who read it. Perhaps none more so than “Pro Patria,” in his response printed on Feb. 1, 1913.<sup>81</sup> In his letter he counters Medhurst’s “two-pence...much-at-a-discount-in-the-Christian-West maxim” of moral might and spiritual strength by forcefully arguing that if

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<sup>81</sup> RA 1, no. 44: 1757-9.

China does not militarize she will be colonized. Responding to Medhurst's claim that China would be better off not being bothered by having her territories "lopped off," Pro Patria exclaims:

In plain, he [Medhurst] would like to see the "Chinese Giant" (the cartoon forming your frontispiece) submit to the process of lopping off of his [sic] legs up to the buttock, and of his hands up to the armpits, without a groan, mark you, but with a righteous smile!...I wonder how would Mr. Medhurst behave if some thieves broke into his house and carried his shoes and boots away. [sic] Would he sit quietly by, and smiling his best, say to the thieves: "And take all my coats and trousers also?" And suffer no hurt even though all his garments were "lopped off?"

Clearly Patria is feeling that China does not have the luxury or the option of sitting idly by as her autonomy is slowly integrated into other national formations. Indeed, if this were China's fate it would be entirely because she did not "seize the sword." Patria asks Medhurst "What has England not gained by seizing the sword? And I will answer him my own question by stating a few good things in this world gained by England, viz., diamond fields...Gold fields...[and the] Opium trade." Patria argues that Medhurst's non-violence and pacifism amount not to a strenuous Chinese morality, but to a "physically weak" China. Continuing, Patria asserts that China has no need for the idealized Christian preachings of Medhurst and his ilk, but that his rhetoric might be better disposed "advis[ing] the Nations of Christendom to disarm all their fighting men, and to "cart" all the armaments to the Pacific Ocean, and to sink them there. This done, then come over and help the "Heathen Chinese." Meanwhile China must "**Think Militarily,**" (bold text in original) and should "**Arm her sons with a vengeance.**" (bold text in original) Although a little frightening in its fervor, Patria's sentiments are nevertheless important in their clear illustration of the unfeasibility of implementing utopian schemes on the real 'battleground' of post-revolutionary China. Patria's



sensitivity to the realities of Western imperialism and its motive military force is surely not lost on the reader. It is precisely Patria's awareness of the facts and dynamics of imperialism that can be used to illustrate the complicated ways in which China both needed *and needed to fight off* Western colonial processes. The future of republicanism in China had in many ways been decided before the first gun of the revolution was even fired. To enter the global modern in the midst of early-twentieth-century capitalist modernity was to necessarily enter it on its own terms, to attempt otherwise was to submit to inevitable failure. China entered a historical condition in which its viability as a modern nation state was already conditioned by Western imperialism, and not just because there was already an imperial presence in the foreign concessions. China needed money for economic solvency, this problem could only be solved through the guarantee of loans, and those loans could only ensure economic dependency. Likewise, China needed to be recognized as a modern nation before she could effectively deploy herself internationally as a legitimate national state, and to be recognized in the family of nations was to be interpellated into it as a state that was peripheral. And, as Patria showed above, in order not to be dominated militarily, China had to militarize, which would only win her more potential enemies in the international arena. These are key contradictions that erupt in the spaces of transition in China's emergence into its own particular modernity. Let us examine one more example of this uneven and fraught emergence.

In the article, "Ethical Teaching and Government Schools," by Mu Tso-lin, reprinted from the *Chinese Students' Journal*, Mu sets forth a very practicable program for a new state education in modern China. It must be ethical, and inculcate a sense of moral and social justice in its students. It should not be the domain of the parents, but a

responsibility of the state. In modern states “the education of the people is recognized as the high and weighty responsibility of the state.”<sup>82</sup> And it must, in Mu’s estimation, “fulfill two conditions:”

It must be truly *national*—inclusive, unsectarian, accessible to the whole community. The right of citizenship carries with it the right to share upon equal terms in that which is provided by the state. [Second] it must be truly a *system*,—not merely provision for instruction in several disjointed departments of knowledge, but a constructive scheme, having a central aim, an architectonic principle, a dominating purpose.<sup>83</sup>

For Mu, the fundamental purpose of education is its construction of a functional citizen. Education “operates powerfully in the training of feeling, the cultivation of tastes, the creation of sentiments, the formation of habits, the moulding of character,” but the form that sentiment, habit and character take are for Mu central to the constitution of nationhood. Mu harbors few illusions about the decline of aesthetics in the machine age, and is in fact quite willing to be a part of that decline in ways that would make Medhurst cringe in disgust. For Mu aesthetic instruction (and he does use the term ‘instruction,’ which Westharp decries) is well and good, but “not of paramount importance.” Aesthetics cannot produce ethics, or so Mu argues, “[t]here are other things which are more practical...[than aesthetics that] have to do with the commonplaces of disposition and conduct; with comradeship, peace, and love...[h]ence any national system of education, to be true, and worthy...[must have]...ethical training [as its]...central feature.” This is not so far from the Western displacements of utopian longing onto China as written about above, but what it does not share is their sense of nostalgia.

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<sup>82</sup> All quotes from Mu’s article are from *RA* 1, no. 23: 911-5.

<sup>83</sup> Italics in original.

Mu is forward looking, pragmatic, and most importantly he is urgent. Mu's ethical education has a very material element to it as well, one that is missing from the Western abstractions about China's past/future. The teacher is the key to the formation of the ethical subject, but the relationship is not unidirectional, that of the malleable young mind existing to be molded by the best and the brightest. Instead, Mu maps a very complex and multidirectional mutuality between teacher and student—both of whom are elementally the same in their shared national citizenship.

Let us remember that the schoolteacher is the creature of public opinion, and made largely what he is by the ordinary citizen...[who]...must recognize he has much to do in this matter. He may exercise the strongest influence on education by careful discharge of his civic duties...He may, in his own personal life cultivate virtues of mind and character which shall sweeten the atmosphere of the coming generation.

Here Mu has mapped a path towards modernity that seeks to avoid the pitfalls of capitalist production and its necessarily degenerate system of ethics, and pragmatically constructs a course of education that would be practicable for China's future. The urgency of Mu's plan is not in doubt, neither in his writing nor through a view of the historical conditions of his writing, and thus he does not have the liberty of philosophy like the Western contributors to the debates about China's future. His relationship to the new republic and his investment in its viability necessarily plunges him into the perilous currents of state formation. Mu cannot view China as pure laboratory or as a site where dystopian nightmares of Western decadence and depravity can be turned into fantastic dreams of a peaceable kingdom on earth. China is his country, his *nation*, and without the efforts of the Chinese themselves in the construction of its new political modernity it will not only cease to be a laboratory for foreign nationalist imaginings, but might cease to be a project of state formation at all. Surely what I suggest is perhaps slightly exaggerated,

but the point is that the realness of an investment in a nationalism that has an organic geographic elementality to it—that is one of racial or ethnic affiliation, which Medhurst et al., distinctly lack—is generative of a very different political sensibility than that of the Western utopian socialists (or Chinese utopian socialists for that matter) whose disengagement from the material provide them with the absence of proscriptions in their formulations of Chinese modernity. It is the very lack of expressive options, the restrictions placed on the imagination by the Western material capitalist world, the urgent need to build with little experimentation, that is the conditioning context for the revolutionaries in China. Their need to produce a viable political state, a competitive global economy, etc., is absolutely dependent on the West for both models (because whatever the failures are of Western capitalist modernity, its borders condition the survival of any political formation that seeks to be modern itself) and for the task of national recognition qua legitimation. The refusal to recognize the reality of this relationship, or the rhetorical displacement of it into a fetishized and fantastic past, is not only a privilege of the West, but is an expression of an implicit recognition of superiority through a disengagement with the real lives of the Chinese with whom Medhurst and others thought they were affiliated.

### **The Republican State, the Revolutionaries, and the United States: The Contradictions of Recognition**

After the successful revolution of 1911 the new republican government had before itself a number of incredible tasks. The decadence of the Empress Dowager, coupled with the harsh indemnities imposed on China from the Opium War through the Boxer Rebellion, had essentially bankrupted the Chinese state. The imperial coffers had

been bled dry, and the republican government had inherited this problem. Financial stability is the key to a successful political regime, and this setback would plague China from the beginning of her attempts to inhabit a new political modernity. One of the first steps undertaken by the new government was to secure a loan from the Western powers to help finance the establishment and growth of an industrial apparatus in republican China. The so called ‘Six Powers Loan,’<sup>84</sup> was an attempt to contract money from the EuroAmerican Powers: England, Germany, France, Russia, Japan (again, which had become part of the ‘West’ after 1905) and the United States. As is already apparent, the very constitution of the loan group consisted entirely of nations with imperial pretensions in China.<sup>85</sup> And yet, in order for the republic to continue and be solvent, the guarantee of these monies was indispensable. This quagmire had situated the republic’s own existence as intrinsically conditioned by the dynamics of imperialism in the early-twentieth-century global arena. Although President Yuan Shikai came under intense criticism after he illegally contracted the loan, his intentions were nevertheless in the interest of the continued viability of the government and the nation. Yuan was in a bind in relationship to the governance of China; to refuse the loan would be to court financial and thus state failure, and to contract it would be to increase the presence of imperialist power in China and render it financially dependent on foreign powers as long as the loan was

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<sup>84</sup> The loan began as a four power loan, inflated to six, and was eventually unconstitutionally signed by the Chinese President and select members of his cabinet with five powers, those mentioned above minus the U.S., which withdrew under the presidency of Wilson.

<sup>85</sup> Although there is sometimes a striking absence regarding EuroAmerican imperialism when it comes to the topic of the loan, the RA seemed to insist on the fact that the U.S. had *no* imperial designs in Asia. Consider the following excerpt from the article, “American Education in the Philippines,” “The Americans are trying a unique experience in colonial government in the Philippine Islands and so far as one can see with success. The entrance of the American on the stage in the Orient was dramatic. He did not claim conquest, he does not care to colonize, he simply occupies the Philippines until such time as he thinks the ‘Little Brown Brother’ no longer needs him as a guardian.” Indeed, throughout the entire run of the RA there are almost countless instances where the U.S. is regarded as China’s dearest ally, despite its refusal to recognize China, and its shameless policies of racial exclusion. *RA* 1, no. 3: 100.

outstanding—which it would be given the interest rates at which it was signed. The thread of recognition is woven tightly into the loan debacle as well. International recognition would require that the EuroAmerican powers contract the loans at rates that were fair and in keeping with international diplomacy. The powers had essentially no responsibility to an unrecognized China. Thus, China’s fight for recognition revolved not just around the pithy decisions of the Western powers to deny or delay recognition, but was deeply imbricated in the logics of power and finance that dominated the imperialist context of early-twentieth-century capitalist modernity. Interestingly, this is a fact that remains starkly absent in the pages of the RA. The central thrust in the claims for recognition within the journal circulated around the argument that according to all the protocols of international diplomacy China had in fact established itself as a sovereign nation and was therefore entitled to recognition. Any denial of it would be counter to the rules of international relations and obligation.

In the second issue of the RA, Chao-Chu Wu’s article, “Plea for Recognition,”<sup>86</sup> follows a simple logical argument for why China “ought to be at once...accorded...recognition...according to the principles of international law and common justice.” Quoting the law that is applicable to the recognition of new governments: “...so long as a person or body of persons are indisputably in possession of the required power foreign states treat with them as the organ of the state...so soon as they cease to be the actual organ, foreign states cease dealing with them; and it is usual, if the change is unquestionably final, to open relations with their successors,” Wu argues that China is undoubtedly in possession of a *de facto* government, and as such must be

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<sup>86</sup> RA 1, no. 2: 55.

accorded recognition according to the laws of diplomacy. Wu's argument sets the tone for the majority of articles about recognition that follow in the next year and a half of the RA. The argument is rarely made that the withholding of recognition might be an effect of imperial power and privilege that the Western nations had over China. The refusal of the Chinese to recognize in the pages of the RA that their government was at best only tenuously stable, not only illustrates the power of the residue of an older belief in civilizationist supremacy—or what by this time was a watered down sense of civilizational equivalence—but effectively erases the prescient question of Western imperialism in Asia. This is made even more striking given the fact that the early twentieth century was the age of ascendant U.S. imperialism in the Pacific and the Caribbean.

The Chinese American perspective as it was expressed within the RA shared some similarities with the Chinese positions, although the evidence suggests that the Chinese in the U.S. were more in touch with the economic realities of the early-twentieth-century economic world—or at least they were willing to read the realities of Chinese republicanism from the angle afforded by that perspective. In a reprint of the article, “The Present Situation in China,” written by Ng Poon Chew, the editor of the largest San Francisco Chinese language paper *Chung-si-jih pao* (in most Asian American historiography this is transliterated as *Chung Sai Yat Po*) this is made clear. Chew's central concern is for the guarantee of a vibrant Chinese republican state. The changes wrought by the “epoch making revolution” have left China in a precarious and “profoundly complicated” situation. He continues

Her [China's] destiny, whether she is to live and develop into a great commonwealth as her leaders intended that she should, and enjoy the full fruition of the wonderful change which she has so completely undergone, or to expire as an untimely victim on the altar of democracy, depends upon the intelligence of her leaders and the patriotism of her people, on one hand, and on the actions of the Powers on the other.<sup>87</sup>

The situation in China is one of economic instability, and this is, “from the standpoint of the West,” according to Chew, an unsatisfactory and “extremely irritating” problem. The irritant is not so much the damaging effects of state and individual poverty—famine and so on—upon the Chinese themselves; no such moral concern motivates the Western perspective. Rather, it is “because it inconveniences the foreigners’ commercial enterprise in [China].”

Without a solid and stable foreign commercial apparatus in place in China the success of republicanism and state formation are imperiled. This is both a fact and an effect of the proliferating excesses of global capitalism. Like *Pro Patria*, Chew is no stranger to the realities of military power in the imperialist context. No country can maintain sovereignty if she is militarily weak, and doubly so if she is in financial straits as well. “As long as China remains military [sic] weak she will remain unrespected, and be imported upon [sic] and bull-dozed by any Tom, Dick and Harry nation that can wield a big stick,” bellows Chew. But the quandary is, again, that in order for China to be militarily strong she must have money. And in order for China to have money, she must engage in foreign economic intercourse at a disadvantage. To do so would not only compromise her sovereignty through economic constraints and dependencies, but could in fact prohibit the militarization that Chew and *Pro Patria* both believe to be quintessential to the guaranteed stability of the republican regime. And yet, inevitably,

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<sup>87</sup> This and all other quotes from Chew can be found in the *RA* 2, no. 3: 107-10, and *RA* 2, no. 4: 143-8.



this is the contradiction that Chew has to navigate here. He does not attempt to do it, as the Chinese contributors to the RA do, through the hortatory repetition of China's *de facto* government. Instead, perhaps more pragmatically, Chew attempts to pull the U.S. into the fray of recognition and economic aid by appealing to the U.S.' own capitalist appetites with little attention paid to the U.S.' supposed motivations by independence, liberty, republicanism and so on. Chew argues

[t]hat the Republic of China is a child of the greater Republic of the United States...Our leaders in the Revolution and in the Republican government have been mostly educated in your institutions of learning, have lived among you and breathed your spirit of liberty [although Chew's adopted home of San Francisco was the center of U.S. power for the exclusion apparatus, particularly the immigration station on Angel Island], and have learned to appreciate your institutions, and when they returned to China they have breathed into the atmosphere this spirit, hence our form of constitution will probably be modeled after your form.

In spite of this idealistic liberalism Chew nevertheless ends his piece by appealing to the U.S. for economic intervention not based on a set of moral principles and ethical obligations, but by enticing the U.S. into a relationship that Europe has lost as long as it refuses to negotiate a loan:

It is a rare chance for the United States to win and control the lion's share in China's foreign commerce of the future. It is of vital interest to the Pacific coast. China, with four hundred million souls adapting themselves to modern conditions, will consume far more than they can produce for years to come. Now this is a golden opportunity that is presented to you. Will you let it pass?

Given the constraints of an expanding capitalist modernity on a fledgling republic, China is left with little choice but to be adopted into the logics and networks of imperialist power. The sovereignty imagined by Chew and others was surely an illusory one.<sup>88</sup>

To justify their claims for recognition, the RA often reprinted articles from foreign newspapers that urged governments to grant China her legitimacy as a nation. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported about the constitution of a committee convened by the city's chamber of commerce to press the government for recognition to "facilitate the work of reconstruction."<sup>89</sup> The *Washington Times* reported about prevailing "American sentiment" arguing that "[f]or about six months the Republic of China has been a definite, accomplished fact," and the U.S. had little excuse for having "thus long...refused recognition." Despite the fact that Congress had passed a resolution congratulating the Chinese on the successful constitution of a republican government, "[it] is not recognition, which must come from the Executive. It is merely a plain intimation from Congress of the course the Congress think the President ought to take; and the President, by refusing to act, has in effect vetoed the will of Congress."<sup>90</sup> In the November 9, 1912, edition of the U.S. magazine *Outlook*, an author argues that "[t]he Republic of China cost its people much suffering, much bitter sacrifice, and much bloodshed. It is built on the same sacred principles that form the foundation of American freedom, liberty, and equality," and asks, "...[why] has [there] been as yet no formal recognition?"<sup>91</sup> The California legislature even passed a resolution to urge the Federal

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<sup>88</sup> For a similar argument, also from a Chinese American perspective see "'The Yellow Peril,' or the Golden Opportunity," by T.S. Sutton, English Secretary of the Chinese-American League of Justice, *RA* 2, no. 12: 486-90.

<sup>89</sup> *RA* 1, no. 25: 979-80.

<sup>90</sup> *RA* 1, no 31: 1244-5.

<sup>91</sup> Reprinted in the *RA* 1, no. 38: 1526-8.

government to accord China recognition. Citing that “[t]he progressive example set by the fathers of the [American] republic...has favorably influenced the former great Asiatic empire of China and established in lieu thereof the Republic of China,” the California legislature argued that the U.S. “ever ready to encourage the growth of free institutions based upon the right of the people to govern themselves should welcome the new republic in the family of nations.”<sup>92</sup> Reprinting articles like these embedded the RA and the revolutionaries in a global conversation about the development of liberalism and the proliferation of republicanism. To be sure, the articles reprinted in the RA expressed views that were held in the U.S. and elsewhere, but they do not register the full range of sentiments that were articulated to justify or deny the need for recognition. They are reproduced in the pages of the RA to serve the purpose of legitimating not only the political reality of the Chinese republic, but to effect the erasure of a more critical reading of the historical moment and the conjunction of material forces that were constitutive of Chinese modernity at the time. To confront the realities of the denial and delay of recognition would require the recognition that China was itself in dire political straits. Its visions of its own modernity might be blurred by such a confrontation, and the facticity of its new sense of being-in-the-world could be exposed as illusory. The stability of the republican government was not a guarantee, assassinations were not unheard of, and attempts at assassination were fairly frequent.<sup>93</sup> Indeed, the discourse surrounding recognition within the pages of the RA signals the complexity of emergent modernities and nationalisms in the early twentieth century world. The U.S. played a role not only as the central legitimating factor in the emergence of the modern Chinese state, but also

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<sup>92</sup> The text of the resolution is reprinted in the *RA* 1, no. 51-2: 2040-1.

<sup>93</sup> In Vol. 2 of the *RA* “bombthrowers” become a category of deviant individuals who command some attention.

served the purpose of being the constitutive discursive backdrop against which the Chinese attempted to construct its own image as a sovereign republic. The debates over recognition as they unfolded in the RA clearly illustrate the complicated and contradictory demands placed on China in an era of ascendant U.S. imperialism as China was forced to navigate that geopolitical terrain in ways that had both to insist on its own sovereignty while simultaneously deferring it through its dependency on U.S. global economic and political power.

### **The State, The Republicans, and the Subaltern Classes: Chinese Political Modernity and the Limits of Liberalism**

Much is made within the pages of the RA about the constitution of a Chinese republic as a world-shifting event. The bulk of this sentiment draws on the fact of China's geographic size and large population. The point is frequently expressed, with much gusto, that China is poised to become the greatest republic the world has ever seen. Indeed, it is stated that "[t]he Chinese millions have given the world the greatest revolution of modern times in the most civilized manner known to history."<sup>94</sup> The four hundred million men, women, and children of the republic are often invoked rhetorically as evidence that China is not only already the largest republic on earth by virtue of this fact alone, but precisely because of this her organizational capacity and clear knowledge of the practices of statecraft leave the facticity of her modern nationhood beyond reproach. Although there is nothing incorrect in the facts of this argument, the evidence suggests that the actualities of liberal republicanism in China were lost on most Chinese except for the few elite intellectuals who had been trained in the universities of the West and acquired a working

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<sup>94</sup> RA 1, no. 45: 1817.

knowledge of the liberal lexicon. In this sense the announcement of a republican government and political sovereignty, and the attendant responsibilities of the polity through ‘right’ practices of citizenship and various other civic duties, were not available for immediate translation for the majority of China’s four hundred million people. As Dipesh Chakrabarty has pointed out,

[t]he history and nature of political modernity in an excolonial country such as India [or China] thus generates a tension between the two aspects of the subaltern as peasant or citizen. One is the peasant who has to be educated into the citizen and therefore belongs to the time of historicism; the other is the peasant who, despite his or her lack of formal education, is already a citizen.<sup>95</sup>

Here Chakrabarty’s claim is important in two ways. The first is its introduction of the question about how to understand, in the Chinese context, the immediate shift from the first form of the peasant who must be educated into the logics of liberalism, against that same peasant who has, often unawares, become a *de facto* citizen without the slightest shift in his or her world view. What kind of citizen does this produce? What kind of modernity does this indicate? How can republican and constitutional authority be arrayed and maintained in such a context, where to the peasant a republic and a constitution are meaningless abstractions? Second, by introducing this problematic, Chakrabarty seems to be asking us to examine the particular kinds of modern nationalisms and patriotisms that may or may not arise out of this conjunction of historical forces. I want to conclude this chapter by examining these questions and attempting to answer them—at least partially—by investigating the early republican context in China. Specifically the focus will be on

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<sup>95</sup> Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 10.

president Yuan Shikai's monarchical attempt, the response of the republicans to it, and the role of the subaltern within the debate and controversy.

In the first presidential election ever held in China, on October 6, 1913, Yuan Shikai, the president of the provisional government who had ruled since Sun Yat-sen handed him the presidency shortly after the success of the revolution in 1911, won with a total of 471 votes.<sup>96</sup> Despite, or perhaps because of, the increasing centralization of power, and the increasing turn towards dictatorship that Yuan was making, he was elected to his first presidential term. Yuan is remembered mostly as a traitor to the republic and “has been despised by historians of all political colorations. As the ‘father of the warlords,’ he has been placed in the category of the reactionary, antimodern, militaristic, feudalistic obstacles to Chinese progress.”<sup>97</sup> My goal here is not to reevaluate Yuan's presidency, or to make claims about his role in the rise of the warlord period (1916–1927) that followed his failed presidency and bid at monarchism. Instead, I want to focus on the ways that the historical problematic in which Yuan was embedded, the terrain of early twentieth century global capitalism, and how the constraints placed on the possibilities of Chinese modernity in that context circumscribed the possible articulations of Yuan's presidency.

Michel Foucault has argued that the quintessential form of political authority in modernity is that of governmentality. The shift from a more feudal European or dynastic Chinese expression of power in the form of kingly transcendence, to a form of sovereignty based on a ruler's ability to control and utilize the *population* (i.e., the

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<sup>96</sup> RA, Vol. 2, no. 28: 1150.

<sup>97</sup> Ernest P. Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai: Liberalism and Dictatorship in Early Republican China*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977), 50.

formation of modern political science legitimated by statistical ‘truths’) as a form of both authority *and* control is the key to a successful operationalization of power in the context of modernity. In the dynastic system the relationship of the emperor to his charges is “a purely synthetic one...there is no fundamental, essential, natural and juridical connection between the prince and his principality...Having the ability to retain one’s principality is not at all the same as possessing the art of governing.”<sup>98</sup> In the context of modernity, political control and legitimacy is fundamentally presupposed by the existence of an effective “science of ruling the state.”<sup>99</sup> However, in order to impress upon the polity a science of government, complete with various techniques of control and coercion, the polity must itself be familiar—to a degree—with the conceptual paradigms through which that control and coercion is effected. In the case of China, that link did not for the most part exist. This is nowhere more forcibly illustrated than through the fact that Yuan was elected to the presidency of a nation of four hundred million on a mere 471 votes out of a total of 759. A more blatant expression of the limited dissemination of the ideas of liberalism is impossible to imagine. This is suggestive for the examination of several key elements in the emergence of Chinese political modernity: the tenuous stability of the republican government, the limited political efficacy of republican claims for recognition, and the question of how to incorporate the peasant classes into the machinery of the inchoate state.

Why might the republic have been so delicately positioned on the line between political success and failure? The reasons were many. The republicans had inherited a

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<sup>98</sup> Michel Foucault, “Governmentality,” in James D. Faubion, ed., *Power: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*. (New York: The New Press, 2000), 204.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, 206.

bankrupt country from their imperial predecessors. The limited scope of their political ideology in the largest and most densely populated country in the world contributed heavily to the problem. The limited efficiency in the techniques of governance, because of the disconnect between the ruling elite and the masses, marked the limits of the problem. However, at the level of practice the task of inhabiting a modern political space was perhaps most clearly concretized in the failure of the state to secure an effective scheme of management because of its lack of economic, intellectual, and political resources. The stability of authority in modern states is premised upon the state's own ability to effectively manage an economy, which according to Foucault is in this period a seamless shift from economic management along family lines transposed onto economy at the level of the state. In this way the state acts as a surrogate father to the polity and the *logics* of authority and control remain intact. However, as I hope has been made expressly clear in the above sections, republican China had little control over the functions and operation of its economy. Their sovereign legitimacy was almost entirely premised upon the actions of those outside of China itself. China's modernity was necessarily going to have to be conditioned from the outside thus placing central elements of its economic apparatus into the controlling hands of foreign states. In this way the modern "art of government"—which Foucault argues is just the exercise of sovereignty through the submission to it so that sovereignty itself is effected through its own eclipse in the polity's submission to law and order rather than according to the compassion or despotism of the sovereign him or herself—was never really a possibility for republican China. In this way Yuan was forced, if the republic were to succeed, to formulate a calculus of political control that would include the four hundred million that



did not vote into the polity as citizens who were not those that, as Chakrabarty points out, had to be educated in the lessons of liberal citizenship. What Yuan needed to look for was a polity who were citizens by the very nature of their own immanent relationship to the state and not through the imaginary dynamics of a purely theoretical relationship. It is this context that compels Yuan to attempt to recreate a monarchy in China.

With the establishment of the ‘Society to Plan for Peace,’ on August, 14, 1915, the intentions of Yuan Shikai to appoint himself the new emperor of China were made public. In this moment of political (in)decision Yuan seems to have been “torn with conflicting emotions.”<sup>100</sup> Indeed, Yuan seems never to have been under any illusions about the viability of the republic without some compromises that might affect the state’s legitimacy within the eyes of the republicans. Hence the illegal contract of the loan, which guaranteed, in compromised forms, Chinese economic solvency, and Yuan’s monarchical attempt, which was a political decision to attempt to generate political legitimacy and stability by instituting “fundamental laws of a nation [that] reflect the country’s history and the sentiments of its people.”<sup>101</sup> There was no reason as far as consolidating power went for Yuan to declare himself emperor. In August of 1915 Yuan’s power had never been more centralized or more complete, and yet he still feared for the future stability of the nation itself. For Yuan, the attempt at the emperorship was “not understood as a reward granted by the Chinese public or foreign powers for services rendered. He knew he was not being elevated to the monarchy by irresistible popular

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<sup>100</sup> Young, *The Presidency*, 212.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, 213.

demand... The monarchy was not a reward; it was a weapon, to fend off external threats and build domestic strength.”<sup>102</sup>

In whatever ways, Yuan’s strange decision was an attempt to appeal to the masses of Chinese and to try and create a new, or at least the rearticulation of an old, set of political vocabularies that could incite patriotic and modern nationalist fervor among the subaltern classes. It can be said that it was an attempt to reclothe the modern nationalist sentiment in the old clothing of the monarchy. Yuan suffered no delusions about the position of China in the arena of the global modern, and he knew that the republican practice of statecraft was not only not working, but was in the given Chinese context bordering on the farcical. The emergence of a modern form of governmentality was foreclosed to Yuan because he could not communicate and thus materialize a form of political legitimacy according to the languages of modern liberalism to his polity. The foreclosure of the emergence of this form of political control was in effect the foreclosure of modern state formation itself. The visionary political ideals of the republicans were insufficient given the Chinese subaltern classes’ relationship to temporality and geography, their alternative inhabitation of modernity in the era of the early republic. Whatever the republicans may have learned at foreign universities, the fact was that the masses of Chinese who constituted for the revolutionaries the potential force of an imagined republican polity were circulating in an intellectual milieu that was not in conversation with the terminology and ideology of revolutionary and republican China. This disconnect could never have produced a stable and thus viable political formation in China and the larger arena of global modernity. Yuan’s attempt at monarchical power

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 220.

must be read from the perspective of an internationalist global capitalist historical problematic as an attempt to bring China into the modern, so to speak, by turning towards her old traditions. Yuan's planned monarchy was not a mere reinstatement of all the old practices of dynastic power. For Yuan, "all the worthless features of monarchy," among them the use of palace eunuchs and practices of servile genuflection and so on, were abandoned. Instead, what Yuan sought was a translation of the imperatives of modernity into the codes of dynastic relations, the system to which the Chinese masses had been inured for millennia. This translation took the form of continual rearticulations of modern ideas within a set of knowledges that made sense to the Chinese subaltern classes.

To be sure, there are always strange effects when a 'democratically' elected official attempts to announce him or herself a supreme and ultimate sovereign. It is rarely an excusable practice, and yet it is often made imperative because of an inherited political situation. This was the case in early republican China. It was a moment of ruthless capitalization in all corners of the globe, a period of ascendant U.S. imperialism as the empires of Europe crumbled, ancient kingdoms that could not—or would not—adapt to the new realities of global modernity would inevitably be crushed. Such was the condition in China when Yuan attempted to restore the monarchy. There is no way to defend the indefensible, and yet one can always explore the historical conditions that produced the logic within which Yuan felt compelled to name himself emperor. This historical condition, the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century global modern, was also the one with which all of the actors in this chapter had to struggle. The combined intellectual, political, social, and economic forces that formed that particular moment in the history of capitalist modernity has proved an incredibly rich terrain upon which to

examine the inherent limitations and contradictory impulses of capitalism and its attendant discourses of utopian longing, nationalist fervor, liberal self-making, and state formation. The complex ways in which the various classes of Chinese, reformists, republicans, peasants, and so on, all sought to resituate China in a changing world were motivated by the same fundamental problematic, the colonialization of China in an age of advancing global capitalism. The dynamic emergence of a modern Chinese sense of being-in-the-world in the early-twentieth century presented some very real problems for the inchoate state and polity as they attempted to reconcile, in a brief period of time, ancient traditions with modern political ideals. While this reconciliation has been a project for a succession of Chinese governments down to the present day, it remains fundamentally an effect of the legacy of the great shame visited upon China beginning with the unequal treaties that followed in the wake of the First Opium War. The historical project of Chinese nation formation, then, has been one deeply involved in crafting new personal, national, and state identities in the shadows of a longstanding imperial legacy, and as such has been deeply global throughout its entire evolution. Understanding the international origins of this national project sheds new light on how we must think the historical genealogies of the present. The next chapter will explore another dimension of the Chinese experience of U.S. imperialism, and the depth of its influence on the formation of Chinese nationalism in a global framework.

## Chapter 3

### **The Missionary Apparatus, American Liberalism, and Chinese Anti-Imperialist Nationalism**

In the early afternoon of May 4th, 1919, over three thousand Chinese students representing thirteen different area colleges gathered in Tiananmen Square, in the capital city of Peking, to protest against the fate of Chinese territories then being decided in peace treaty negotiations at Versailles, France. Ostensibly a spontaneous outbreak of popular unrest over the Great Powers' decision to transfer the German-held concessions in Shandong over to the Japanese, the protests were in fact the result of a long period of intellectual dissatisfaction with what was viewed by many Chinese as their government's ineffectiveness in securing the nation's territorial integrity in the face of changing geopolitical realignments after the First World War.<sup>1</sup> Although nominally a sovereign republic, by the end of the war China was in a state of political unrest and geographically

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<sup>1</sup>The classic study of the May Fourth Movement remains Tse-tung Chow's *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960). Chow's work is based on both rigorous historical research as well as participant experience. A superb intellectual history of the movement is Vera Schwarcz's *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986). For an excellent brief overview of the movement see Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 310-319. For an argument about the specifically political aspects of the movement, as distinct from the more cultural slant of the contemporary New Culture Movement, see Joseph T. Chen's essay "The May Fourth Movement Redefined," *Modern Asian Studies* 4, no. 1 (1970): 63-81. For an exploration of America's response as an early example of the U.S.' failure to link itself with anticolonial nationalism see Warren I. Cohen's, "America and the May Fourth Movement: The Response to Chinese Nationalism, 1917-1921," *The Pacific Historical Review* 35, no. 1 (1966): 83-100. For a more recent exploration of America's influence on the thinking of the May Fourth era intellectuals in China see Hans Schmidt's excellent essay, "Democracy for China: American Propaganda and the May Fourth Movement," *Diplomatic History* 22, no. 1 (1998): 1-28, and Erez Manela's *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 99-117, 177-196.

divided, as powerful warlords ruled various regions of the country as their own independent kingdoms. Yuan Shikai's failure to create a stable and unified republic, and his subsequent death in 1916, had given way to the Warlord Period which characterized the political and military landscape of China until the Kuomintang (KMT) led the Northern Expedition unification campaign beginning in 1926. Even after the relative success of the Northern Expedition various powerful warlords still controlled large territories and fought semi-regular battles throughout the decades of the 1930s and 1940s. The most famous of these were the Central Plains Wars fought between the KMT leader Chiang Kai-shek's forces and the warlords, Feng Yuxiang, Li Zongren, and Yan Xishan.<sup>2</sup> *De facto* political stability was not fully achieved until after the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) consolidated power in late 1949.

The throng of protesters on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1919, began marching from Tiananmen towards the foreign legation quarter seeking a meeting with the American minister, Paul Reinsch. The students carried signboards plastered with Chinese characters that read "Refuse to Sign the Peace Treaty!" "Oppose Power Politics!" and "Give Us Back Qingdao!"<sup>3</sup> Refused entry to the foreign quarter by police guards, the students chose representatives from their ranks to speak with Reinsch. Finding him absent, the disgruntled students left a petition instead. Similar efforts to speak with the ministers

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<sup>2</sup>For a solid study of the Warlord Period in Chinese politics see Ch'i Hsi-sheng, *Warlord Politics in China, 1916-1928*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976). For a brief, but thorough, digest of the period see Spence, *Search for Modern China*, 334-360.

<sup>3</sup>Schwarcz, *Chinese Enlightenment*, 14-15. The failure of the U.S. to negotiate a just peace at Versailles had deep consequences for American liberalism as well. Many left-leaning Progressives, once they saw the collapse of the Tsarist regime in Russia in 1917, began to believe Woodrow Wilson's rhetoric about the war being one waged in the name of a global democratic movement, and threw themselves fervently behind the U.S. war effort. The failure of the Paris Peace Conference redirected many of these Progressives' political attentions away from the compromised liberalism of Wilson, who they were now chagrined to have supported so uncritically, and began to look towards other models for liberalism outside of the U.S.—namely those arising out of the new communist state in Russia. Gerstle, "Protean Character," 1052-1054.

representing the other Great Powers at Versailles met with similar results. In the face of these disappointments, the students decided to head towards the residences of Chinese government officials whom they saw as being pro-Japanese.<sup>4</sup> An object of particular ire was the Chinese Minister of Communications, Zao Rulin, who had negotiated a secret treaty with the Japanese in 1918 which reaffirmed Japanese rights in Shandong that had originally been conceded when the Chinese signed the infamous Twenty-One Demands increasing the Japanese sphere of influence in China. V.K. Wellington Koo, the famed Chinese diplomat, and one of four Chinese delegates at the Paris Peace Conference, did not even know of the secret treaty until he was at Versailles.<sup>5</sup> The terms of the secret treaty greatly hindered any claims the Chinese could make on the province of Shandong. Indeed, after the conclusion of the Treaty of Versailles, Liang Qichao stated that the secret treaty had made China's counterclaims to the legitimacy of Japanese rights over Shandong "immediately ineffective."<sup>6</sup> Angered by this treasonous act, the student protesters burned down Zao's residence, but luckily he was not at home. Another Chinese official fared much worse, he was beaten unconscious.

Although on one hand the shift to Japanese control of Shandong was the symbolic breaking point for the student protestors, it was merely the straw that broke the proverbial camel's back in China's slow descent from what many still saw as their rightful place at the apex of world civilization, the vestiges of an ingrained cultural sense of civilizationalist supremacy. What makes the unrest generated by Chinese diplomatic failures at Versailles so interesting is the new language within which dissent was framed.

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<sup>4</sup> Manela, *Wilsonian Moment*, 187.

<sup>5</sup> Stacey Bieler, "Patriots" or "Traitors"?: *A History of American-Educated Chinese Students*. (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 166.

<sup>6</sup> For more on the secret treaty see Bruce Elleman, *Wilson and China: A Revised History of the Shandong Question*. (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 24-27. Liang's quote is on p. 27.

It was the language of modern diplomacy, of self-determination and of nation-state centered nationalism. It was a new conception of China's place in the world, articulated according to the dictates of a rapidly changing world system. This new alignment of modern conceptions of Chinese nationhood could not have been possible without the knowledge of Western cultural and political ideals, transmitted in large part by the great labors of the Christian missionary movement, and led by the efforts of zealous American Christians.

### **The Missionary Movement and the Impulse towards Empire**

In July of 1886, at the invitation of the popular evangelist Dwight L. Moody, two hundred and fifty-one students from eighty-nine different American and Canadian universities gathered at the Mt. Hermon School in Northfield, Massachusetts, for four weeks of intensive bible study.<sup>7</sup> After two weeks, Robert P. Wilder, a recent graduate of Princeton College, broached the subject of missionary work. He "had come, after weeks of prayer, with the deep conviction that God would call from that large gathering of college men, a few, at least, who would consecrate themselves to the foreign mission service."<sup>8</sup> Indeed, twenty-one students gave themselves over to foreign mission work that day. On the evening of July 24, about three weeks into the conference, an historic

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<sup>7</sup> Northfield, Massachusetts, was the birthplace of Dwight L. Moody, and was by this time a sort of "summer capital of Protestant evangelicalism." Paul A. Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats: The American Protestant Missionary Movement in China, 1890-1952*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), 57. The literature on Christian missionaries in China is extensive, for a wide ranging view see the essays in: John K. Fairbank, ed., *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), and Daniel Bays, ed., *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> John R. Mott, "The American Student Missionary Uprising, or, The History of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions" *Student Volunteer Series, No. 1* (August, 1889), 5. Archives of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, Series VII, Box 554: Fol. 6493, Record Group No. 42, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, Yale University. Henceforth SVM Papers.



meeting was held that has come to be known as the ‘Meeting of the Ten Nations.’ The audience was addressed by the sons of missionaries then laboring in Asia and the Middle East, as well as “seven young men of different nationalities,—an Armenian, a Japanese, a Siamese, a German, a Dane, a Norwegian, and an American Indian.”<sup>9</sup> Each young man spoke briefly, appealing to the audience for the need of more workers in the mission fields of the world. As the meeting drew to a close, “each speaker repeated in the language of his country the words, ‘God is love.’”<sup>10</sup> By all accounts, the Meeting of Ten Nations only served to increase the fervor for mission work among the participants at Mt. Hermon. Despite the message of love being preached by participants of the conference, an unmistakable air of cultural supremacy could be felt as well. Indeed, William Ashmore, a Baptist missionary recently returned from China, made quite an impression on a young John Mott as he intoned participants to “look upon ‘missions as a war of conquest, and not as a mere wrecking expedition.’”<sup>11</sup> Methodist missionary D.L. Anderson, in a letter to his home board, wrote similarly of the China mission field in 1910, “the conquest of China will not simply be taking advantage of an opportunity, but a bitter war with an adversary [i.e., Chinese traditionalism] of greater power and more strongly entrenched, than the Church found in her conflict with the Roman Empire.”<sup>12</sup>

In any event, regardless of the degree of amity or enmity expressed towards the subjects of the missionary enterprise, in the eight days that passed between the Meeting

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<sup>9</sup> John R. Mott, “The American Student Missionary Uprising, or, The History of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions” *Student Volunteer Series, No. 1* (August, 1889), 6. SVM Papers.

<sup>10</sup> John R. Mott, “The American Student Missionary Uprising, or, The History of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions” *Student Volunteer Series, No. 1* (August, 1889), 6. SVM Papers.

<sup>11</sup> John R. Mott, “The American Student Missionary Uprising, or, The History of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions” *Student Volunteer Series, No. 1* (August, 1889), 7. SVM Papers.

Ashmore’s quote was once again mentioned by Mott twenty-five years later in his article, “The Student Volunteer Movement After Twenty-Five Years,” 12-13. Series VII, Box 557: Fol. 6539, SVM Papers.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats*, 15.

of Ten Nations and the end of the Mt. Hermon Conference nearly eighty more young men committed themselves to foreign mission work, more than one third of the total number of participants. In a final act of organizational endeavor, the last day of the conference saw a meeting convened by the one hundred volunteers “in which there was a unanimous expression that the missionary spirit, which had manifested itself with such power at Mt. Hermon, should be communicated in some degree to thousands of students throughout the country who had not been privileged to come in contact with it at its source.”<sup>13</sup> Thus was the seed of the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) planted.

The students at Mt. Hermon were greatly influenced by the recent example set by the ‘Cambridge Band,’ seven Cambridge students who were born-again Christians that decided in 1885 to devote their lives to missionary work in China. The Cambridge students traveled the country before their departure spreading the word and increasing the publicity of the China mission calling. The Cambridge Band became quite well known in both England and the United States, and their story was published as “The Evangelization of the World,” and distributed to every single Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) and Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) throughout Britain, its colonies, and the U.S. So great was the influence of the Cambridge Band that the SVM incorporated the title of the pamphlet into their famed watchword, “the evangelization of the world in this generation.”<sup>14</sup> The students from Mt. Hermon decided that a tour of American colleges devoted to increasing awareness about mission work overseas,

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<sup>13</sup> John R. Mott, “The American Student Missionary Uprising, or, The History of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions” *Student Volunteer Series, No. 1* (August, 1889), 7-8. SVM Papers.

<sup>14</sup> Mott states that, “naturally, [we] thought of the ‘Cambridge Band’ and its wonderful influence among the universities of Great Britain; and decided to adopt a similar plan.” John R. Mott, “The American Student Missionary Uprising, or, The History of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions” *Student Volunteer Series, No. 1* (August, 1889), 8. SVM Papers.

especially China, would be an especially efficient way of starting towards the achievement of the goal.

In the first year following the Mt. Hermon Conference, only two young men, both recent graduates of Princeton, Robert P. Wilder, and John N. Forman, were able to travel across the country securing recruits. Their expenses were paid by a “consecrated man, who has ever been glad to help on missionary enterprises.”<sup>15</sup> A testament to their fervor, as well as the timeliness and appeal of their message, by the end of their first year they had gained the pledges of two thousand two-hundred young men and women. In some colleges they secured as many as sixty volunteers.<sup>16</sup> Without any central organizational scheme, the movement began to lose steam by late 1888. In order to reinvigorate the message that had taken shape at Mt. Hermon two years prior, the loose committee of students decided to organize themselves into an institution that worked only towards securing volunteers for mission work, and not actually sending missionaries into the field. They also decided to focus their energies only upon students in American colleges, professional schools, medical schools, and seminaries. They adopted the name the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, appointed an executive committee composed of one representative from each of the most influential inter-denominational student organizations, the YMCA was represented by John R. Mott, the YWCA was represented by Nettie Dunn, and the Inter-Seminary Missionary Alliance (IMSA) was represented by Robert Wilder. The executive committee of the SVM began its work in January, 1889. By August of the same year, “there were three thousand eight hundred and

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<sup>15</sup> John R. Mott, “The American Student Missionary Uprising, or, The History of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions” *Student Volunteer Series, No. 1* (August, 1889), 8. SVM Papers.

<sup>16</sup> John R. Mott, “The American Student Missionary Uprising, or, The History of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions” *Student Volunteer Series, No. 1* (August, 1889), 9. SVM Papers.

forty-seven volunteers ready, or preparing, to proclaim ‘the unsearchable riches of Christ’ in every land.”<sup>17</sup> Clearly, the staggering numbers of volunteers in these early years suggests that the SVM’s message of service to Christ and the ‘evangelization of the world in this generation’ resonated deeply with young college students across America. Indeed, the historian Paul A. Varg has even called the missionary ardor of this period “reckless” in its enthusiasm.<sup>18</sup>

The rapid rise of evangelical fervor among American youth in this period can be linked with a contemporary interest within the U.S. in the expansion of American power. Unlike earlier American missionaries who had advocated a sort of gunboat evangelicalism, this new generation of Christian soldiers was the vanguard of American cultural imperialists. They crossed the Pacific with a sense of the innate superiority of Western Christian values, and saw themselves as part of a benevolent crusade to bring the heathen Chinese out of the darkness of their ossified traditionalism and into the light of a new modern Christian era. Theirs was an imperialism without any apparent territorial designs; they sought hearts and minds, not land. One historian saw in this period of missionary growth a very particular historical confluence of interests in the U.S. of “humanitarianism, nationalism, and imperialism.”<sup>19</sup> Despite the great enthusiasm of the missionaries, conversions had been a slow affair in the early days of the Protestant missionary enterprise in China. The Methodist church did not baptize their first Chinese convert until a full decade after their arrival in China.

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<sup>17</sup> John R. Mott, “The American Student Missionary Uprising, or, The History of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions” *Student Volunteer Series, No. 1* (August, 1889), 16. SVM Papers.

<sup>18</sup> Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats*, 3.

<sup>19</sup> Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats*, 68-85.

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), the first American Christian foreign mission agency, lacked a conversion for nine years in Fuzhou (Foochow), even though missionaries had written “glowing reports” back to the home board after they first arrived in 1847.<sup>20</sup> ABCFM fared even worse in Canton, their first native convert found Christ in 1847, a full seventeen years after Elijah Bridgeman began preaching there. By the late nineteenth century Christian conversions had picked up in pace, and the fervor of many missionaries indeed echoed the rhetorics of empire. In 1895, ABCFM missionary Henry Blodget wrote that missionaries were then enjoying

The freedom of Empire...in 1833 death was the penalty for teaching or receiving Christianity; in 1895 Christianity is a lawful religion of the Empire...Instead of one port of Canton in 1833, we have in 1895 thirty ports, which are in fact European Colonies of greater or lesser proportions, planted on the Seaboard, in the interior, and in the outlying territories of China; and the powerful stimulus of Western civilization is by this means brought to bear, as in so many object lessons, upon the Chinese.<sup>21</sup>

Blodget was particularly fervent in his belief in the superiority of Christian doctrine to anything indigenously Chinese. He likened the deep traditions of Buddhism in China to a tree that had stood unmoved for a millennium outside of a monastery on the western outskirts of Peking:

In vain have furious tempests and the forked lightnings sought to rend trunk from branches, and beat it to the ground. Apt emblem this aged pine of the vitality and strength of the heathen system whose shaven-headed priests for thirty generations have sat beneath its shade.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats*, 6.

<sup>21</sup> Henry Blodget, “Mission Work in China,” 1895, 7, Box. 26: Fol. 14, Henry Blodget Papers, Archives of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Record Group No. 08, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, Yale University. Henceforth ABCFM Papers.

<sup>22</sup> Henry Blodget, “Mission Work in China,” 1895, 10, Box. 26: Fol. 14, ABCFM Papers.

No longer, Blodget argued. Christianity would now descend upon the Chinese and deracinate the “ancient paganism” of Confucianism, Buddhism, and “the worship of the powers of nature, of deceased ancestors, [and] of heroes and sages.”<sup>23</sup> Christianity, like empire itself, was on a civilizing mission. This was benevolent imperialism of the most noble sort. Blodget hoped that the missionary apparatus could effect great changes in China. He was less optimistic about the pace of the work than the SVM, whose motto “the evangelization of the world in this generation,” seemed an impossible goal for a project as large as the Christianization of the Chinese. Blodget wrote that it would be harder than the Christianization of Europe, which had been underway for a thousand years and still remained unfinished. Missionaries should be far from discouraged, however,

If these ignorant [Buddhist] priests could labor on, generation after generation, in gloomy caverns of the earth, to inscribe stone character by character so many tomes of heathen classics, which after all contain only the dark surmises of unenlightened reason in regard to the great problems of human existence, what patience ought those to exercise, who are the instruments of the Holy Ghost to inscribe the Law of the eternal God and the Gospel of Salvation by Jesus Christ upon the consciences and hearts of the Chinese people!<sup>24</sup>

A generation later, John R. Mott recounted the achievements of the SVM in its first generation of existence. By 1919, over eight thousand students had actually gone abroad into the “battlefields of Christianity” for missionary work.<sup>25</sup> An extraordinary majority of these missionaries went to China, 2,524 in total. Indeed, according to Sherwood Eddy, a SVM and YMCA administrator, “China was the goal, the lodestar, the

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<sup>23</sup> Henry Blodget, “Mission Work in China,” 1895, 9, Box. 26: Fol. 14, ABCFM Papers.

<sup>24</sup> Henry Blodget, “Mission Work in China,” 1895, 14, Box. 26: Fol. 14, ABCFM Papers.

<sup>25</sup> John R. Mott, “The Achievements of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions During the First Generation of its History, 1886-1919” Report to the Executive Committee, Presented at the Eighth International Convention, Des Moines, Iowa, December 31, 1919 to January 4, 1920. Series VII, Box 554: Fol. 6492, SVM Papers.

great magnet that drew us all in those days.”<sup>26</sup> If China was the lodestar, the rest of the Far East drew missionaries in far greater numbers than did Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, or the Caribbean. Of the 8,140 student volunteers spread throughout the world, nearly 6,000 were stationed either in China, Japan, Korea, India, Burma, or Ceylon.<sup>27</sup> By the end of its first generation of activity, the SVM was furnishing nearly seventy-five percent of male, and seventy percent of unmarried female missionaries from North America. This was hardly the evangelization of the world, but it was an impressive turn out nevertheless. Between 1890 and 1905 the number of American missionaries in China doubled from 513 to 1,304, by 1919 it had doubled again to 3,305.<sup>28</sup> The two decades between 1900 and 1920 were the richest in terms of Chinese conversions, increasing from 95,943 to 366, 524, and over 300 missions were started in those years.<sup>29</sup> By the early twentieth century, in the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion, and echoing the tides of U.S. imperialism more generally, the American missionary project had taken a secular turn towards broad education rather than strict evangelization. By the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1911, “a full 50 percent of American missionaries in China were no longer involved in direct evangelism. Most of them were teachers.”<sup>30</sup> In 1910, the famed theologian Lyman Abbott linked the rise in missionary fervor in the U.S. to the fact that missionaries no longer preached “the grim doctrine of an endless hell for the unreclaimed heathen.”<sup>31</sup> One

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<sup>26</sup> Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats*, 3.

<sup>27</sup> 1,570 student volunteers were stationed in ‘India, Burma and Ceylon,’ (which were grouped together in the enumeration) and 987 in Japan and Korea. Comparatively, only 867 total volunteers had gone abroad to all of Africa, less than 100 to what is today the Middle East, and only 833 for all of Mexico, Central, and South America. Numbers are printed in Mott’s, “The Achievements of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions During the First Generation of its History, 1886-1919,” 5.

<sup>28</sup> Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 270, n. 10.

<sup>29</sup> Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats*, 89.

<sup>30</sup> Hunter, *Gospel of Gentility*, 10.

<sup>31</sup> Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats*, 68.

historian has noted that, “the closeness of American national and missionary interests in China unavoidably tainted the missionary enterprise. It also allowed Americans at home to remain blind to the moral implications of their ambitions to power there.”<sup>32</sup>

As American missionary interests increasingly overlapped with the economic ambitions of U.S. empire, the influence of the missionary apparatus on the expression of Chinese modernity remained deep. A retreat from the earlier preoccupation with eternal damnation of the heathen Chinese soul began with a group of liberal Congregationalists in the 1880s, and by the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century, Robert Speer of the American Presbyterian Mission could write, with what one must assume had been more than one iota of plausibility, that

the idea that missionaries were motivated by the thought of saving the heathen from damnation was an invention of the scornful stay-at-homes and that missionaries had never been primarily moved by this consideration.<sup>33</sup>

Apparently, by the late nineteenth century Americans were developing a cultural distaste for the language of hellfire, brimstone, and damnation. While Americans did not want the Chinese to come to America, “neither did they want them to go to hell.”<sup>34</sup>

Historians have noted that the turn away from direct evangelization towards a more robust and well-rounded project of education in something like Western civilization was influenced by Progressivism in the U.S.<sup>35</sup> The work of crusading journalists like Jacob Riis, and the charitable work of women like Jane Addams among immigrants in Chicago, set the stage for an overarching belief among many liberal Americans that

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<sup>32</sup> Hunter, *Gospel of Gentility*, 10.

<sup>33</sup> Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats*, 70.

<sup>34</sup> Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats*, 71.

<sup>35</sup> See Varg, esp. chapter 5.



Christian uplift was the panacea for the cultural backwardness that plagued ancient civilizations like that in China, and other missionary hot spots like Africa and India. Conversion to Christianity was no longer seen as the only true path towards salvation, an emulation of the culture of the West, inclusive of Christianity, was what would lift China out of the morass of traditionalism and into the bright future of modernity. If the missiological impulse was at its core an imperial one, many missionaries were blind to the reality because they saw their work as universally good, as the one true pathway into a shared future of Christian modernity. There were always those who were conflicted by the nature of what they did, however. For example, the Nobel-Prize-winning author Pearl Buck's father, Absalom Sydenstricker, who was a Presbyterian missionary in China, recalled to his daughter once that

We must never forget that missionaries went to China without invitation and solely from our own sense of duty. The Chinese therefore owe us nothing. And if our country has taken no concessions, we will have kept silent when others did, and we too have profited from the unequal treaties.<sup>36</sup>

Generally, however, the American missionaries in China saw themselves mostly as harbingers of good. Even those who were critical of an overreliance on American gunboats in Chinese waters, nevertheless believed that their good works made the compromise worth it. This had much to do with the fact that the majority of the missionaries believed in the moral superiority of the culture from which they came. This was a larger syndrome of the Progressive era. Many saw morality as the linchpin of an ordered society; teaching new immigrants the basics of a well-ordered moral life would inevitably lead to their assimilation into the mainstream culture, or so many reformers

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<sup>36</sup> Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats*, 84, n. 30.

thought. The same was true of China: hers was fundamentally a moral problem, and “right morals would solve all problems.”<sup>37</sup> One historian has characterized the relationship of the missionaries, especially female missionaries, to the Chinese as one of “beneficent imperialism.”<sup>38</sup> The missionary women,

Confident that they were bestowing the benefits of a more advanced civilization on China...were quite unabashed about trying to impose their culture on the Chinese and expressed little discomfort with either their privileged position in Chinese society or the implicit backing they enjoyed from the power of the U.S. government.<sup>39</sup>

In an effort to produce rather than persuade, missionaries in China took up the mantle of modern education with a fervor equal to the pure evangelicism of their predecessors. As I’ve noted in the last chapter, the turn of the century in China was a moment of colossal change. The collapse of the imperial system, the abolishment of the classical examination system in 1905, the spread of Christianity, these were all things that were an expression of the imminent collapse of a culture that had withstood the sands of millennia. Indeed, by 1912 the Chinese people were nominally engaged in a project of nationalization and modernization according to the new teleological timetables of the West. At the core of this shift in worldview were the ideas embodied in a Western style liberal education. Even though “rarely did missionaries sense that they were witnessing the collapse of a civilization, that the impact of the West was undermining the basic Chinese institutions,” they nevertheless contributed greatly to the redirection of Chinese

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<sup>37</sup> Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats*, 121.

<sup>38</sup> Carol Chin, “Beneficent Imperialists: American Women Missionaries in China at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” *Diplomatic History* 27, no. 3 (June 2003): 328. [327-252]

<sup>39</sup> Carol Chin, “Beneficent Imperialists: American Women Missionaries in China at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” *Diplomatic History* 27, no. 3 (June 2003): 328.

culture away from traditionalism and into modernity by being the vanguard of Western education in China.<sup>40</sup>

### **Missionaries and the Education of the Chinese**

The most important legacy bequeathed to the Chinese by the missionary apparatus of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has to be that of a modern liberal education. Education not only in the philosophy of religion, but in political philosophy, the law, economics, the sciences, and other disciplines that formed the basis of Western higher education, were the cornerstone for the modernization and nationalization of China in the twentieth century. In a country and a culture where the attainment of a formal education and the official title of scholar had long carried social privileges and often economic security, the shift to the dominance of a Western-styled education was a significant one.<sup>41</sup> For the purposes of the study at hand, the importance of the education provided by the Christian missionaries was its dual role as both an agent of empire and of liberation.

Western education entered into China in a time of extraordinary change, both globally and within China itself. The nineteenth century was the age of empire, and the two Opium Wars in the middle of the century testified to the fact that China was under enormous pressure to undergo massive social change lest she be carved up into various colonial protectorates. In the early days of Christian education in China it remained relatively isolated from Chinese intellectual life, and as such drew little comment from

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<sup>40</sup> Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats*, 95.

<sup>41</sup> The classic and most comprehensive study of the history of Christian higher education in China remains Jessie Gregory Lutz's, *China and the Christian Colleges, 1850-1950*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), see esp. 80-129, for more on the rise of Western education at the turn of the century.

the native intelligentsia. By the late nineteenth century that began to change. As China convulsed under the pressures exerted by a decaying imperial regime, and as the rapid transformation of the world system accelerated the emergence of a global modern, Western education increasingly became associated with the revolutionary vanguard in China. Many of the most forward looking reformers of the late-Qing dynasty were intellectuals who had known both the classical Chinese educational system as well as the emergent disciplinary education of the mission establishment. By the turn of the century, Christian education had become inextricably linked with a growing sense of anti-imperialist nationalism.

From the earliest moments of the emergence of a Chinese state after the fall of the Qing Dynasty there developed a strong sense of nationalism that underwrote nearly all projects aimed at social transformation in China. While schemes for a state-sponsored educational program varied greatly, they were tied together by the common thread that the needs of the state should outweigh the desires of the individual.<sup>42</sup> Ideally the desire of the individual and the needs of the state should be coeval. In the early days of the Chinese Republic what constituted the national interest was a malleable quantity, and the Christian educational apparatus ebbed and flowed accordingly, but did not cease to be an important part of the emergence of China onto the international scene. Indeed, the education provided by the missionaries was often the catalyst for student radicalization.

In July of 1908, *The American Journal of Sociology* published a letter from a young Chinese Christian to “a former teacher in the missionary school in China in which he became a Christian,” wherein the student candidly discussed his disillusion with the missionary apparatus in China, and clarified the primacy of nationalism to his own sense

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<sup>42</sup> Lutz, *China and the Christian Colleges*, 81.

“of supreme duty.”<sup>43</sup> The student, although himself a Christian, and admittedly “intoxicated” with “admiration and worship of the Western civilization,” nevertheless found himself having “something against the Christians as such and their conceptions of Christianity.”<sup>44</sup> The writer once believed that the “enlightened West” knew China “better than the so-called ignorant and uncivilized China knows the great modern and proud world.” His own subsequent experiences served as cause to rethink that assessment. He had come to believe, after spending some time studying in the U.S., and perhaps rethinking the revolution then welling up in his native country, that

the missionaries, in spite of their good will, noble devotion, and unselfish work, have done more harm to China than good; they have done more harm than any other people from the West, politician and traders; and the greatest of all these harms is that China has been made unknown, and much worse, misunderstood.<sup>45</sup>

This was an honest admission of the great influence of the missionaries, not just in China on young people like himself, but abroad, in the United States, where their reports of mission work reached a vast audience as they were read aloud in thousands of churches across America each Sunday. These were probably the single most influential sources of information for Americans about China at the turn of the century. Perhaps belying his own class status, the anonymous author of the letter argued that the missionaries as a group generally only came into contact with the lowest strata of Chinese society, “the worst element of China’s citizenship and morality.”<sup>46</sup> Because of this and their desire to

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<sup>43</sup> Anonymous, “The Nationalism of a Chinese Christian,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 14, no. 1: 52, n. 1; 54. [52-63]

<sup>44</sup> Anonymous, “The Nationalism of a Chinese Christian,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 14, no. 1: 55.

<sup>45</sup> Anonymous, “The Nationalism of a Chinese Christian,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 14, no. 1: 56.

<sup>46</sup> Anonymous, “The Nationalism of a Chinese Christian,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 14, no. 1: 56.

stir up the “missionary sympathy of their own countrymen,” the missionaries tended to “draw pictures of the worst things that they have seen, and often give bad interpretations of good things.” For the author, there was no greater sin perhaps than to create a false picture of China, exaggerating its superstitions and overselling its vices. Despite belief in the moral superiority of those who were Christians, in America the student found little difference between the two. “The fact is that non-Christians treat me as well as the Christians, if not better.”<sup>47</sup> Clearly grateful for the opportunities afforded him by his missionary education, the author had nevertheless come to the conclusion by the time he was pursuing graduate work in the U.S. in 1908 that, “patriotism is now my decided journey in life.”<sup>48</sup>

While grateful regarding the privileges of his education, the young student was also critical of the contradictory blessings of missionary work in his native land. On the one hand the missionaries had brought Christianity with them, a religion to which the author both prescribed and felt ambivalent towards, but they also brought with them the intellectual inheritance of the Enlightenment, and with it the knowledge with which masses of Chinese were beginning to articulate their determination to see a modern China emerge onto the world scene. It was a nationalism deeply informed by a transnational circuit of knowledge transmission. The author felt so seriously about the matter that it overrode his desire to be a good Christian, “for the salvation of China I am even willing to damn my soul, if necessary.”<sup>49</sup> His deepest criticism of the missionary apparatus lay in

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<sup>47</sup> Anonymous, “The Nationalism of a Chinese Christian,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 14, no. 1: 58.

<sup>48</sup> Anonymous, “The Nationalism of a Chinese Christian,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 14, no. 1: 58.

<sup>49</sup> Anonymous, “The Nationalism of a Chinese Christian,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 14, no. 1: 59.

its stifling of Chinese nationalism, despite its professions to “develop and prepare China for her part in the future work of world’s co-operation and progress in which she is destined to play a very important role.”<sup>50</sup> Too often, and to the chagrin of the author, the missionaries in China failed to place their faith in the desire or abilities of the Chinese for self-government. This was a position with which the author had little patience:

On the highway of Patriotism, with the banner writ large and clear, “China for the Chinese,” my resolution is inflexible, my steps are firm, my attitude is uncompromising, my will is very strong. . . In short, my position forcibly expressed, amounts to this—*Rather China without Christianity than Christianity without China*. If Christianity cannot get along with the existence of China, or without disturbing or curbing her national life, we, at least most of us Christians, will have none of it.<sup>51</sup>

Ultimately, the author concluded, “Christianity, pure and simple, can never be sufficient, in my opinion, to help and save China, unless you enlarge the sphere of your so-called religious interest.”<sup>52</sup> The failure of the missionary enterprise was its inability to embrace Chinese nationalism and modernity on its own terms. Instead, the missionaries often pushed their Chinese converts “to love our country,” but only on the terms offered by the church. For this student, the limit of the missionaries’ tolerance for a nationalism that at times drew dangerously close to the edge of anti-religiosity was reached “when we [Chinese] begin to try to realize our patriotic consciousness and express it in our speeches and actions, at once you want to stop and turn us back absolutely to indifference.”<sup>53</sup> This student was beginning to outgrow the usefulness of the missionary apparatus, especially

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<sup>50</sup> Anonymous, “The Nationalism of a Chinese Christian,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 14, no. 1: 59.

<sup>51</sup> Anonymous, “The Nationalism of a Chinese Christian,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 14, no. 1: 59. Emphasis in original.

<sup>52</sup> Anonymous, “The Nationalism of a Chinese Christian,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 14, no. 1: 60.

<sup>53</sup> Anonymous, “The Nationalism of a Chinese Christian,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 14, no. 1: 61.

in relation to the larger project of Chinese nationalism. The missionary education he had received, and the opportunities that education had opened up for him, such as advanced study in the U.S., all converged to produce a kind of model Chinese modern, who straddled the two worlds of Chinese traditionalism and an attenuated Christian modernity. This Chinese modern was a hybrid historical product, wholly Chinese, but with a political sensibility that was heavily influenced by Western thinking. The overlap of these two worlds was often made explicit in these latter days of imperial China, for example when students in Hunan came to church services on Sundays and freely challenged the preachers, often quoting Herbert Spencer and other Western agnostics in the process.<sup>54</sup>

### **Christian Education and the Rise of Chinese Nationalism**

While anti-Christian feelings had been in existence in China from the earliest days of the Christian presence, the emergence of a coordinated movement against the missionary apparatus did not really take organized shape until the end of the 1910s.<sup>55</sup> The upsurge of nationalism that attended the May Fourth Movement can be seen as part of a larger revolutionary milieu that was occasioned by a number of overlapping factors, the most prominent of which was arguably the confluence of a sense of traditional Chinese culturalism with the logics of a good dose of Western liberal education. Indeed, in many ways the modern itself in China was associated with the West, and any attempts at accelerating China's emergence into the global modern system of nation states necessarily had to traverse the intellectual terrains of the Enlightenment inheritance. This

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<sup>54</sup> Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats*, 98.

<sup>55</sup> For a detailed account of the anti-Christian movement in nineteenth-century China see the essays in Paul A. Cohen, *China and Christianity: The Missionary Movement and the Growth of Chinese Anti-foreignism, 1860-1870*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963).



was troubling for some, like the conflicted student who wrote to his former missionary teacher, but for others Christianity merely became a tool through which to gain access to the fruits of modernity. It was not merely a question of the Chinese subject being wholly interpellated into a Western worldview and abandoning a Chinese one, it was a dynamic interplay where the Chinese made conscious decisions about what parts of the missionary influence could be put to good use to craft a distinctly modern Chinese anticolonial and nationalist sensibility. As the traditional Chinese examination system crumbled, the new access to education among all strata of society—and perhaps particularly among the rural poor—provided by missionary schools produced rapid conversions. Many of these new Chinese converts crafted a hybrid religious practice mixing elements of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Christianity. To some, there was “no conflict between the true Christianity and the true Confucianism.”<sup>56</sup> I think it is safe to say that the increase in converts was not entirely due to a newfound fervor for Christianity among the Chinese. As a new international system emerged alongside the collapse of the Qing Dynasty, many Chinese saw in Western education the knowledge that would be necessary to help China once again gain prominence among the nations of the new world order. Most of these students were not in favor of abandoning Chinese traditionalism altogether. Their task was to find a delicate balance between the Chinese and the Western, the old and the new. Indeed, flaws in the Western model were evident from the destruction of total war that engulfed Europe. This, coupled with the fact that the terms of peace discussed at Versailles threatened rather than buttressed the sovereignty of China, caused many to view the uncritical reception of Western knowledge as inherently superior with suspicion.

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<sup>56</sup> Anonymous, “The Nationalism of a Chinese Christian,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 14, no. 1: 62.

In fact, for many intellectuals one of the core constitutive elements of modern China itself was a rejection of Christianity.

An important precursor to the organized movement against Christianity in China was the *bai hua* (literally “plain speech”), or vernacular movement. The *bai hua* movement sought to replace the old traditional formal Chinese writing with a written vernacular language. The support of the movement for the institutionalization of vernacular Chinese was supported by well known leftist and liberal revolutionaries and reformers like Hu Shih, Lu Xun, and Chen Duxiu (one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party).<sup>57</sup> There was general agreement across the intellectual classes in China that a modern education was instrumental in the regeneration of the nation. It was the most efficient and universal means to produce an informed citizenry who might understand the tasks that faced the troubled republic. Knowledge in the classical liberal disciplines would be critical in laying the foundations for a revolutionary base. A political revolution in China was inevitable, but the social, intellectual, and ideological revolution had to precede it. The *bai hua* movement was founded on these presuppositions. Chinese literature and the textbooks of science, law, and philosophy had to be written in a form that everyone could understand. It was also easier to translate Western works into vernacular rather than classical Chinese. Vernacular Chinese was something that students

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<sup>57</sup> Hu Shih wrote an influential and widely read piece on the importance of the Chinese vernacular called, “The Problem of the Chinese Language,” *The Chinese Students’ Monthly*, XI (1915-1916), 567-572. Lu Xun’s famous work, *The True Story of Ah Q*, is perhaps the first and most well known modern piece of Chinese fiction to utilize the written vernacular. Unfortunately, throughout the twentieth century the name Ah Q, in the United States in particular, often became a metonym for John Chinaman, Ah Sin, etc., and other derogatory names for Chinese people. For a careful intellectual biography of Hu Shih see Jerome B Grieder, *Hu Shih and the Chinese Renaissance: Liberalism in the Chinese Revolution, 1917-1937*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970). For a literary biography of Lu Xun, the reader should turn to Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Voices from the Iron House: A Study of Lu Xun*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

should be able to master with just a few years of schooling. *Bai hua* was therefore indispensable to the project of creating a modern China.

Somewhat ironically, the missionaries had been among the first in China to really tout the importance of vernacular Chinese as a better means of literary transmission than the often times difficult and more arcane classical Chinese. The Bible and much other Christian literature had been translated into vernacular Chinese in the mid-nineteenth century, but Chinese intellectuals, even progressive and liberal ones, often viewed anything Christian as containing the taint of foreignism, and so until the late 1910s few Chinese lent much credence to the vernacular as a revolutionary tool. By the end of the decade, however, ardent Chinese nationalists began seeing the revolutionary potential, indeed the necessity, of the adoption of a national vernacular written language. Hu Shih advocated the application of a single spoken national language against the proliferation of various regional dialects, and a single national vernacular written language to match. He believed that this was the only route away from Confucian traditionalism. *Bai hua* began to gain adherents among the Chinese intellectuals, and soon the earlier *bai hua* versions of the Bible began to be used as a model text for revolutionaries trying to familiarize themselves with the new vernacular form.<sup>58</sup> By 1922, the vernacular had gained enough proponents that the Ministry of Education ordered that all schoolchildren's textbooks be written in *bai hua*.

The May Fourth Movement also heightened other strains of anti-foreignism in China, particularly that of the radical left wing. What the Chinese felt was their disgrace at Versailles made the Marxist view of the war as a war of empire even more convincing. Communist literature gained increasing traction in China in the wake of the success of the

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<sup>58</sup> Lutz, *China and the Christian Colleges*, 209.

October Revolution in Russia. The popular revolutionary journals often reprinted the writings on socialism, anti-imperialism, and communism by Karl Marx, V.I. Lenin, and Karl Kautsky.<sup>59</sup> In the late 1910s few Chinese were committing themselves to communism, but many were “heartened by the example of the Bolshevik Revolution” and ready “to accept heterodox or left-wing ideologies from the West and to criticize more orthodox democratic and liberal programs.”<sup>60</sup> The language of Marxism would later make its influence on the writings of the anti-Christian movement very clear. The May Fourth Movement had clarified the power of anti-imperialist nationalist appeals for the radicalized students. The relative success of May Fourth, insofar as the government conceded considerably to student demands, furnished radicals with the newfound hope that direct action and a more confrontational style of political activism might gain students a stronger influence upon the government, especially given the decreasing importance of the intellectual to political life. Merging anti-imperialist nationalism with the language of Marxism almost inevitably led to another precept of Chinese radical nationalism in the late 1910s and early 1920s: anti-Christianity.

### **Anti-Christianity in China in the 1920s**

The New Culture Movement (NCM) in China, which lasted from the mid-1910s through the 1920s, epitomized the expression of the vanguard of China’s new intellectual elite, writing in the vernacular, and appropriating Western liberal democratic and radical principles in an effort to craft a new China that would be a distinct departure from the

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<sup>59</sup> Lutz, *China and the Christian Colleges*, 210-11, n. 9.

<sup>60</sup> Lutz, *China and the Christian Colleges*, 211.

traditionalism that had defined its imperial history.<sup>61</sup> The NCM was not a unified movement, but was made up of many strands, often contradictory, but with the shared purpose of building China anew after the collapse of the Qing Dynasty and the failure of the first attempt at republicanism under Yuan Shikai. While intellectuals like Hu Shih and Lu Xun represented the liberal wing of the movement, more radical groups who were anarchists or communists were important as well. Beijing University was a hotbed of activity during the NCM, and two of the most prominent founders of the CCP, Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, were there in the heyday. Although ideologically the NCM spread itself widely across the political spectrum, including in its fold liberal Christian democrats, anarchists, and communists, a shared sense of national purpose and an extraordinarily unique radical flowering of intellectual production made the task of generating a new state philosophy take primacy over ideological quibbling. The political table was empty, so to speak, and guests were invited to bring nearly anything to the banquet.

The overarching political and intellectual strands of the NCM did ultimately produce two dominant political parties and orthodoxies that would change the course of world history, the Chinese Communist Party and the restructured Kuomintang.<sup>62</sup> As the wild intellectual experimentation of the NCM settled in, these two parties came to dominate the political vision of China's future. They shared certain characteristics that almost everyone agreed were the core of a new Chinese modernity, namely, anti-imperialism and a return to an uncompromised Chinese sovereignty, and a nationalism

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<sup>61</sup> For more on the intellectual and political ferment of the New Culture Movement see: Rana Mitter, *A Bitter Revolution: China's Struggle with the Modern World*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), esp. 3-154; for a study of the role of anarchists in the New Culture Movement see Arif Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). See also n. 1 from this chapter.

<sup>62</sup> For more on the restructured Kuomintang of this era see chapter 4 in this dissertation.

centered on the state and generative of a new sense of Chinese political identity less restrained by culturalism. This retreat from culturalism was a ripe breeding ground for the proliferation of science as a form of objectivity that might reform Chinese culture from the ground up. The effulgent scientism of the age was counterbalanced by what many saw as the dead weight of religiosity. Confucianism, Buddhism, and Christianity were all viewed as excessive constraints on the development of a modern Chinese sensibility. Organizations began to form devoted to the rigorous examination of the restrictive role of religion in Chinese life. One such organization was the Young China Association (*shao nian zhong guo xue hui*), or YCA, dedicated to, “the creation of a young China through social service under the guidance of the scientific spirit.”<sup>63</sup> The YCA even passed a resolution in 1920 decreeing that membership in the organization was to be limited to “those who have no religious faith.”<sup>64</sup>

Many of the young radicals and revolutionaries of the age continued their Western educations in the U.S., Japan, and Europe after attending Christian elementary and secondary schools in China.<sup>65</sup> This was true of a group of Chinese YCA members studying in France who distributed a questionnaire among their professors at the University of Paris seeking their opinion of what, if anything, religion had to offer a

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<sup>63</sup> Jessie G. Lutz, “Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s,” *Modern Asian Studies* 10, no. 3 (1976): 397.

<sup>64</sup> N.Z. Zia, “The Anti-Christian Movement,” April 20, 1925, Archives of the World Student Christian Federation, Record Group No. 46, Box 219: Fol. 1667, Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Archives, Yale University. Henceforth WSCF Papers.

<sup>65</sup> For an excellent study of this cohort of Chinese intellectuals in the United States see Weili Ye, *Seeking Modernity in China's Name: Chinese Students in the United States, 1900-1927*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001). For a history of Chinese Communists in Europe during this period see Marilyn Levine's, *The Found Generation: Chinese Communists in Europe during the Twenties*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993).

modernizing China. The overwhelming response of the faculty was that it offered little.<sup>66</sup> The YCA even sponsored a lecture series on the question of religion and its role in modern Chinese life, and devoted an entire issue of its journal, *Young China* to “The Problem of Religion.”<sup>67</sup> Bertrand Russell even contributed a piece to the issue. Russell had a significant impact on the young intellectuals then engaged in thinking the pathways of Chinese modernity, and he spent much of 1920 and 1921 travelling around China giving lectures.<sup>68</sup> The American pragmatist philosopher John Dewey was also an important influence on the thinking of young Chinese nationalists of the period.<sup>69</sup> The hegemony of science in their thinking easily gave the lie to much of the Christian doctrines they had been taught in school, like the virgin birth and the resurrection of Christ. Even worse than the scientific impossibility of many of the fundamental tenets of the Christianity they had been taught, it actually had a stultifying effect on the production of new ideas which was incompatible with the radical change necessary for the regeneration of China. Western critiques of Christianity gained wide purchase in China. The literatures of liberal democracy and the science of evolution were widely read. One missionary noted that the local “book stalls were full of Chinese translations of the writings of Rousseau, Comte, Huxley, and Spencer. The thousands of Chinese students

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<sup>66</sup> Lutz, “Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s,” *Modern Asian Studies* 10, no. 3 (1976): 397, esp. n. 2.

<sup>67</sup> Lutz, “Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s,” *Modern Asian Studies* 10, no. 3 (1976): 397.

<sup>68</sup> For Russell’s own views on China during his visit see Bertrand Russell, *The Problem of China*. (London: Allen & Unwin, 1922).

<sup>69</sup> For more on Dewey’s two-year sojourn in China see Jessica Ching-Sze Wang, *John Dewey in China: To Teach and to Learn*. (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007). Wang makes the case for the dynamic relationship between Dewey, his philosophical thought, and China. As much as Dewey influenced Chinese thinking, China too taught Dewey much about global politics and internationalism in this moment.

who went to Japan and the West exalted science while deprecating the superstitions of religion.”<sup>70</sup>

The unique history of the Christian missions in China associated them indelibly in the Chinese mind as one part of the larger apparatus of Western imperialism and the inequities of the treaty port system. Deep-seated anger over this interrelation was often given full expression in the press of the student radicals. Vitriolic attacks on both the church and Jesus himself were fairly common. While angry diatribes against Christianity were not necessarily new, an anti-Christian tract from 1861 recounts a typical Sunday service climaxing in “copulation among the congregation and sodomy with the castrated priest,” mixing a critique of Christianity with the logic of science had become more dominant by early 1920s.<sup>71</sup> A representative article from the later period, like Chu Chih-hsin’s 1919 piece, “What is Jesus” (*Ye Shu shi shen me dong xi?*), utilizes the teachings of Jesus against himself. For example, Chu employs

parables from the Gospel to demonstrate that Jesus was ‘a hypocritical, selfish, narrow minded, easily provoked man, with a strong desire for revenge.’ In condemning the bare fig tree, Jesus not only vented his anger at not being able to appease his hunger but he deprived others of the right to eat fruit from the tree simply because it had disappointed him.<sup>72</sup>

The continuity of an anti-Christian literary tradition in China illustrates the important shifts in thinking from the mid-nineteenth century into the early twentieth. In both eras a rejection of Christianity was a barometer of what constituted an authentic Chinese identity, but by the late-1910s a creative use of the fruits of a Christian education were bearing bounty as Chinese used Western logic as an instrument of social revolution.

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<sup>70</sup> Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats*, 98.

<sup>71</sup> Lutz, “Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s,” *Modern Asian Studies* 10, no. 3 (1976): 399.

<sup>72</sup> Lutz, “Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s,” *Modern Asian Studies* 10, no. 3 (1976): 399.



Indeed, this kind of anti-religiosity had become so entrenched by the time of the NCM that to be anti-Christian, or at least to have a firm awareness of the limitations of Christianity for the formation of a modern Chinese state, became a part of what it meant to be a Chinese nationalist.

The zenith of the movement that was focused explicitly on anti-Christianity as an intellectual paradigm for thinking Chinese nationalism in and of itself came in 1922 with the formation of the Anti-Christian Student Federation (ACSF) in Shanghai. Once again spurred by the failure of an international settlement to take seriously the desires of the Chinese for sovereignty in an emerging world system, this time at the dogged resistance of the colonial powers to give up their rights of extraterritoriality at the Washington Naval Conference, outraged students and activists demanded change. They turned towards the newly formed Soviet Union as a model for righteous international comportment in a time of global change, specifically the Karakhan Manifesto of 1919 in which the Soviets pledged to give up all special privileges gained in China by the Tsarist government. Adding insult to an already palpable sense of outrage, the World's Student Christian Federation decided to hold its 1922 annual meeting in China in a calculated move designed to bristle the surging anti-Christian tide in China. Chinese students responded by organizing the ACSF and issuing a manifesto. It stated in part that

We oppose the World's Student Christian Federation because we want to protect the happiness and welfare of humanity... We know that Christianity and the Christian church have created many evils in the history of mankind... We know the organization of the present society is an organization of capitalistic society which has on the one hand the property-holding class who eat without work [*sic*], and on the other hand, the non-property holding class who work but are unable to get anything to eat... The present Christianity and the Christian church are the devils that support the former class in their effort to exploit and oppress the latter class... We are convinced that capitalist society today, tyrannical and

cruel, unreasonable and inhumane, ought to be destroyed without mercy. Consequently we declare that Christianity and the Christian church today, demons which aid the merchants to do evil, are our enemies. We must battle them in a war to the death.<sup>73</sup>

The language of Marxism is clearly evident in the writings of the ACSF at this early stage of their struggle for a new China.

Not long after the manifesto of the ACSF was issued, the Peking student groups took over control of the organization and broadened its appeal to be more generally anti-religious, and not just anti-Christian. They were renamed the Great Federation of Anti-Religionists (GFAR). The new Peking-based GFAR issued a number of proclamations regarding such topics as: “Religion teaches men obedience, which is the moral code of slaves,” and “Religion propagates superstitions which hinder the search for truth.”<sup>74</sup> On March 21, 1922 the GFAR circulated a telegram widely among student groups across China protesting the convention of the WSCF at Tsinghua University in Peking. Among the seventy-nine signatories of the telegram were such renowned radical intellectuals as the French-educated anarchist and co-founder of the Sino-French University in Peking and the Institut Franco-Chinois de Lyon in France, Li Shih-tseng, as well as Chen Duxiu, Cai Yuanpei, and Wang Jingwei.<sup>75</sup> The telegram had an extraordinary influence on the development of anti-religious Chinese nationalism in the early 1920s. As the position of the telegram became known among student circles across China, many branches of the GFAR were founded in middle schools and universities. The GFAR had the support of the Kuomintang and the nascent CCP, as well as endorsement from such prominent

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<sup>73</sup> Quoted in Lutz, “Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s,” *Modern Asian Studies* 10, no. 3 (1976): 400.

<sup>74</sup> Quoted in Lutz, “Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s,” *Modern Asian Studies* 10, no. 3 (1976): 400.

<sup>75</sup> Howard L. Boorman, Richard C. Howard, and Joseph K.H. Cheng, eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China*, Vol. 3. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 418; Lutz, “Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s,” *Modern Asian Studies* 10, no. 3 (1976): 400.

veterans of the anti-Qing revolution like Liang Qichao who “welcomed the movement as a sign that the Chinese nation was awake and criticized Christianity for its exclusiveness and its use of education for religious purposes.”<sup>76</sup>

The YCA also joined the chorus of anti-religious fervor and published a number of like-minded documents. Despite ample protest, the WSCF held its meeting anyway between April 4–9, 1922, on the Tsinghua University campus. GFAR sent Tsinghua students an open letter on the first day of the conference protesting the WSCF and convened a massive protest on its final day that drew over one thousand demonstrators. Speeches were made by prominent radicals for science in favor of religion. In his speech, Cai Yuanpei launched a critique of all religions condemning them as corrupt, and defended the right of atheists to lodge legal protests against religion. Some Chinese argued that the Christian evangelists in China were the most egregious offenders against religious freedom because they preached their gospel as the universal truth. The anti-religious fervor spread across student centers in China, and similar anti-religious protests were held in Wuhan, Shanghai, and Canton. The radical anarchist and Marxist left wing took up the anti-religious mantle with particular fervor, reiterating Marx’s adage that religion was the opiate of the masses, and lambasted Christian missionaries as the running dogs of the imperialists and capitalists.

The rhetoric of the left could sometimes overflow into the territory of the overly precious, as with one proclamation in support of GFAR issued by the students at the National School for Fine Arts in Peking:

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<sup>76</sup> Quoted in Lutz, “Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s,” *Modern Asian Studies* 10, no. 3 (1976): 401.

Religion suffocates reason and promotes immorality. It spreads its venom among our ignorant and heedless citizens... We believe it necessary to caution our people against this infection, to exhort them to wash away this ordure.<sup>77</sup>

Despite its ability to rouse anti-imperialist sentiment, the anti-religious campaigns failed to provide an adequate political directive that could be useful in creating a roadmap towards modern statehood for the awakened Chinese. Instead, it remained largely a self-perpetuating discourse that circulated mostly among the urban intellectual elite and student groups in China. It was, however, of historical importance because of its usefulness as an example of the evolution of Chinese national consciousness, and the ways in which the fruits of the Christian missionary enterprise—like a Western education—would ultimately become weapons in the hands of the radicalized Chinese in their efforts to create anew a China that was free from the taints of Western imperialism.

### **The Movement Against Christian Education in China**

The ultimate failure of the first phase of the anti-Christian movement most likely lay in its outbreak as an emotional response to the WSCF meeting in Peking in 1922, its lack of a coherent platform for any substantive political change, and its lack of populist support. With the completion of the WSCF meeting, some of the fervor of the student radicals petered out. This was not the end of the larger anti-Christian movement in China, however, it just represented the conditions under which it would shift direction from being mostly a protest against the WSCF conference, to one that was more focused on the

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<sup>77</sup> Quoted in Lutz, "Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s," *Modern Asian Studies* 10, no. 3 (1976): 402.

problem of Christian education in China and its restraining effect on the constitution of a constructive nationalism.

The focused attack on Christian education, as opposed to a more amorphous conception of Christianity more generally, gained significant purchase in 1923 with the publication by the YCA of a book called, *Nationalistic Education*. It contained essays attacking Christian education in China that bore titles like, “Christianity and Emotion,” and “Problem of Missionary Education.”<sup>78</sup> These attacks on Christian education were mostly penned by former students of missionary schools, who had withdrawn because of “dissatisfaction with the authorities.”<sup>79</sup> The popular refrain for the new movement was the “restoration of educational rights,” and it became part of the trifecta of rights that were to become a cornerstone of anti-imperialist nationalism in China during the turbulent 1920s. The other two were the right to control tariffs, and the rescinding of the rights of extraterritoriality to foreigners in treaty port areas. The new movement against Christian education was more organized and enjoyed more popular support than the anti-religious movement of the previous year, and it enjoyed a longer duration as a core piece of the nationalist struggle.

While it was the education brought to China by the missionaries that had given radicals and revolutionaries the language of political dissent in the first place, the inseparability of educational autonomy and political sovereignty generated a critique of the ineluctable association of Christian conversion with Western higher education in China. What bristled was not that the missionaries had educated the Chinese, it was that teaching and learning Christianity was a prerequisite for anyone wishing to attain a

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<sup>78</sup> N.Z. Zia, “The Anti-Christian Movement,” 4, Box 219: Fol. 1667, WSCF Papers.

<sup>79</sup> N.Z. Zia, “The Anti-Christian Movement,” 4, Box 219: Fol. 1667, WSCF Papers.

Western education. Chinese nationalists were not opposed to Western education on its own terms, quite the contrary. This was a moment in which the logic of scientism enjoyed a dominance in the thinking of the intellectual elite, and they highlighted the inherent contradictions between the claims of the Christian gospel, and the science of the Christian schools. Chinese nationalists understood the centrality of a Western education to the dynamic of fomenting social and political revolution, and they demanded that education be placed into the hands of the Chinese themselves, and to excise the requirement that one need be a Christian convert in order to receive the most up-to-date education in China. This would mean that, “the Chinese government should supervise and regulate all educational institutions, and that henceforth Christian schools as well as government schools should serve the cause of state sovereignty and nationalist ideology.”<sup>80</sup>

A series of important meetings were convened in 1924 to address the issue of placing education in the hands of the Chinese themselves. The fifth annual conference of the YCA was held in Nanking in July and passed a resolution stating, “That we strongly oppose Christian education which destroys the national spirit of our people and carries on a cultural program in order to undermine Chinese civilization.”<sup>81</sup> That same month, the National Association for the Advancement of Education held its third annual meeting, also in Nanking, and passed a resolution insisting that the national government in Peking (such as it was) demand that all foreign educational enterprises in China register with the state. The resolution carried the additional recommendation that the government should only register those institutions that banned religious education from their curricula. The

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<sup>80</sup> Lutz, “Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s,” *Modern Asian Studies* 10, no. 3 (1976): 403.

<sup>81</sup> N.Z. Zia, “The Anti-Christian Movement,” 4, Box 219: Fol. 1667, WSCF Papers.

sixth annual conference of the Students' Union was held in Shanghai in August, and "decided to start a movement for the restoration of educational rights and for the denunciation of educational enterprises started by foreigners in order to spread religion."<sup>82</sup> The Student's Union also criticized the missionary educational establishment for denationalizing Chinese youth, and turning them into the running dogs of imperialism. They also urged Chinese students to link their destinies with that of Sun Yat-sen and the Soviet Union against Western imperialism.<sup>83</sup> At the tenth joint meeting of the provincial educational associations of China, it was decided that education in China should be an autonomous entity from religion, and that foreigners should not be allowed to have control over the means of education in China.

In the heyday of the anti-Christian education movement, the period of most activity was generally during the week surrounding Christmas. In 1924, this week was deemed an official 'Anti-Christian Week,' and there was an upsurge of protest in cities across the country. Parades, public lectures, and the dissemination of anti-Christian literature took place in Ji'nan, Wuchang, Hankou, Jiujiang, Shanghai, Suzhou, Hangzhou, Xuzhou, Shaoxing, and Ningbo. In some cities, demonstrators even intervened in the Christmas services at Christian churches. In Changsha, the capital city of Hunan, the anti-Christian education movement adopted as their official slogans, "Overthrow Christianity which kills people without shedding their blood," "Stamp out the mission schools which make men the slave of foreigners," and "Bring to an end the foreign cultural program

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<sup>82</sup> N.Z. Zia, "The Anti-Christian Movement," 5, Box 219: Fol. 1667, WSCF Papers.

<sup>83</sup> Lutz, "Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s," *Modern Asian Studies* 10, no. 3 (1976): 407.

which saps the national spirit.”<sup>84</sup> One contemporary Chinese Christian observer delineated a ten-point platform that formed the foundations of the movement. They were:

Religion stands for the old conservatism and opposes us in our effort to develop the new culture and to make progress...

Christianity is the forerunner of imperialism...

The doctrines of the creation of men by God and the eternal life of the soul can never be explained by biology or psychology and are opposed by the theory of evolution...

Christians claim to belong to a higher class and associate with rich men and officials; they tempt people with material benefits... Beyond teaching many people to worship the foreigners, the church has apparently done nothing valuable in China...

Backed up by imperialistic forces of foreign countries, the Christian preachers threaten local authorities and compel them to decide according to foreigners' idea of right, not paying attention to the laws of the land, and thus protecting criminals...

The administration of Christian schools is autocratic, conservative, and domineering...

The Jesus of history is unimportant... The Jesus who is actually set forth by preachers both old and new, Catholic and Protestant, is narrow minded, hypocritical, selfish, revengeful, a mere idol...

Christianity has always depended upon oppression...

Christianity teaches that women should be obedient and submissive...

The doctrines of Christianity are not so comprehensive as those of Buddhism. Its philosophy is less profound. The teachings of Christianity are artificial, narrow, idealistic, impractical, and hypocritical, caring more for outward expression than for inward reality, grasping at the trivial and neglecting the fundamental.<sup>85</sup>

The breadth of the general platform of the movement to reform educational rights appealed to both major nationalist parties, the Kuomintang and the CCP, and it was thus

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<sup>84</sup> N.Z. Zia, "The Anti-Christian Movement," 6, Box 219: Fol. 1667, WSCF Papers.

<sup>85</sup> N.Z. Zia, "The Anti-Christian Movement," 9-10, Box 219: Fol. 1667, WSCF Papers.



adopted broadly and had a significant influence on Chinese nationalism of the era. The first KMT-CCP united front under the leadership of the Comintern unified the anti-Christian nationalist movement even more, bringing adherents of the two state ideologies under the aegis of a single anti-religious movement.<sup>86</sup> In 1922 there were over 7,000 Christian schools in China boasting a total enrollment of over 214,000 students.<sup>87</sup> And it was true that most of these schools operated independent of government control or regulations, despite the government having issued a call for such requirements in 1913 and 1917. The Christian educational institutions “made little effort to secure recognition” from the Chinese government, and the government was too weak to demand it. Most of these schools “continued to bear the marks of their evangelical origins” and required their students to take religious study and to attend religious services.<sup>88</sup> The faculties of these schools were dominated by missionaries, and the staff was composed mostly of Chinese graduates of the missionary educational apparatus. It was in many ways an insular community which felt little need to be in touch with the revolutionary changes underway in China.

Sensing a growing sense of anti-Christian unrest among the Chinese, the Protestant denominations in China published two surveys in 1922 to bring their good works to the attention of the Chinese nationalists. Unfortunately, even the titles of the works suggest how out of touch the leadership of the churches was with the political scene in China. One, *The Christian Occupation of China*, was a study of the rapid growth of church membership in China in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The

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<sup>86</sup> For more on the first KMT-CCP united front see chapter 4 of this dissertation.

<sup>87</sup> Lutz, “Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s,” *Modern Asian Studies* 10, no. 3 (1976): 404.

<sup>88</sup> Lutz, “Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s,” *Modern Asian Studies* 10, no. 3 (1976): 404.

second, *Christian Education in China*, was an effort to push for greater coordination of missionary educational enterprises, and an even more thorough merging of education and religion. In response, the GFAR reprinted one of the maps detailing the spread of mission work in China under the caption, “The Spreading Infection of Religious Poison.”<sup>89</sup>

The increasing strength and momentum of the anti-Christian movement in the mid-1920s was partly the result of a more general shift away from the West in Chinese nationalist thinking. The West, particularly the U.S. and England, became increasingly associated with imperialism, especially in their refusal to aid and recognize Sun Yat-sen and his Canton government. The image of a democratic U.S. was further eroded by the aid given by the Soviet Union to the nationalist government in Canton.<sup>90</sup> Lenin’s position as the vanguard philosopher of anti-imperialism, and his support of Chinese nationalist aspirations, further reduced the stature of the West in the eyes of the Chinese. Sun told an audience of YMCA members in December of 1923 that “We [the Chinese] no longer look to the Western powers. Our faces are turned toward Russia.”<sup>91</sup> The reform educational rights movement was a logical outgrowth of the more generalized and impassioned anti-religious movement of 1922, and a more overtly politicized movement that the primarily cultural NCM. Most radical Chinese nationalists had by 1924 realized that the generation of a new national culture would have to hinge more on political change than it would on cultural efflorescence. Sovereignty was the ultimate goal, and sovereignty became intertwined with the struggle against Western imperialism, and the

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<sup>89</sup> Lutz, “Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s,” *Modern Asian Studies* 10, no. 3 (1976): 405.

<sup>90</sup> For more on Soviet aid to Sun Yat-sen, and the work of Mikhail Borodin in China, see chapter 4 of this dissertation.

<sup>91</sup> Lutz, “Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s,” *Modern Asian Studies* 10, no. 3 (1976): 405.

restoration of the three important rights of educational autonomy, tariff autonomy, and the abolishment of extraterritoriality. Throughout 1924 and 1925 the student anti-Christian movement gained ground in Christian schools across urban China as students themselves began to protest to the administration of Christian schools. This rise in student agitation coincided with the rising power of both the CCP and the left KMT, with the regional student unions often acting as intermediaries between the political parties and the radicalizing students. It was no coincidence that the most active hotbeds of student anti-Christian activity also happened to be the centers of left-wing power in China, cities like Canton, Changsha, Wuhan, and Shanghai.

### **Progressive Christians and the Anti-Christian Movement**

As the anti-Christian movement gained strength and numbers, some of its supporters were even drawn from within the edifice of Chinese Christianity itself. Not only had some of the most radicalized of the anti-Christian students been educated in mission schools, but many progressive missionaries hoped to find a common ground between religiosity, liberal democracy, and Chinese nationalist anti-imperialism. It is worth exploring in some detail the activities of some of these progressives.

The Christian missionaries in China were pulled from a diverse range of backgrounds in the U.S., and as such represented very different views about issues like race, gender, and civilization. Although the missionary movement had its origins in the Protestant religiosity of New England, by the twentieth century most missionaries were actually being drawn from the midwestern states.<sup>92</sup> To be sure, many of these

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<sup>92</sup> Hunter, *Gospel of Gentility*, 28.

missionaries fit the classical mold of the ugly American, harboring feelings of both racial and cultural superiority towards the Chinese, and believing there to be little of value to be learned from them. However, there were many missionaries who also genuinely felt deep feelings of compassion and respect for the Chinese, and understood their nationalist yearnings for political sovereignty. These missionaries knew that a significant part of the rapid destruction of Chinese civilization in the turbulent nineteenth century had been an effect of empire, and that the U.S., while not technically a belligerent in the Opium Wars that opened up China to Western imperialism, benefitted nevertheless from the unequal treaties that followed in their wake—the U.S. most certainly were signatories to their fair share of such treaties. Both before and during the anti-Christian movement, many of these missionaries attempted to reconcile their continued belief in the benefits of Christianity for the Chinese with their simultaneous desire to see a strong, unified, independent, and modern China. Many of these progressive missionaries were supporters of the Chinese revolution, and worked hard to find a place for Christianity in the new China.

Even before the Wuchang Uprising and the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1911, some missionaries were already cognizant of the fact that their presence in China was compromised because they were deeply associated with the foreign presence in China, which was by its very existence a part of the machinery of empire. The anti-foreign and anti-Christian Boxer Rebellion of 1898–1901 had made all Christians in China acutely aware of deep wellsprings of dissatisfaction among the Chinese regarding the erosion of their political sovereignty, and that dissent often took shape against the most visible representative of foreignism, the church. Matters were not helped by the fact that the

suppression of such protest, as was the case with the Boxer Rebellion, involved foreign troops and the use of asymmetrical force. The missionaries clearly had the backing of the military armature of empire, whether they wanted it or not. To make things worse, the looting that occurred in the aftermath of the suppression of the Boxers was so outrageous that it continues to this day to be a source of nationalist fervor in China. Of course, not all missionaries were deserving of the violence perpetrated against them as individuals engaged in the larger dynamic of imperialism. Indeed, many were intelligent critics of racism and imperialism themselves.

In late 1906, D. Willard Lyon wrote a private report of what he thought to be “facts of encouragement” regarding YMCA work in China.<sup>93</sup> Lyon was sensing an upsurge of anti-foreign sentiment in China, as evidenced by things like the anti-American boycott of 1905, and believed that perhaps things were headed towards a “more terrible attempt to oust the foreigner than was witnessed in 1900.” Lyon astutely observed that, “the foreigner is not hated because he is a foreigner, but rather because he has disregarded the rights and interests of the Chinese people.”<sup>94</sup> He indicated his understanding of the role of missionary education in this Chinese awakening when he wrote that

in the past the Chinese has lacked the courage to protest; but education has brought with it a sense of justice; the inalienable rights of the nation have been apprehended; patriotism has found birth; and what we see is but a country coming into a realization of her rightful place in the family of nations, and her people learning how to love their native land.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> D. Willard Lyon, “Extract from the Private Report of D. Willard Lyon,” Dec. 1, 1906, Box 221: Fol. 1706, WSCF Papers.

<sup>94</sup> D. Willard Lyon, “Extract from the Private Report of D. Willard Lyon,” Dec. 1, 1906, Box 221: Fol. 1706, WSCF Papers.

<sup>95</sup> D. Willard Lyon, “Extract from the Private Report of D. Willard Lyon,” Dec. 1, 1906, Box 221: Fol. 1706, WSCF Papers.

Lyon believed that the Chinese could now make clear distinctions between those foreigners whose pretensions were towards empire and special privileges, and “those who come not to be ministered unto but to minister,” to whom, Lyon believed, China would “open her arms as never before.”<sup>96</sup>

The reform movement that resulted in the abolishment of the traditional examination system in 1905 was noteworthy for the revolutionary sea-change it inaugurated in Chinese life, but also because it evinced “an intelligent appreciation of the vital relation between popular education and popular government.”<sup>97</sup> Lyon believed that it was a critical moment in which the missionaries must proceed with careful and studied steps, for the church must “win [China] for Christ now and she in turn will win the Orient; fail, and the whole world is imperiled.”<sup>98</sup> Lyon hoped one day for the Christian conversion of China to be a wholly indigenous undertaking, and was optimistic about the emergence of Chinese-run Christian publications, such as *China’s Young Men*, and the ways in which they represented the indigenization of Christianity in China. The same year that Lyon prepared his report, another missionary named F.S. Brockman, was reaching similar conclusions. Brockman was also not blind to the increased vitality of Chinese patriotism, what he saw as an “inert mass...fired with a new spirit...the signs of the birth of a new national spirit.”<sup>99</sup> Brockman drew a distinction between anti-foreignism and a general opposition to Western ideas. To him, China was set on a course

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<sup>96</sup> D. Willard Lyon, “Extract from the Private Report of D. Willard Lyon,” Dec. 1, 1906, Box 221: Fol. 1706, WSCF Papers.

<sup>97</sup> D. Willard Lyon, “Extract from the Private Report of D. Willard Lyon,” Dec. 1, 1906, Box 221: Fol. 1706, WSCF Papers.

<sup>98</sup> D. Willard Lyon, “Extract from the Private Report of D. Willard Lyon,” Dec. 1, 1906, Box 221: Fol. 1706, WSCF Papers.

<sup>99</sup> F.S. Brockman, “Some Aspects of the Present Situation in China which have a Direct Bearing upon the Work of the Association,” Dec. 1, 1906, Box 221: Fol. 1705, WSCF Papers.

to adopt “Western civilization.”<sup>100</sup> Just three years earlier, when Brockman had left China temporarily, “reformers were an insignificant and despised minority,” and by 1906 he could find “no man who would acknowledge himself a conservative. Up to three years ago the students educated abroad or in mission colleges were discounted on every hand. To-day [*sic*] the telegraph wires are kept hot by officials calling them to positions of honor and influence.”<sup>101</sup> Indeed, in 1906, one of the students of a missionary school who Brockman had known in Shanghai before he left, was acting as secretary to Prince Dai Ze on his tour of the United States, Japan, and Europe, and was “no doubt largely responsible for the recommendations which are so largely determining the destiny of the whole country.”<sup>102</sup> Brockman was adamant that Westerners not mistake the Chinese’s newfound respect for Western learning for a respect for Westerners themselves, “it is nevertheless the Westerner’s civilization rather than the Westerner with whom China is in rapprochement.”<sup>103</sup> Brockman was cognizant of the fact that the new spirit of Chinese nationalism blamed many of China’s ills on the misdeeds of the missionaries, who were to many the most recognizable manifestation of imperialism. Implied in this connection was the danger that the Chinese might decide that Christianity was itself incompatible with the new nationalism. In an effort to avoid Chinese desires that the Christian church be excluded from a reconstructed China, Brockman urged American Christians in China

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<sup>100</sup> F.S. Brockman, “Some Aspects of the Present Situation in China which have a Direct Bearing upon the Work of the Association,” Dec. 1, 1906, Box 221: Fol. 1705, WSCF Papers.

<sup>101</sup> F.S. Brockman, “Some Aspects of the Present Situation in China which have a Direct Bearing upon the Work of the Association,” Dec. 1, 1906, Box 221: Fol. 1705, WSCF Papers.

<sup>102</sup> F.S. Brockman, “Some Aspects of the Present Situation in China which have a Direct Bearing upon the Work of the Association,” Dec. 1, 1906, Box 221: Fol. 1705, WSCF Papers. Dai Ze was part of a famous group of Chinese officials who traveled abroad to try and learn more about modern democracy in the West. Dai Ze travelled throughout Europe, Japan, and the United States in an effort to learn more about their respective educational systems in an effort to modernize China’s.

<sup>103</sup> F.S. Brockman, “Some Aspects of the Present Situation in China which have a Direct Bearing upon the Work of the Association,” Dec. 1, 1906, Box 221: Fol. 1705, WSCF Papers.

to be more receptive to the new desires of the Chinese for political sovereignty. In 1906, Brockman still saw little evidence that Chinese Christian patriots felt that “Christianity [was] in itself...a menace to the country,” but warned his audience that many Chinese had come to “resent the present methods of propagating Christianity,” particularly the ways in which the missionaries benefitted from the laws of extraterritoriality and the special privilege, denied other foreigners, that missionaries could live anywhere in the country and not just in specially designated zones.<sup>104</sup> Brockman noted that “China has incurred so much trouble from riots against missionaries that even some Christian young men who have recently been brought into government employ are forcing the question whether the right of the foreign missionary to live at any place which he desires should not be curtailed.”<sup>105</sup> Missionaries, especially those in the treaty port areas, “where all of these antagonistic opinions and interests meet,” needed to tread carefully in their negotiation of progressivism and the evangelizing impulse, “lest either [the Christian church] find itself allied with a party antagonistic to the missionaries, or lose the sympathy and cooperation of the progressive Chinese, or offend the foreign resident and receive all the handicap of his opprobrium.”<sup>106</sup> Despite his own progressive views about the legitimacy of the grievances of the Chinese against foreign domination, Brockman nevertheless remained hyper-cognizant of the ways in which the missionary did in fact benefit directly from the existence of the treaty ports and the privileges they represented,

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<sup>104</sup> F.S. Brockman, “Some Aspects of the Present Situation in China which have a Direct Bearing upon the Work of the Association,” Dec. 1, 1906, Box 221: Fol. 1705, WSCF Papers.

<sup>105</sup> F.S. Brockman, “Some Aspects of the Present Situation in China which have a Direct Bearing upon the Work of the Association,” Dec. 1, 1906, Box 221: Fol. 1705, WSCF Papers.

<sup>106</sup> F.S. Brockman, “Some Aspects of the Present Situation in China which have a Direct Bearing upon the Work of the Association,” Dec. 1, 1906, Box 221: Fol. 1705, WSCF Papers.



and ultimately chose to confine his own sympathy for the Chinese nationalists to ways guaranteed not to ‘offend’ residents of the foreign concessions.

By the 1920s the thinking of some missionaries regarding the relationship between themselves, the Chinese, and the prescient question of empire had become more complex. In the July 1926 issue of *The Chinese Recorder*, a missionary named T. Ekeland tackled the question of ‘missionary paternalism’ in an article by the same name.<sup>107</sup> Ekeland began his article by calling explicit attention to the fact that the missionary enterprise had increasingly become associated with the phenomenon of ‘imperialism.’ Rather than conclude that this could not possibly be the case, he instead argued that the definition of imperialism itself had

expanded to include far more than we are wont to have it signify; and today it looms as a task of the utmost importance to the missionary body to discover what this “more” is. For unless the charges are understood and genuine efforts to right the wrongs involved are put forth, the spectre of racial misunderstanding will surely disorganize and obstruct the causes for which they labor who have the best interests of mankind at heart.<sup>108</sup>

Ekeland was finely attuned to the shifting contours of Chinese anti-imperialist nationalism, for he noted that in just the last few months Chinese conceptions of imperialism had begun to expand their definitional borders, and he took note of the “sympathetic echoes” which had begun to pour into China from around the world. What Ekeland attempted was to rescue the missionary apparatus from what was, he recognized, a legitimate concern among the Chinese about imperialism. But the work of missionaries would not escape unscathed by his critique, it was just relegated to its own category of oppressive behavior, namely ‘paternalism.’ The article was simultaneously a deliberate

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<sup>107</sup>T. Ekeland, “Missionary Paternalism,” *The Chinese Recorder* LVII, no. 7 (July, 1926).

<sup>108</sup>T. Ekeland, “Missionary Paternalism,” *The Chinese Recorder* LVII, no. 7 (July, 1926): 478.

attempt to dissociate the missionaries from charges of imperialism, and a rather critical rebuke to missionaries who continued to adopt a paternalistic attitude towards the Chinese, in whose country they were guests.

Ekeland was using paternalism as a term “to designate one of our outstanding race traits that has proved a chief obstacle to happy and effective relations in our dealings with the races to whom we have come as missionaries.”<sup>109</sup> Paternalism was a particularly pernicious posture to affect because it had become assimilated into the daily life of many missionaries as a kind of invisible hand of discipline. Paternalism was thus

a weapon which civilization has been refining until we scarcely recognize it in the benevolent generosity and pleasing deference with which its clever wielder today so often disarms us and takes us captive to serve his ends.<sup>110</sup>

Ekeland’s vision was more global and internationalist. To him, paternalism had functioned as a roadblock towards the ultimate goal of the absolute freedom of expression that forms the cornerstone of humanism. “Paternalism has ever contested his [*sic*] claim to this privilege, and has persisted in setting up its standards as unalterable norms...this has tended to dehumanize men.” Ekeland sensed change in China, however. “The remarkable intellectual awakening...of recent years, due largely to the process of democratization that has invaded most spheres of life, but especially the field of education, makes it possible to surmise faintly where we might have been today but for the long reign of Paternalism.”<sup>111</sup> He called on his fellow missionaries to become more cognizant of the fact that they wielded the cudgel of paternalism often and sometimes unwittingly. “The representatives of Paternalism are usually unable to discover wherein

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<sup>109</sup>T. Ekeland, “Missionary Paternalism,” *The Chinese Recorder* LVII, no. 7 (July, 1926): 479.

<sup>110</sup>T. Ekeland, “Missionary Paternalism,” *The Chinese Recorder* LVII, no. 7 (July, 1926): 479.

<sup>111</sup> T. Ekeland, “Missionary Paternalism,” *The Chinese Recorder* LVII, no. 7 (July, 1926): 479.

they have so wronged the rising generation as to call down upon themselves such opprobrium and opposition, and are inclined to consider the whole stir the ebullitions of a passing madness.”<sup>112</sup> He saw failure in the missionary enterprise in China up until that moment:

A more discomfiting disillusionment has never embarrassed a body of missionaries than is experienced in China today. We had been regarding ourselves as harmonious co-workers with the forces diffusing the light that was awakening and regenerating China, and thought we had every reason to expect that the work of these united forces would result in a heretofore unknown rallying of consecrated talent and earnest devotion to the Christian banners. But as the issues have been clearing and the smoke of conflict lifting, we have been shocked and grieved to find that those whom the new movement has most deeply influenced have for the most part arrayed themselves against us and have fortified themselves for the attack. The noticeably cooled interest of many of those closest to us indicates that these influences have had a live effect upon them.<sup>113</sup>

Ekeland blamed missionaries for trying to find fault in the anti-foreign movement rather than turning towards more critical self reflection. He even saw, like his contemporary Chinese students, the benefits of scientific thinking on an examination of missionary paternalism. It was much harder to discern than the naked aggression of political empire,

the wrongs of which we have been guilty in our political and social relations are more concrete and have been accusing us to our faces, while the gravest wrongs committed in our religious relations are so subtly concealed in our race psychology that they are but now emerging into light, largely because the keener analysis of modern scientific methods is being concentrated on them.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> T. Ekeland, “Missionary Paternalism,” *The Chinese Recorder* LVII, no. 7 (July, 1926): 479.

<sup>113</sup> T. Ekeland, “Missionary Paternalism,” *The Chinese Recorder* LVII, no. 7 (July, 1926): 480.

<sup>114</sup> T. Ekeland, “Missionary Paternalism,” *The Chinese Recorder* LVII, no. 7 (July, 1926): 481.

He castigated missionary education for teaching Christianity as a fixed entity, requiring no critique, with predetermined orthodoxies and infallible principles. This impenetrable shield of Western presumptions about the inability of Chinese converts to interpret for themselves the meanings that inhered in a religion they were being asked to serve made a mockery of any pretensions the missionaries had about promoting an indigenous Chinese Christianity with Chinese leadership. Given this set of extraordinary circumstances, it was a surprise to Ekeland that the Chinese still met “the attitude of [the missionaries with such] extreme patience and forbearance.”<sup>115</sup> Ekeland believed that the predominant reason that Marxism was so appealing to the Chinese was “because of suspicion and disgust due to their treatment at the hands of Western nations.”<sup>116</sup> This was probably a gross simplification of the appeal of Marxism, but his sentiment was not without merit. Ultimately, Ekeland’s conclusions were that the anti-Christian movement was not a movement against Christianity per se, but rather an upwelling of long buried resentments “against the Paternalism in which Christ and living truth is imprisoned.” Although his was a trenchant and pointed critique of the shortcomings of the missionary enterprise in China, and called attention to the very real problems of racism and paternalism in its conduct with the Chinese, he nevertheless concluded that he knew better than the Chinese themselves what their motives were. The anti-Christian movement couldn’t be just that, at least not according to Ekeland, for there was an eternal kernel of truth in Christianity, a slight nuance perhaps, that the Chinese just weren’t picking up on

The so-called anti-foreign and anti-Christian movements are but efforts to drag us before the tribunal of an outraged nation to account for the incongruity between our high pretences to altruism and our open-faced

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<sup>115</sup>T. Ekeland, “Missionary Paternalism,” *The Chinese Recorder* LVII, no. 7 (July, 1926): 485.

<sup>116</sup>T. Ekeland, “Missionary Paternalism,” *The Chinese Recorder* LVII, no. 7 (July, 1926): 485.

greed, and mean striving to retain the outward insignia of leadership and power—a course the folly of which we should have discovered ere our host found it necessary to force it upon our attention.<sup>117</sup>

In some ways, however, though probably unintentionally, Ekeland's visions of Christianity and what it could provide were expansive enough that they encompassed a kind of ecumenical humanism, and perhaps this was his hope. The anti-Christian movement's turn towards the radical left might have been, to his eyes, just a temporary detour through a kind of secular Christianity—like the most humanist Marx—and what Ekeland longed for was a peaceful internationalism in which the sorrows of empire were distant memories of things past.

The anti-Christian movement was not just supported by students, clearly progressive church leaders like T. Ekeland gave it their support. The desire for national independence and freedom from imperialist domination was one that many missionaries shared, however much they wittingly or unwittingly benefitted from it. Their support was key because it represented an institutional avenue through which to generate change. The direct action tactics of radicalized Chinese students could only get them so far in the political milieu of 1920s China. An increased sense of power based on the victories that students achieved during the May Fourth Movement, coupled with increasing institutional support, led to substantive change in the Chinese educational system in the 1920s. YMCA leaders in China helped to draft an anti-imperialist manifesto in support of the KMT warning foreigners that they would only be welcome in China if they were on the side of revolutionary change.<sup>118</sup> The church had, to a small degree, become

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<sup>117</sup>T. Ekeland, "Missionary Paternalism," *The Chinese Recorder* LVII, no. 7 (July, 1926): 486.

<sup>118</sup>Jessie G. Lutz, "Students and Politics, Revolution and Historical Continuity: The Chinese Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s," in Jessie G. Lutz and Slah El-Shakhs, eds., *Tradition and Modernity: The Role of Traditionalism in the Modernization Process*. (Washington D.C.: University Press of America, 1982), 205.

radicalized. The majority of power in the missionary education system remained in the hands of the conservatives, however, but the rising tide of protest against foreign control of education was reaching a tipping point.

As the 1920s progressed, the anti-Christian movement was increasingly absorbed into the various party movements in China, particularly those of the two dominant nationalist parties, the CCP and the KMT. For those who equated educational autonomy and political sovereignty, the structure of the missionary schools was less than adequate. They were insular, and had a tendency to reproduce themselves insofar as the faculty were mostly foreign, instruction was mostly in English, religious study was required, and graduates often returned to work in missionary schools as staff—rarely as faculty—or went abroad to study.<sup>119</sup> As the Northern Expedition got underway in 1926, the reform educational rights movement had become almost completely assimilated into the broader political program of the nationalist parties in China, though it was increasingly being subordinated to military concerns.<sup>120</sup> The Northern Expedition generated new demands on Chinese nationalists to choose sides in the new China. Would they align themselves with the KMT or the CCP? Nationalism in China had become politicized and divided along ideological lines, and no one could remain unaligned. Many Christians joined or supported the KMT, and some of the more radicalized students joined the CCP, whose platform for national education excluded the teaching of religion altogether. Some of the demands coming from the left were so radical that Comintern agents, like Mikhail

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<sup>119</sup> Jessie G. Lutz, “Students and Politics, Revolution and Historical Continuity: The Chinese Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s.”

<sup>120</sup> For more on the Northern Expedition, the dissolution of the first KMT-CCP united front, and the turn towards rightism of the KMT under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek, see chapter 4 of this dissertation.

Borodin and Eugene Chen, even stepped in to act as mediators between the outraged students and the missionary establishment.<sup>121</sup>

In 1927, before his own conversion to Christianity, KMT leader Chiang Kai-shek was advocating educational reform on the grounds not of free intellectual expression, but of a party education. He wished for the educational apparatus in China to come under the control of the Chinese themselves, but believed that the government should regulate education and teach a strict party line. The new doctrine of the state, Sun Yat-senism, was to be the new educational orthodoxy. It was only to be taught by instructors vetted by the KMT establishment. Students would even be required to attend weekly Sun Yat-sen memorial services.<sup>122</sup> Chiang was inaugurating what would ultimately be the failed New Life Movement, a conservative turn towards Confucian neo-traditionalism. This was the beginnings of the KMT's turn towards autocracy, if not fascism. By the late 1920s Chiang began to crack down on student radicalism, and advocated a return to rote study of the new state orthodoxies. Chiang believed that

during the struggle against the militarists and imperialists... youth had been obliged to participate in the revolution, but now that the revolution had been won, the students should leave politics and educational policy to the legitimate government.<sup>123</sup>

This kind of a patronizing attitude that served to protect his power would characterize Chiang's political and military reign for much of the twentieth century. While the anti-Christian movement did not disappear by the end of the 1920s, a lot of its original goals had been met, just not quite in the radical ways the students had expected. Many

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<sup>121</sup> Jessie G. Lutz, "Students and Politics, Revolution and Historical Continuity: The Chinese Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s," 206.

<sup>122</sup> Jessie G. Lutz, "Students and Politics, Revolution and Historical Continuity: The Chinese Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s," 206.

<sup>123</sup> Jessie G. Lutz, "Students and Politics, Revolution and Historical Continuity: The Chinese Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s," 208.

missionary schools did come under government control during the brutal Northern Expedition, even many of the long-standing Christian colleges. Despite a reshuffling of the administrative structure of many schools, however, foreigners, because of their position vis-à-vis foreign aid to China, continued to wield greater influence in Chinese education than their dwindling numbers might have suggested. Chiang's conversion to Christianity, and his marriage into one of China's most prominent Christian families, resulted in his espousal of Christianity and prayer, and dampened the distance the state was willing to go to expel Christianity from China.<sup>124</sup> The lack of genuine popular support for his reconstructed right-wing KMT allowed many Christian schools to continue to operate autonomously from real government control. Indeed, the relative autonomy of the Christian schools allowed them to continue operating in China unmolested by state forces for another two decades, until the final clash between the KMT and the CCP resulted in the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

The anti-religious, anti-Christian, and educational rights movements in China in the late 1910s and 1920s were significant because they highlight the tensions apparent in the contest between Chinese modernity and nationalism, and the ways both were informed by deep Western influences. The students who revolted against the religious establishment did so wielding the intellectual weapons they had honed through their immersion in Western education. Without proficiency or fluency in the languages of the Enlightenment inheritance, found in ideas like the scientific method, theories of sovereignty and the state, a sense of justice as construed by modern Western jurisprudence, or even Marxism itself, the revolutionary tide that washed over much of

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<sup>124</sup> The Soong family had made their fortune selling bibles in China.



urban China in the 1920s might never have happened. Conversely, the power represented in the hegemony of those ideas was too strong to support a genuine radical reorganization of the instruments of the state. The political and ideological weakness of the KMT made its continued reliance on Western aid unavoidable, which in turn made social revolution inimical to the interests of the West nearly impossible. In an era that is widely regarded as seminal in the emergence of a centralized bureaucratic national state in China, Western ideas as well as Chinese reliance upon and subordination to the demands of Western liberal capitalist and imperialist interests made for a very fraught and attenuated Chinese political autonomy. The transnational nature of the emergence of Chinese anticolonial nationalism, made possible as it was by the Western missionary educational apparatus, as well as through the rejection of that very apparatus, has much yet to teach us about the global dimensions of Chinese nationalism and political evolution. This was a dynamic that persisted throughout much of the violence and instability that characterized the Chinese political landscape throughout the war decades of the 1930s and 1940s. The following chapter will explore the global conditions that marked the historical terrain upon which the CCCP rose to power, and on which KMT anti-communism grew to proportions far beyond what the U.S. could have understood when it attempted to intervene in the internecine political conflict between the KMT and CCP during WWII.

## Chapter 4

### **The Rise and Fall of Sino-Soviet Relations, and the Origins of Chinese Anti-Communism**

#### **The Origins and Emergence of the First United Front**

As I argued in the first chapter of this dissertation, Yuan Shikai's failed plot to enthrone himself as the new emperor of China announced in some ways the emergence of China into the chaotic world of twentieth-century inter-state relations. Yuan died shortly after his botched attempt to restore the Chinese monarchy, in 1916. The period between his death and the emergence of the KMT as the centralized ruling party in 1928 is known as the Warlord Period. Contrary to the antiquated connotations that are evoked by the use of the term 'warlord,' the Chinese warlords of the early-twentieth century were often fairly sophisticated political leaders who ran their suzerains like modern bureaucratic states, complete with protocols for taxation, large modern standing armies, some warlords even had their own air forces.<sup>1</sup> The warlord of Shanxi, Yan Xishan, developed his political philosophy out of an eclectic admixture of European and Chinese elements, one

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<sup>1</sup> For a brief overview of Chinese warlordism see Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991), esp. 288-294. A more detailed survey can be found in James E. Sheridan's contribution, "The warlord era: politics and militarism under the Peking government, 1916-1928," in John K. Fairbank, ed., *The Cambridge History of China Vol. 12 Part. 1*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 284-321. For a classic study of the period see Ch'i Hsi-sheng's, *Warlord Politics in China, 1916-1928*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976). A more recent account of the ways in which the warlord period resulted in the militarization of Chinese society at the expense of developing a more robust civil society is Edward A. McCord's, *The Power of the Gun: The Emergence of Modern Chinese Warlordism*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

that combined “militarism, nationalism, anarchism, democracy, capitalism, communism, individualism, imperialism, universalism, paternalism, and utopianism.”<sup>2</sup> Despite whatever cruel or beneficent intentions the various warlords may have had, the chaos invoked by the disunity within China sparked many political movements, including robust anarchist, communist, and other nationalist movements.<sup>3</sup> The most important parties to emerge out of these movements were the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and the Kuomintang (KMT). In this chapter I want to explore the global conditions in which the CCP came to prominence as the most important political alternative to the increasingly right-wing KMT, particularly the ways in which Soviet influence rose and fell throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Soviet machinations in the internal affairs of the Chinese political scene, and Stalin’s pusillanimous commitment to Chinese anticolonial nationalism (his priority in much of these years was taken up with quelling the Trotskyist opposition), illustrate clearly the origins of the mistrust with which the Chinese Communists continued to deal with Stalin until his death in 1953. This mistrust was something the U.S., for the most part, failed to see. The ideological construction of a monolithic communism based in Moscow was an American invention that took shape in the postwar Cold War, and had extraordinary consequences on U.S.-China relations, and consequently the international balance of power, from the end of WWII until 1971 when Nixon visited China and began to thaw American relations with the Chinese. This chapter shows the indigenous context in which Chinese anti-communism grew to become the guiding motivation behind Chiang Kai-shek’s will to power throughout most of his long military and political career, both in China, and later in ‘exile’ on Taiwan. Understanding

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Spence, *Search*, 289.

<sup>3</sup> For more on Chinese anarchism see Arif Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

the intensely global nature of this incredibly formative political historical moment in the construction of modern China highlights the origins of many foundational beliefs that plagued the Cold War relationship between the U.S. and China. Fundamental misunderstandings that characterized the tensions between China and the U.S. in the years 1945–1971 (and persist to this day as well) gestated in the very particular historical conditions that underwrote the political and military contests between the CCP and the KMT. Laying the groundwork that informs the history of the enmity between these two parties outlines the genealogy of the central contest in Chinese political life throughout the second half of the twentieth century, and sets the historical stage for the centrality of China, and of the Chinese political scene, to the emergence of the global Cold War, especially as it was imagined and acted upon in the U.S.

In the early 1920s the KMT had not become the ossified and reactionary party that it was by the time of the Second World War. It was a dynamic political party, receiving significant support from the Soviets, and with an active left wing. Unable to procure support from foreign powers like the U.S., from whom he thought he might receive a sympathetic ear, by the early 1920s Sun Yat-sen began turning towards the Soviet Union as his situation grew more desperate. In January of 1923 Sun and Adolf Joffe, a Soviet diplomat, issued a joint declaration that signaled the emergence of a new united front between the KMT and the Soviet Union.<sup>4</sup> While not an ideological proponent of communist doctrine, Sun clearly felt that Soviet support of international anti-imperialist revolution was enough of a draw for him to begin allowing communists into the KMT in the fall of 1922. The joint statement made clear Sun's belief that China was

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<sup>4</sup> For a thorough analysis of the Joffe mission see Allen S. Whiting's classic, *Soviet Policies in China, 1917-1924*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), 181-207.

not a society capable of harboring the successful development of a soviet or communist state “because there do not exist here the conditions” germane to its success. However, the statement did make plain the fact that “China’s most paramount and most pressing problem is to achieve national unification and attain full national independence” and that the Soviets offered the Chinese their “warmest sympathy” and Sun could be sure to “count on the support of Russia.”<sup>5</sup>

In October of 1923, veteran Soviet operative Mikhail Borodin was named “special adviser” to the KMT by Sun Yat-sen.<sup>6</sup> He was charged with the task of creating a united front between the emergent CCP and the more established KMT. Despite misgivings on the part of the leadership of the CCP, especially over concerns that it was still a growing party and movement, and fears that a united front with the KMT might dilute the revolutionary objectives of the CCP, Borodin successfully convinced communist leaders that an alliance with the KMT would serve the CCP’s long term interests quite well. In the short term, an alliance would provide them with the organizational superstructure to organize workers in both rural and urban areas with little interference from a hostile government. Meanwhile, the KMT’s leader Sun Yat-sen saw in Borodin a conduit between his Three Principles of the People (nationalism, democracy, and the people’s welfare) and the aims of the international Communist movement. To Sun, the Three Principles were in effect in the Soviet Union, it was a worker’s state in which the yoke of

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<sup>5</sup> Joint statement quoted from Spence, *Search*, 335.

<sup>6</sup> Mikhail Borodin’s real name was Mikhail Gruzenberg, and he was born to a Russian-Jewish family in 1884 in Latvia. He began working for Lenin in 1903, and was exiled after the failed revolution of 1905, at which time he moved to the United States and enrolled as a student at Valparaiso University. Subsequently, Borodin became a schoolteacher for immigrant children in Chicago. When Lenin seized power in the October Revolution, Borodin returned to the Soviet Union and undertook a number of secret postings that made a cosmopolitan out of him, in places throughout Europe, Mexico, and the United States. See Spence, *Search*, 337; for a book length study of Borodin’s activities in China see Dan Jacobs’ *Borodin: Stalin’s Man in China*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).

imperialism had been thrown off; Borodin represented the possibility that this could happen in China as well. Borodin was needed because he could provide “effective methods” for operationalizing the Three Principles on Sun’s home turf.<sup>7</sup>

Sun became increasingly oriented towards a Leninist vision of left anti-imperialism as the road to salvation for the disorganized Chinese state. Sun even responded to some of his overseas Chinese critics who complained about the increasingly Soviet oriented policies of the KMT with the terse rebuff that if supporters of the KMT refused a CCP alliance, then he himself would join the CCP.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, when Lenin’s death was announced at a KMT conference in January of 1924, where only about fifteen percent of the attendees were CCP members, Sun nevertheless delivered a heartfelt eulogy stating that, “I wish to proceed along the path pointed out by you, and although my enemies are against this, my people will hail me for it.”<sup>9</sup> Under Borodin, the KMT centralized and expanded greatly in conjunction with the CCP which had been folded into it, although at this time the CCP was still allowed to have autonomous communist subgroups within the KMT. Importantly, Borodin helped establish a KMT military academy at Whampoa, just south of Canton in southern China. Chiang Kai-shek, who had recently spent some time in Moscow studying military organization, was appointed the head of the new military academy. Not wanting to leave the CCP unrepresented in the military training apparatus of the new KMT, Borodin appointed Zhou Enlai as the head of the academy’s Department of Political Instruction. Zhou had himself recently returned from abroad. He had studied in France, and after the Third Party Congress of the CCP

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<sup>7</sup> Sun quoted in Spence, *Search*, 338.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

had accepted the Comintern's directive to merge with the KMT in 1923, Zhou began organizing overseas Chinese in Europe into a kind of more left oriented KMT ideological and political formation. Indeed, a disproportionately larger number of Chinese who were being organized under the umbrella of the KMT party in Europe in the early 1920s were Communists than was the case in the party's autochthonous base.<sup>10</sup> At Whampoa, in addition to a military education overseen by Chiang Kai-shek, and a political education overseen by Zhou Enlai, the students were thoroughly indoctrinated with Sun's Three Principles. Although some of the cadets were already communists, or were brought into the party during their matriculation at Whampoa, the majority of the students were "fiercely loyal to Chiang Kai-shek."<sup>11</sup> This fact would soon have great consequences after Sun's death, as Chiang subsequently maneuvered to consolidate the KMT under his leadership through a mop up of the warlords and the subsequent expulsion of the communist elements from within the KMT.

### **The Northern Expedition and The Shanghai Massacre:**

Sun Yat-sen's death from liver cancer at the age of fifty nine on March 12, 1925, left a considerable power vacuum in the KMT party. There was no successor who had the revolutionary credentials, nor the vast wellspring of transnational support from the

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<sup>10</sup> For more on the organization of the Chinese left in Europe during the 1920s see Marilyn Levine's *The Found Generation: Chinese Communists in Europe During the Twenties*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993). For a clarifying overview of this generation of radical transnational Chinese intellectuals see esp. 203-245. For more on Zhou's early political career see Chae-jin Lee's *Zhou Enlai: The Early Years*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), esp. 118-168.

<sup>11</sup> Spence, *Search*, 339. Lin Biao is perhaps the most famous example of an early graduate of Whampoa (c/o 1925) to rise in the ranks of the CCP political and military apparatus. According to U.S. Army Colonel David Barrett, who met Lin in Yen'an during the Dixie Mission, "[Lin] impressed me as being a first-rate soldier, and I felt I would have been glad to serve under his command, except of course in fighting against my own or a friendly country." David Barrett, *Dixie Mission: The United States Army Observer Group in Yen'an, 1944*. (Berkeley: Center for Chinese Studies, 1970), 33.

overseas Chinese community as had Sun from his extensive exile in Japan, Europe, and the Americas. Possible successors included Wang Jingwei—who represented a left leaning though not communist faction of the KMT, Hu Hanmin—who represented rightist tendencies within the party, and Liao Zhongkai—who represented the radical left wing of the KMT. Perhaps because of his more radical tendencies, especially the organization of massive anti-foreign boycotts and strikes in Guangdong, where he was governor, Liao was assassinated in August of 1925. While the murder remains unsolved, there is speculation that the five gunmen who shot him down may have been hired by the anti-left faction of the KMT, perhaps in collusion with the British. Hu Hanmin was arrested in relation to the assassination, but later released.<sup>12</sup> In any case, Liao's murder signaled a rightward turn within the KMT immediately following Sun's death. Of particular note was the emergence of the Society for the Study of Sun Yatsenism, which, despite its patriotic name (and despite the fact that Sun's last will and testament was a distinctly pro-Soviet document), was a hardcore anti-communist contingent at Whampoa Academy. As members graduated and came to occupy important posts within the KMT bureaucracy, they spread their anti-communist doctrine.<sup>13</sup> Although not himself a veteran of the anti-dynastic revolutionary struggles like Wang Jingwei, Hu Hanmin, or Liao, Chiang Kai-shek's control of the Whampoa military contingent positioned him particularly well to begin consolidating the power of the KMT over the warlords in a broad and sweeping military campaign. Indeed, throughout 1924–5 Chiang had led a number of successful military campaigns against regional warlords in areas near his Whampoa base. The rightward turn in the party, coupled with Chiang's rising status as a

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<sup>12</sup> Spence, *Search*, 342.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 343.



commander of the strongest military faction of the KMT, did not add up to a promising future for the left wing and communist contingent of the Kuomintang.

As Chiang continued to rack up regional victories against warlords, defeated troops and officers were beginning to swell the ranks of what was now called the National Revolutionary Army (NRA) under his general command. This increase in fighting force further reinforced Chiang's confidence that the time was ripe for a large-scale offensive against the major warlords who still controlled much of central and northern China, and a purge of the Chinese Communists from the KMT. This line of thinking is well illustrated by the Zhongshan Incident of March 20, 1926. Just before dawn a Chinese gunboat, *Zhongshan*, commanded by captain Li Zhilong, a communist, appeared in the waters just off the coast of Whampoa Island. Convinced that the ship's appearance was part of a larger plot to kidnap him, Chiang Kai-shek invoked his power as garrison commander and arrested Li. The madness did not stop here, however: Chiang also placed Canton under martial law, occupied important city buildings with his most loyal cadets, disarmed ongoing workers' strikes, arrested over thirty Russian advisers then resident in Canton, imprisoned a number of senior Chinese Communist officials, and ordered the cessation of CCP-affiliated newspapers in the city. Within two weeks Chiang began to ease up on his suppression of the left, and even paid lip service to his belief in the soundness of a continued KMT-Soviet alliance (he did, after all, need Soviet arms for his upcoming Northern Expedition), but as historian Jonathan Spence has noted, his truculence left "no one...sure how to interpret these statements."<sup>14</sup> The Zhongshan Incident marked a turning point in the KMT-CCP united front, and a weakening of the

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 344.

left wing of the KMT. Borodin made significant concessions to Chiang in an effort to get the jailed leftists released, as well as to save face for Stalin, who was then embroiled in a power dispute within the Comintern, and whose prestige would certainly have been damaged by a rift in the Soviet-KMT alliance. Among the concessions was an agreement that communists could no longer serve as bureau heads within the KMT. This meant that Tang Pingshan had to give up his powerful position as head of the party organization department to Chiang, Borodin had to provide a list of names of communist members of the KMT to Chiang, all autonomous communist factions within the KMT had to be abandoned, and Borodin was forced to support the upcoming Northern Expedition. This last item was a *quid pro quo* because Chiang promised to place a check on the right wing faction of the KMT.<sup>15</sup>

With a potent military force at his disposal, Chiang and other KMT leaders now began to plan an offensive attack on the major warlords of central and north China, especially Zhang Zuolin (Chang Tso-lin) and Wu Peifu. Together Zhang and Wu controlled much of Manchuria, Peking, Central China, southern Hebei, and Hubei province. The official mobilization order for the Northern Expedition was issued on July 1, 1926, and was defined by the Central Executive Committee of the KMT in the following way:

The hardships of the workers, peasants, merchants and students, and the suffering of all under the oppressive imperialists and warlords; the peace and unification of China called for by Sun Yat-sen; the gathering of the

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<sup>15</sup> Anthony Saich, "The Chinese Communist Party During the Era of the Comintern (1919-1943)," 35. [http://www.hks.harvard.edu/m-rcbg/research/a.saich\\_iish\\_chinese\\_communist\\_party.pdf](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/m-rcbg/research/a.saich_iish_chinese_communist_party.pdf) (accessed May 4, 2010).

National Assembly ruined by Duan Qirui—all demand the elimination of Wu Peifu and completion of national unification.<sup>16</sup>

Over the course of the next several months, Chiang's NRA advanced northwards and successfully defeated Wu Peifu's forces in Wuhan in September of 1926.<sup>17</sup> The fall of the tri-city area of Wuhan is important for my larger argument because it illustrates clearly the ways in which the long struggle for Chinese independence was still very much backwritten by the presence of foreign colonial power. When Chiang entered Hankow, his decision to protect the large number of foreigners living in the foreign concessions of the city at the time was one that flew in the face of the KMT's supposed anti-imperialist nationalism. It was probably a wise decision, as the power base of the KMT at the time most certainly could not have held up under the offensive onslaughts of both the warlords and Western colonial armies, but it nevertheless illustrates the ways in which a key moment in the consolidation of the modern Chinese state was imperiled at every turn by the threat of retaliation from European, Japanese, and U.S. military forces.

Considerable anti-foreign sentiment and a rapidly expanding urban workers' movement made Wuhan a particularly amenable city for the left wing of the KMT under the leadership of Wang Jingwei to take hold. By the end of 1926 and early 1927 this

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<sup>16</sup> Spence, *Search*, 346. Duan Qirui was a powerful warlord who strongly opposed Yuan Shikai's bid for the monarchy. After Yuan's death, Duan became a powerful leader in Peking, and commanded the large Beiyang Army. During WWI Duan was instrumental in allying China with the U.S. and other European powers against Germany, and by so doing deepened the Chinese state's position as a colonial state. This ultimately resulted in the humiliation of China at Versailles in 1919, and was the impetus for much of the revolutionary upheaval that generated the conditions for the emergence of the CCP in 1920. For his appeasement of foreign powers, Duan is considered by many to be a thorn in the side of Chinese nationalist struggle. See Spence, *Search*, esp. 275-299. Spence also suggests that the conspicuous absence of Zhang Zuolin's name from the KMT's official outline of the Northern Expedition was a clear invitation to him to attack Wu Peifu from the north as the NRA advanced from the south.

<sup>17</sup> Wuhan is the capital city of Hubei province, and is composed of three important cities that merged into the single city of Wuhan in 1927. The three cities are: Wuchang (the site of the revolutionary uprising that ultimately toppled the Qing Dynasty in 1911), Hankow (a city with a long history of European colonial presence), and Hanyang.

consolidation of power of the left KMT was taking place, as Chiang Kai-shek contemplated a move northeast with his NRA towards Shanghai.<sup>18</sup> What unfolded in Shanghai in 1927 was perhaps an indicator that Chiang's anti-communism was so deeply rooted that any possibility of a KMT-CCP alliance under his leadership was doomed to failure.

After the success in Wuhan, there developed two conflicting interpretations of what would be the best strategic maneuver for the future of the Northern Expedition. On one hand, Chiang wanted to move towards Shanghai and capture the industrial and agricultural nerve center of China, on the other hand, Wang and his Wuhan faction—with the support of Borodin—thought a move north up the Wuhan-Peking railway line was the best course of action. Chiang came to Wuhan to discuss the options, but was not only firmly rejected by Borodin and the left-KMT, but was publicly insulted to boot. Smarting from this loss of face, Chiang assessed the conditions in Shanghai and tried to feel out the pulse of some remaining warlords to calculate the possibility of an offensive on Shanghai, not only to capture the city for the KMT, but to purge the KMT of the left and communist elements that had insulted him in Wuhan. Chiang's assessment must have pleased him, for what he found clarified for him the decision to move on Shanghai. Of prime importance to this decision was the power of anti-left sentiment that could be marshaled under his leadership as he hoped the Northern Expedition might advance in a way inimical to what he feared to be a growing urban and rural social revolution drawn along left and communist lines. Chiang weighed factors such as the reaction of various

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<sup>18</sup> For a very detailed, though staunchly anti-communist, account of the Northern Expedition see Donald Jordan's, *Northern Expedition: China's National Revolution of 1926-1928*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1976).

warlords to the NRA's victories in southern China, the power of the labor movement in Shanghai, the power of the countervailing anti-labor movement—represented by the business class, organized crime, and reactionary police force, and the depth of Stalin's commitment to a Soviet-KMT alliance.

Chiang found that many warlords believed that casting their lot with an ascendant KMT with Chiang at the helm would be to their best long term benefit. Feng Yuxiang, a powerful northern warlord, decided after visiting Moscow that Stalin's commitment to the Soviet-KMT alliance ran deep, and so he joined the KMT. Zhang Zuolin, in control of Peking, seemed to be devolving into a grandiloquent and anachronistic rulership, "having yellow earth—symbolic of an emperor's prestige—strewn across the roads he traversed" while a decadent bureaucracy let political power in Peking slip from his grasp.<sup>19</sup> But Zhang was also becoming fanatically anti-communist, which was good for Chiang. Apparently Zhang's Peking headquarters were decorated with numerous banners that read "Absolutely Destroy Communism!"<sup>20</sup> Despite what appeared to be a convergence of interests between Zhang and Chiang, Zhang nevertheless mobilized 150,000 of his troops in late 1926 to march south towards the advancing NRA, but just as quickly revoked the order. This abrupt about face was construed by many within the CCP and the left-KMT to be evidence that he had struck a secret deal with Chiang.

While labor unrest in Shanghai was growing daily, Chiang felt confident that he could count on the support of several important groups to suppress any widespread left wing radicalism. The foreign business class had entrenched interests in China's most

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<sup>19</sup> Spence, *Search*, 350.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. For more on Zhang Zuolin in this period see Gavan McCormack, *Chang Tso-lin in Northeast China, 1911-1928*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977).

elegant and prosperous port city, and the military forces of these foreign colonial powers could be counted on to interfere if their interests were too deeply threatened by communists or any other factions inimical to the advance of foreign capital. Chiang also had deep ties to the Shanghai underworld, whose control of vice in the city was an essential part of the capitalist machinery of Shanghai. The most notorious of these gangs was the Green Gang, who Chiang would use to great advantage to break up labor strikes and other forms of left protest.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, by all accounts Stalin's commitment to a Soviet-KMT alliance was steadfast. Comintern policy was set according to lines drawn up in the "Theses on the Chinese Question" as it had been adopted at the Seventh Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern in late 1926. This "Theses" called for continued CCP support of the left-KMT, a policy of non-withdrawal from the KMT, and a commitment to keep the right-KMT from becoming a bourgeois party.<sup>22</sup> Stalin's continued support of the Sino-Soviet alliance was animated in part by his general support of global anti-imperialist movements *a la* Lenin, but it was also informed by a very rational and instrumental decision to maintain Soviet security in East Asia against Japanese encroachments as best he could.

The combination of the aforementioned conditions convinced Chiang that he should push his way into Shanghai, despite the opposition of Borodin and the left-KMT based in Wuhan. Additionally, and to Chiang's great advantage, he was further able to exploit his Green Gang connections to secure financial backing in Shanghai. Since the Green Gang controlled most of the opium, gambling, and prostitution trade in Shanghai,

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<sup>21</sup> For more on the Green Gang and organized crime in twentieth-century Shanghai see Brian Martin, *The Shanghai Green Gang: Politics and Organized Crime, 1919-1937*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). For an account of this period see esp., 113-134

<sup>22</sup> Saich, "The Chinese Communist Party During the Era of the Comintern (1919-1943)," 34-5.

they counted wealthy and influential Shanghai financiers among their numbers. In late 1926 the head of the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce approached Chiang and pledged his organization's financial support if Chiang should move into the city. The implicit understanding was that the organization of the concessions was not to be disturbed. The foreign business class, deeply insular and unaware for the most part of the rising amount of labor unrest outside of the colonial concessions, depended upon the exploitation of the masses of cheap Chinese labor to keep its factories running. A revolution of the working class was of course anathema to its interests. Chiang also successfully brokered support from the powerful Bank of China in Shanghai, as well as from the chief of detectives of the police force in the French Concession. The latter deal was most likely worked out in the interest of quelling any future worker uprisings that might take place when Chiang began to crack-down on the radical sectors of the city's population.<sup>23</sup>

By early 1927 events in areas of China with a large foreign presence were not looking up for the elites who controlled the vast financial and political machinery of those cities. Inspired by the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist rhetoric of the CCP, workers burst into the foreign concessions in Hankow, causing the evacuation of the city's foreign population to Shanghai. The situation just northwest of Shanghai in Nanjing was even worse. The incident that followed in Nanjing was, according to one U.S. diplomat, "the most disquieting single occurrence in the history of China's foreign relations since the Boxer Uprising in 1900."<sup>24</sup> Pearl Buck recalled hiding out with her

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<sup>23</sup> For more on the relationship between the Green Gang and the police force of Shanghai's French Concession see Martin, *Green Gang*, 64-78. See also Frederic Wakeman, *Policing Shanghai, 1927-1937*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), esp. 95-162.

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Minister to China John A. MacMurray to Secretary of State Kellogg, May 10, 1927. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1927, Vol. 2., 7*. Henceforth *FRUS*. The Boxer Rebellion was also the last large scale anti-foreign movement in China, and was met with swift retributive violence from the colonial

family in the one room residence of a poor Chinese woman she had befriended and thinking, “the whirlwinds were gathering...and I was reaping what I had not sown... We were in hiding for our lives because we were White.”<sup>25</sup> While not a workers revolt, the Nanjing situation illustrates clearly the ways that viewing the putatively anti-imperialist and nationalist insurgency of the right-KMT faction during the Northern Expedition in an enlarged conceptual frame can illustrate the power of the architecture of colonialism in China at the time. The maintenance of Chinese governance in formations that understood that to threaten the sanctity of colonialism was a sure and quick way to be met with swift, decisive, and deadly retaliation was a significant function of the colonial power structure.

Indeed, Americans resident in China must have known this too, for the U.S. minister in China, John Van Antwerp MacMurray noted that by the end of March, “tension and uncertainty [in Nanjing] increased to such a point as to cause foreigners resident in China to feel that they were faced with an extremely grave situation in which *immediate, decisive and comprehensive action* would apparently be necessary to prevent an appalling disaster.”<sup>26</sup> Who to mete out this comprehensive justice other than the colonial military apparatus that foreigners knew to have their backs? Nationalist troops who had driven retreating warlord forces out of Nanjing looted the U.S., British, and Japanese consulates in that city, and in the process killed several nationals of those

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powers. MacMurray was a conservative thinker when it came to U.S.–China relations, in his own words the Chinese had since the anti-imperialist May 30<sup>th</sup> Movement of 1924 been “infected through various Bolshevik and juvenile nationalistic influences.” Clearly, his reference to Chinese nationalism as juvenile illustrates his schooling in the pedagogy of imperialism. MacMurray to Kellogg, August 1, 1925. *FRUS, 1925, Vol. 1*, 809.

<sup>25</sup> Barbara Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-45*. (New York: MacMillan, 1970), 103. At this point Buck was unable to discern the interconnections between the missionary apparatus and the larger architecture of colonial violence.

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Minister to China John A. MacMurray to Secretary of State Kellogg, May 10, 1927. *FRUS, 1927, Vol. 2.*, 7. Italics mine.



countries, as well as some French and Italian citizens. Incensed by the recalcitrance of the Chinese, whom they deemed a vastly inferior class of people, American gunboats and a British cruiser opened fire on the city to create an escape route for the embattled foreigners, killing several Chinese in the process. While many histories of this period focus on either the consolidation of a centralized and right-wing KMT over the fractured and multiplicitous power bases of the warlords, or on the internecine battles between the left-KMT, the CCP, and the right-KMT, it is important to keep in sight the awesome structures of power and violence encapsulated within the deeply embedded colonial apparatuses of nations like the U.S., England, France, and Japan. We should not take lightly the fact that in 1927 there were roughly 22,000 foreign troops and police in Shanghai, 42 foreign ships of war at anchor in the waters surrounding the city, and an additional 129 warships in other Chinese waters that could be called to action at a moment's notice.<sup>27</sup>

It was in this chaotic environment that, in the spring and summer of 1927, Chiang Kai-shek began a ruthless campaign of violence in an attempt to purge the KMT of communists and other leftists. Further highlighting the treachery of this betrayal, Chiang rode into Shanghai on the backs of a security made possible by the actions of Shanghai's General Labor Union (GLU) working in the service of the Soviet-KMT alliance. On March 21, 1927 roughly 600,000 Chinese workers joined forces in the city and overwhelmed the warlords in a massive general strike and armed insurrection in support of the approaching NRA. The radicalized workers cut communication lines, and seized railroad and police stations throughout the city. Under orders from the CCP—who were

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<sup>27</sup> Spence, *Search*, 352.

presumably following the Comintern line that support of Chiang somehow hewed to the doctrine that he represented the “bourgeois democratic” stage of the revolution—not to harm foreigners, the workers engaged only with Chinese. Imagining this intensive explosion of revolutionary upheaval, in which much of the city’s apparatuses of colonial and capitalist domination were seized by the workers, but with knowledge that they were operating under the strict proviso not to harm any foreigners lest they be met with swift and asymmetrical response from foreign troops—as they had in the Opium Wars, the Boxer Uprising, and only recently in Nanjing—recasts the picture of Chinese nationalist insurgency in this period in a more global imperialist frame. Acting as if the foreign presence in Shanghai wouldn’t prove to be too much of a roadblock in what many believed to be the inevitability of a dictatorship of the proletariat, the Shanghai workers held a public inauguration of the no longer underground GLU on March 27, in a requisitioned former guild hall, with over 1000 workers in attendance. According to their own estimates, Shanghai now boasted 499 unions representing 821,282 workers, as well as a workers’ army consisting of 2700 soldiers, many of them armed with weapons seized from local police stations and military caches.<sup>28</sup> The heady days of the workers’ victory were to be short-lived.

Around the same time Chiang Kai-shek himself arrived in Shanghai. He quickly reassured the foreign population of the city that they needn’t be alarmed by all the civil unrest, and likewise issued stale bromides to the unions praising their valor in securing the city for his arrival. Under orders from the Comintern, the CCP advised the GLU and other workers to remain friendly with the KMT, and to disarm. The CCP also withdrew

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 353.

its earlier anti-imperialist demands that the city's foreign concessions be returned to China. This did not bode well as far as genuine social revolution was concerned. Meanwhile, behind closed doors, Chiang solidified a reactionary bloc through secret negotiations with "wealthy Shanghai industrialists" and "leading Green Gang and underworld figures."<sup>29</sup> He also "arranged for generous loans from Shanghai bankers, and transferred out of the city those army units known to be sympathetic to the workers."<sup>30</sup> He was clearly gearing up for something big. Before dawn on the morning of April 12, heavily armed Green Gang members who had been organized under the banner of the Society for Common Progress launched a violent offensive attack against all of the city's major labor unions. This civilian paramilitary organization had the implicit blessings of the foreign concession authorities, and as the day progressed they were often aided in their efforts by the NRA. A number of GLU members were murdered, and hundreds of leftists were arrested and forcefully disarmed. The next day, incensed workers staged a protest and NRA troops opened fire on the crowds with machine guns, killing nearly one hundred. The mayhem wore on for several weeks amidst massive arrests and many executions. The KMT declared the existence of the GLU illegal, and anti-foreign and anti-capitalist strikes across the city ceased.

The ruthless suppression of the CCP-supported workers' left in Shanghai soon reverberated throughout the various centers of KMT power in China. In Wuhan, Borodin and CCP leader Chen Duxiu were faced with the dilemma of how to square the right-KMT betrayal of the CCP with the ideology of the Soviet-KMT alliance as articulated by the Comintern. According to Stalin's twisted logic, the massacre was in fact a CCP

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 352.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 352.

victory. It was, he said, “the first serious attempt of the national bourgeoisie to bridle the revolution.”<sup>31</sup> Clearly, the power struggle going on in Moscow between Stalin and Trotsky was not helping matters. Any deviation from the orthodox perception of the alliance, no matter how reasonable, would be seen as weakness, something which Stalin could ill afford. Trotsky had already made plain his suspicion of the KMT, and of its compromised anti-imperialism. Instead, he advocated a more flexible trajectory of communist revolution, favoring “skipping over the revolutionary-democratic stage of the movement” if necessary.<sup>32</sup> He urged the Soviets not to lose sight of what he believed to be the most insurrectionary and revolutionary force in China—the peasantry.

Of course, Stalin rebuffed Trotsky’s views, and pushed for a continuation of the party line that the KMT-CCP alliance should be maintained. According to Anthony Saich, the Comintern, in its strict adherence to the “Theses” as articulated at the Seventh Plenum, had a hard time seeing the conditions on the ground in China. By refusing to allow the CCP to withdraw from the united front, while simultaneously claiming that the CCP needed to lead the social revolution in China, and that that would be an agrarian movement of the peasant classes, the Comintern placed irreconcilable and conflicting demands on the CCP. By not breaking with the KMT, and by suppressing peasant insurgency in order to maintain a broken alliance, the CCP was in effect alienating the very base it was in theory supposed to lead. Oddly, at the Fifth Congress meeting of the CCP held in the wake of Chiang’s great betrayal (April 27–May 9, 1927), rather than conjure up a break with the KMT, the CCP instead tried to make Chiang’s treachery fit into the teleological trajectory of the longer revolution—just as had Borodin and Chen in

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<sup>31</sup> Robert North, *Moscow and Chinese Communists*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963), 98.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Spence, *Search*, 353.

Wuhan. Amazingly, Chiang's betrayal was "met head on" and "treated as a positive sign for the revolution"!<sup>33</sup> CCP leader Chen Duxiu argued that the Shanghai Massacre had in fact "brought the revolution to a new stage" in which "the bourgeoisie had now deserted the revolutionary front reducing its numbers but improving its quality."<sup>34</sup> Chen pushed the CCP to place a check on the radical land reform policies such as those being enacted by the various "poor peasants associations," and to continue to work in alliance with the KMT. This placed the CCP in a particularly compromised position in which they could be blamed by all factions. The left-KMT led by Wang Jingwei in Wuhan could blame them for the sometimes murderous excesses of the peasants carried out against the landlords, and the peasants could blame them for non-support of their radical reforms and for leaving them open to the predations of both the right-KMT, who were engaged in a program of left-extermination, as well as those remaining warlords in whose way the peasants stood. It was clearly a lose-lose situation for a nascent CCP with umbilical ties to Moscow.<sup>35</sup>

Events continued to send the CCP in a downward spiral towards increased alienation with respect to both wings of the KMT. Right after the purge, many within the KMT left denounced Chiang Kai-shek as a traitor. Among these included Soong Qingling, Sun Yat-sen's widow, and Chiang's soon to be sister-in-law. In a further betrayal of the Soviet-KMT alliance, Chiang set up his own government in Nanjing on April 18, 1927, and proclaimed it the legitimate KMT, in opposition to the leftists who persisted in Wuhan. This famous split has come to be known as the Nanking Separation,

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<sup>33</sup> Saich, "The Chinese Communist Party During the Era of the Comintern (1919-1943)," 35.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> For more on the relationship between the Comintern and the CCP-KMT alliance in this period see North, *Moscow and Chinese*, esp., 98-112.

for the two KMT capital cities of Nanjing and Wuhan. The left-KMT in Wuhan was peopled by a colorful cast of transnational intellectuals including Sun Fo, Sun Yat-sen's son from his first marriage, who had been educated at the University of California at Berkeley and subsequently risen through the ranks of the KMT to a prominent position in the Central Executive Committee, and Eugene Chen, a Chinese-Trinidadian, the son of an exiled Taiping rebel. M.N. Roy, the Bengali revolutionary and founder of both the Mexican and Indian Communist Parties, had also been dispatched to China by Stalin. He claimed at the time that his continued support of the left-KMT was an attempt to transform it into the organ of "the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry."<sup>36</sup> Despite a leadership with deep combined revolutionary experience, the left-KMT did not by any stretch of the imagination have the Wuhan area under its control. In fact, in another example of the limitations placed on internal revolution in China by foreign colonial power, when the left-KMT tried to seize the Japanese concession in Hankow they were repulsed by machine gun fire, and a train of foreign warships a mile long thereafter stood at the ready in the Yangzi River awaiting further provocations.

### **The Disintegration of the Left-KMT-CCP Alliance**

Internal disunity and mistrust between the left-KMT and the CCP deepened throughout the spring and summer of 1927. Capitalizing on this unstable situation, local warlords in the Wuhan area decided to launch a series of counteroffensives in an attempt to reclaim territory lost in the Northern Expedition. Many of these skirmishes involved

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<sup>36</sup> North, *Moscow and Chinese*, 99.

indiscriminate slaughter of the peasants, often in the thousands, who had only recently begun to rise up against the landlord classes who had held them in poverty for centuries. Confirming Saich's argument, Wang Jingwei's left-KMT blamed this violence on the excesses of the CCP, despite the fact that the CCP had done its best, as instructed by the Comintern, to quell the peasant insurgencies so as to not permanently disable the fragile alliance between the CCP and KMT. In fact, when a peasant army did begin to form in retaliation for the murderous campaigns of the warlords, the nascent group was instructed to stand down in a patronizing cable from the Wuhan CCP asking the peasants "to be patient and wait for the government officials to avoid further friction."<sup>37</sup> These phantom officials never arrived, and the fate of the peasant rebels is unknown.

Despite the high human costs of the Shanghai Massacre, Stalin continued to push for a strengthening of the CCP-KMT alliance, but not without a little intrigue. He sent M.N. Roy and Borodin a cable clarifying the need for the CCP to attempt to push the KMT in a leftward direction while pretending to support the party's current platform of peasant suppression. Stalin's directive reiterated the Comintern position that it was "decidedly in favor of the land actually being seized by the masses from below" and that Borodin and Roy and other communist operatives in Wuhan "must not sever yourselves from the worker and peasant movement, but must assist it in every possible way."<sup>38</sup> Stalin called for a slow CCP takeover of the left-KMT, saying that certain leaders of the left-KMT "are afraid of what is taking place" and "vacillating and compromising. A large number of new peasant and working class leaders from the ranks must be drawn into the

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<sup>37</sup> Harold Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), 236.

<sup>38</sup> Stalin's cable quoted in North, *Moscow and Chinese*, 105.

Central Committee of the Kuomintang.”<sup>39</sup> He further intoned that “the leadership of the Kuomintang must be freshened and reinforced by new leaders who have come to the fore in the agrarian revolution...otherwise, the Kuomintang runs the risk of becoming divorced from realities and losing every atom of authority.”<sup>40</sup> Stalin directed a CCP troop buildup to get rid of the generals of the left-KMT, many of whom were of the landlord class, who he believed harbored ideas inimical to the furtherance of the revolution. He ordered the organization of “20,000 communists and 50,000 revolutionary workers and peasants” to “form several new army corps...before it is too late...it is a difficult matter, but there is no other course.” He instructed Borodin and Roy to

[o]rganize a revolutionary tribunal headed by prominent non-Communist Kuomintangists. Punish officers who maintain contact with Chiang Kai-shek or who set soldiers on the people, the workers and peasants. Persuasion is not enough. It is time to act. The scoundrels must be punished. If the Kuomintangists do not learn to be revolutionary Jacobins, they will be lost both to the people and to the revolution.<sup>41</sup>

Roy, contrary to Borodin’s advice, decided that Wang Jingwei should see this cable from Moscow, and that he should see it because he would no doubt approve of its contents. Roy’s reasoning for showing Wang the cable had a history. Not long before, Wang had traveled to Moscow to seek assurance that the Comintern was still firmly in support of the Soviet-KMT alliance, Wang was there “promised full support.” Roy, for his part, got Wang to agree to a course of action that might best protect his leadership of the left-KMT, which included things like mild land confiscation (but not of KMT political or military officials), disarming of the landlord militias, and the arming of the peasants. Fearing that Wang had begun steps towards a rapprochement with Chiang, Roy

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.



thought it wise to show Stalin's cable to Wang as a sign of good faith. Despite whatever kind of agreement Wang and Roy may have reached, Wang read the cable as a betrayal of the original Sun Yat-sen/Alfred Joffe terms of Soviet-KMT alliance, and concluded that Stalin was moving for a CCP takeover of the left-KMT. According to the left-KMT account of the incident, Wang immediately made it clear to Roy that there was no way the left-KMT was going to accept what the cable dictated. Left-KMT accounts also believed that Roy had overestimated the weakness of their party, and thought that it could only survive an armed conflict with the Nanking KMT with CCP support. On this, they believed, Borodin had the more realistic portrait of the actualities of the left-KMT. If their account of Borodin is correct, then he was right in not wanting to show the cable to Wang, because it would probably lead Wang to begin a purge of the CCP from within the left-KMT, which is exactly what he did. Some members of the left-KMT did, however, believe a purge of communists from within their ranks to be a bad idea, including Eugene Chen, and Soong Qingling.<sup>42</sup>

Fearing the CCP might be crushed before it really got off the ground, an emergency meeting of the Central Executive Committee was called, and the party issued a series of accommodationist instructions to dissident workers and radicalized peasants still under its control. This "policy of defeat" came too late, however, as Wang moved forward with his program of curbing CCP power within the left-KMT.<sup>43</sup> Wang entered into an alliance with Feng Yuxiang, the warlord who retained power now in northern China, who soon thereafter negotiated an agreement with Chiang Kai-shek. The chips were beginning to stack higher against the survival of the CCP in any kind of a viable

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>43</sup> "Policy of defeat" is Roy's term. Quoted in Ibid., 108.

role in the architecture of official state power. With the fate of the CCP clear in their minds, Roy and Borodin left China and headed back towards Moscow.

This was not the end of the issue for Stalin, however. He continued to issue directives that were often self-contradictory, as long as they were in disagreement with the Trotskyite wing of the Comintern. Failing to see Roy's sharing of his cable with Wang—and the subsequent campaign to root communists out of the left-KMT—as a Soviet mistake, Stalin continued to square the tragedy with a party line. This time, it was that the left-KMT's betrayal of the CCP was a signal of their actual petty bourgeois tendencies, and that it was a positive force for the revolution as it merely forced them to accelerate their campaign of radicalizing the peasants—but while still maintaining the united front! Accordingly, the CCP issued an equally unrealistic announcement stating that it was going to continue the social revolution, only this time with “the *really* revolutionary members of the Kuomintang and with the masses of the Kuomintang. The Communists have therefore no reason to leave the Kuomintang or to refuse to cooperate with it.”<sup>44</sup> The scenario is almost funny, if it weren't underwritten by the death of thousands of Chinese. Blame was placed on the leadership of the CCP, and leaders like Chen Duxiu were expelled from the party. Chen was declared a Trotskyite, even though he had done nothing but follow Stalin's line and oppose Trotsky's position of secession from the CCP-KMT alliance.<sup>45</sup> One communist who was elevated to a leadership role by the end of the reorganization was Mao Zedong. Following the reshuffling of the leadership of the CCP, an announcement was made that was critical of the Wuhan

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 109. Italics mine.

<sup>45</sup> Saich, “The Chinese Communist Party During the Era of the Comintern (1919-1943),” 47. Chen Duxiu did develop Trotskyite sympathies later on, but at this time he had done nothing but follow the Stalin line to the letter.

government. On July 15, 1927, the Political Affairs Committee of the left-KMT announced that their party's alliance with the CCP had reached an end. Two weeks later, on August 1, the CCP launched an offensive against the left-KMT in Nanchang which was ultimately a failure. Four days later, Wang Jingwei embarked on a program of purging communists from within his party. Despite its failure as a military offensive, the Nanchang Uprising is remembered as the first battle in the long civil war between the CCP and KMT.

### **Encirclement Campaigns, The Xi'an Incident, and the Second United Front**

By 1931 the CCP, now disbanded from the united front, had set up a Chinese Soviet Republic in Jiangxi, also known as the Jiangxi Soviet, with its capital in Ruijin. From this base they continued to coordinate activities and to foment revolutionary work among peasants and workers, and to build up their fighting strength in an escalating civil war. Skirmishes with the KMT continued as Chiang pursued his program to eliminate the communists. Wang's Wuhan left-KMT had fallen in early 1928, with members being absorbed into the ranks of the CCP and KMT, leaving the two remaining major power factions in China the CCP and Chiang's KMT based in Nanjing. In a series of late-1920s and early-1930s military campaigns known as the Encirclement Campaigns, the KMT was able to significantly diminish the CCP fighting forces, to the point where they ultimately had to retreat north and regroup and re-strategize the future and ideological commitments of the party.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> For more on the Jiangxi Soviet see Ilpyong J. Kim, *Politics of Chinese Communism: Kiangsi Under the Soviets*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); Derek Waller, *Kiangsi Soviet Republic: Mao and the National Congresses of 1931 and 1934*. (Berkeley: Center for Chinese Studies, 1973). For those

Chiang's first three Encirclement Campaigns failed to annihilate the communists, but they did significantly reduce their fighting forces. This ultimately was a decisive factor in the success of the Fifth Encirclement Campaign of 1934. CCP losses had gotten so bad that by October they began what was officially called a "strategic transfer" of their base out of Jiangxi, to an as yet unknown location. The euphemism was ultimately dropped in favor of what has come to be known as the Long March. Without a clear plan, the early days of the Long March proved exceedingly destructive to the CCP. By late November, as a result of a series of serious engagements with the KMT, CCP forces had been diminished from 86,000 to 30,000.<sup>47</sup> Between January 15–18, during a vital and well deserved break from their arduous trek, the communists held a historic meeting in northern Guizhou at Zunyi that "marked the start of Mao Zedong's rise to preeminent power in the CCP."<sup>48</sup> What started out as a meeting to discuss the dire situation confronting the retreating CCP turned into a decisive moment in party history as "it turned into a major review of past policy and heralded a shift in the party leadership."<sup>49</sup> Mao gave a speech criticizing the military policy of the CCP, especially the Comintern policy of what was called "pure positional defense" as advocated and carried out under the direction of Otto Braun, a German communist then serving as the Comintern's military adviser in China. As a result of his strong stand speaking out against the failure of Comintern military policy with respect to the Chinese civil war, the leadership of the CCP was restructured and Mao rose into the ranks of the top-five most powerful leaders

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interested in conducting primary research on the Jiangxi Soviet see Tien-wei Wu, *The Kiangsi Soviet Republic, 1931-1934: A Selected and Annotated Bibliography of the Chen Cheng Collection*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).

<sup>47</sup> Saich, "The Chinese Communist Party During the Era of the Comintern (1919-1943)," 59.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

of the CCP. This was a turn towards the indigenization of the Chinese Communist movement. Mao was now to be involved in all aspects of military and political policy. Consequently, Braun's influence in the military operations of the CCP was greatly diminished.

It was during the Long March that the Comintern issued its final instructions that were to have a lasting direct impact on the activities of the CCP. This was the Comintern's decision to push for a second united front with the KMT. At the Comintern's Seventh Congress held in the summer of 1935, it was decided that the CCP should adopt "a new policy that called for a united front of all elements, classes, and nations in the fight against fascism."<sup>50</sup> Pushing for a second united front was motivated less by the interests of putting the CCP in a position from which to negotiate its ascendancy as the *de facto* ruling power of China, but rather to protect Soviet security from encroachments from Japan and Germany. Stalin would of course later sign pacts with both countries, but for now he followed the path of a second united front. As early as 1933 the CCP had itself begun to contemplate the idea of salvaging the moribund united front. Japanese aggression in northern China, such as the Mukden Incident of 1931, made it clear to the Chinese that Japan had designs on Chinese sovereignty. Many within the CCP leadership believed that exploiting anti-Japanese nationalism in the interest of building up the communist movement would be a useful strategy. The CCP could "cooperate with the national bourgeoisie if a solid united front *from below*... would ensure proletarian leadership in the united front."<sup>51</sup> Anti-Japanese sentiment was a deep wellspring for inciting Chinese nationalist fervor, and if the CCP could direct that

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., italics mine.

nationalist energy into a proletarian revolution, they would be one step ahead of the KMT who were at the time busy with their policy of “first pacify domestically [i.e., the CCP], then resist the external enemy [i.e., Japan].”

However, it is important to note the difference in the CCP vision of a revitalized united front in contradistinction to the Comintern directive. The CCP vision was for a united front from below, built on the struggles of the Chinese people—proletarian and bourgeois alike. At this stage, the more people the CCP could bring under their leadership in a nationalist movement against the Japanese imperialists the better. Each additional anti-Japanese nationalist brought into the movement this way was one less who might become an anti-communist in the KMT. The Comintern directive, on the other hand, sought to impose a second united front from above. Rather than try to generate an organic mass movement driven by Chinese nationalism from below, the Comintern sought to manufacture as large an alliance and as quickly as possible to try and put pressure on the expansion of Japan into China, which would necessarily imperil Soviet interests not just in China, but in East Asia more generally. At this stage, Soviet support was still paramount to the survival of the CCP, and so the Comintern policy of a united front from above ultimately won out. On August 1, 1935, Moscow issued a declaration in the name of the CCP and the Chinese Soviet Republic (the Jiangxi Soviet government at Ruijin) which marked a strategic shift from civil war to a united front. The declaration stated that it was the “sacred duty of everyone to resist Japan and save the nation.”<sup>52</sup> The CCP hoped that this might imbue their party with the moral authority of being the first party to push for a rebirth of the united front that had been destroyed by the KMT betrayal and

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

Shanghai Massacre of 1927. Additionally, they hoped this might marshal Chinese nationalism in a communist direction. The declaration criticized Chiang Kai-shek and other military generals for their inaction with regard to Japanese belligerence, calling them “traitors” and “scum,” but also stated that the CCP was willing to pledge itself to close cooperation with any forces opposed to Japanese aggression, which included, but was not limited to, the KMT.<sup>53</sup>

The Comintern directive, though issued in the name of the CCP, most likely did not reach the Long Marchers until around October of 1935. In an effort to reach out to as many interested Chinese nationalists as possible, the CCP scaled back some of its more punitive measures directed against the landlord class. The shift in attitude was expressed clearly at this time in the official name change of the peripatetic Jiangxi government from a ‘worker and peasant Soviet Republic’ to a ‘People’s Soviet Republic.’ In this expanded conception of the party, rich peasants were to enjoy the same rights as other peasants, and criteria for party membership were relaxed as “left closed-doorism” was elevated to the status of greater hindrance to nationalism than “right opportunism.”<sup>54</sup> This declension on the part of the CCP with regards to its hard-line policy towards the KMT was brought about both to oppose Japanese imperialism, and as a method for consolidating power for the CCP in uncertain times as it relocated to its wartime capital in Yenan. Despite CCP redirection towards a policy of nationalist alliance against Japanese aggression, and direct overtures towards Chiang, the head of the Nanjing government remained unmoved. Instead, he continued his campaign of communist annihilation by remaining steadfast to his policy of placing primacy on the control of domestic threats to his power over those

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 62.

of external threats. His was a compromised and conflicted nationalism. It was not until more extreme measures were taken in the winter of 1936 in Xi'an that Chiang was compelled to scale back his aggressive anti-communism.

### **Kidnapped!**

The northern warlord Zhang Zuolin had a son, Zhang Xueliang, also known as the Young Marshal, who was a powerful military commander in his own right. He had been expelled from his homeland of Manchuria four years earlier as the Japanese had swept into the province on the heels of the Mukden Incident. In exile from his homeland, the Young Marshal had allied himself with Chiang Kai-shek, and was at the time of the CCP call for a second united front stationed in the city of Xi'an in Shaanxi province, where his Northeastern Army (*Dongbeijun*) comprised the frontline in Chiang's anti-communist forces in the area. Zhang held the title of Deputy Commander, North Western Bandit Suppression Headquarters, the bandits in this case being a euphemism for communists. In this capacity he was working in concert with the commander of the 17<sup>th</sup> Route Army, Yang Hucheng. In part over lingering resentments that he had been exiled from his homeland by Japanese aggression, Zhang felt that Chiang's policy of exterminating communists instead of aggressively fighting Japanese expansion that was only going to increase over time was wrongheaded to say the least. Yang Hucheng felt similarly, but unlike the Young Marshal who had been born into a world of wealth and privilege, Yang had been born a poor peasant, and worked his way up through the ranks from soldier to warlord. His background may have made him more predisposed towards sympathy for the communist cause. In any event, despite Chiang's continual purges of leftist elements



within his own army—often with the aid of clandestine spy agencies within the KMT who were fanatically loyal to Chiang, like the *Lixingshe* (Society for Vigorous Practice) under the leadership of Dai Li—Yang managed to harbor many known leftists and even communists in the 17<sup>th</sup> Route Army.<sup>55</sup> Unbeknownst to Chiang, sometime in late October of 1936 Zhang and Yang had concluded a truce with the CCP, whom they were under orders from Chiang to encircle and suppress. This truce induced a concomitant amount of inaction on the part of Zhang and Yang's armies with respect to fighting the communists. Angered over their lack of initiative in response to a direct order from himself to initiate a campaign of “bandit suppression,” Chiang arrived in Xi'an on December 4, 1936, to personally berate the insubordinate generals and to “put personal pressure” on them to comply with his demands.<sup>56</sup> Not to be persuaded by his bellicosity, the two generals continued in their refusal to violate their secret agreement with the CCP. Pushed to his limits, Chiang began preparing to have Zhang replaced. In order to preempt Zhang's replacement from carrying out his order to begin his campaign of bandit suppression on the following day, December 12, the two generals put into action a plan that had been conceived not much earlier to kidnap Chiang Kai-shek in an attempt to induce him to agree to a second united front against Japan. Just before dawn Zhang and Yang acted, launching a “military action to save the country” (*bingjian*), arresting Chiang and many of his top officials, and issuing an eight-fold ultimatum revolving around the twin goals of ending the civil war, and the reformation of a united front against Japanese aggression. Chiang had been relaxing at a hot springs resort about twenty miles outside of Xi'an

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<sup>55</sup> Tien-wei Wu, “New Materials on the Xi'an Incident: A Bibliographic Review,” *Modern China* 10, no. 1 (Jan., 1984): 115-141. For more on Yang Husheng see esp. 120, 127-8.

<sup>56</sup> Xu Youwei and Philip Billingsley, “Behind the Scenes of the Xi'an Incident: The Case of the *Lixingshe*,” *The China Quarterly*, no. 154 (Jun., 1998), 283-207.

when troops came looking for him. Quickly fleeing out the window, the Generalissimo fell into a ditch trying to escape, injuring his ankle. It was there he was found, shivering in the December cold, wearing only underwear, and summarily arrested.

The news of Chiang's arrest came as a shock to the world. The *New York Times* called it "a sensational revolt" and predicted that it would likely result in the "immediate revival of activities of the organizations favoring stronger anti-Japanese policies."<sup>57</sup> That afternoon, Zhang issued a circular telegram pushing for a coup d'etat, also claiming that the kidnapping of Chiang was his "last effort to persuade the generalissimo to change his policies."<sup>58</sup> Among those shocked by the imprisonment was the CCP. Although they had certainly worked out a truce with Zhang and Yang, they were not privy to the plans, mostly hatched by Yang, to kidnap Chiang to force his hand in a campaign against the Japanese.<sup>59</sup> After securing Chiang and his officials, Zhang and Yang moved to consolidate control of Xi'an. Their first order of business was to destroy the intricate spy apparatus of the *Lixingshe* (The Society for Vigorous Practice), a clandestine subgroup of the infamous Blue Shirt organization. According to Frederic Wakeman, the *Lixingshe* represented "the single most important political formation within what the public called the Whampoa clique, and its members constituted a military freemasonry that admired fascism and that pledged itself to carry out Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People under the guidance of its supreme leader, Chiang Kai-shek."<sup>60</sup> The Blue Shirts were one of the most important intelligence agencies in Chiang's government, a group that one

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<sup>57</sup> Hallett Abend, "Chiang Kai-shek is Prisoner of Mutinous Shensi Troops, Demanding War on Japan," *New York Times*, Dec. 13, 1936.

<sup>58</sup> Zhang telegram quoted in Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Wu, "New Materials on Xi'an," 120.

<sup>60</sup> Frederic E. Wakeman, *Spymaster: Dai Li and the Chinese Secret Service*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 46.

historian has argued was “in fact a political body with proto-fascist tendencies rather than simply a pro-Chiang Kai-shek terrorist cell.”<sup>61</sup> Troops were deployed “surrounding and occupying all the military and police organizations [the *Lixingshe*] controlled, confiscating documents, and smashing or commandeering its radio transmitters to cut off its communications with the world beyond Xi’an.”<sup>62</sup> This proved to be an extraordinarily effective offensive against an organization that controlled much of the information used by Chiang in his anti-communist campaigns across the country.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, Chiang’s near maniacal devotion to rooting out communists had fostered a secret intelligence apparatus whose activities highlighted his distrust of nearly everyone, which led him to, in Zhang’s words, “send in spies to wantonly sow dissension and make false accusations [within the KMT]” and which contributed to a “lack of trust between higher and lower echelons, and a lack of clarity overall.”<sup>64</sup> Indeed, the official response of the KMT to Chiang’s arrest, informed in large part by information gathered by the *Lixingshe*, was to launch an all out armed offensive rescue mission, and to punish Zhang and Yang. Cooler heads needed to prevail if a cease-fire was to be negotiated between the KMT and the CCP, and if the possibility of a second united front was to be maintained.

In order to negotiate a settlement between Chiang, Zhang, and Yang that would result in a renewed united front between the KMT and the CCP, Zhou Enlai arrived in

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<sup>61</sup> Xu and Billingsley, “Behind the Scenes of the Xi’an Incident,” 284-5.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 292.

<sup>63</sup> The Xi’an incident was a decisive moment in the future career of Dai Li, a major figure in both the *Lixingshe* and the Blue Shirt organization. The failure of the *Lixingshe* intelligence to know in advance the plans to kidnap Chiang, and what to him was their subsequent stupidity in planning for his release, ultimately resulted in the dissolution of the organization and the rise of Dai Li as Chiang Kai-shek’s right hand man. Of course, Dai Li was to play an instrumental role in the U.S. war in China, as head of the Sino-American Special Technical Cooperative Association (SACO) where he worked closely with the U.S. head of naval intelligence in Asia, Milton “Mary” Miles. For more on Dai Li and SACO see Frederic Wakeman’s magisterial account, *Spymaster: Dai Li and the Chinese Secret Service*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

<sup>64</sup> Xu and Billingsley, “Behind the Scenes of the Xi’an Incident,” 293.

Xi'an on December 17. A master diplomat, and a former teacher from the Whampoa days of some of Chiang Kai-shek's closest confidantes—many of whom were in the top echelons of the *Lixingshe*—Zhou was perfect for the job. He began by speaking with a top *Lixingshe* member who had been imprisoned, Zeng Kuoqing, and laid out the CCP position with regards to a second united front. Zeng had been a member of Whampoa's first graduating class, and had passed through Zhou's classes when he was the director of political instruction at the academy. As a former teacher of Zeng's, Zhou elicited respect and exerted a subtle persuasion that had Zeng agreeing to a peaceful settlement of the Xi'an affair. Zeng offered "to make a national radio broadcast assuring the nation of Chiang Kai-shek's safety," and even sent a message to Chiang assuring him that Zhang and Yang had been motivated by patriotism, rather than communism, and advised him to acknowledge their demands for a second united front.<sup>65</sup>

Despite his punitive and bloody campaigns to root communists out of his government and the country, the CCP still believed that Chiang Kai-shek possessed a certain moral authority as the leader of China that they still lacked. They understood that if he were to be executed while under arrest, the country would most likely be thrown into political chaos, and that would only weaken the party's position with regard to Japanese designs on China's territorial and administrative integrity. It was therefore crucial for the future of both China and the CCP that a peaceful solution to the Xi'an Incident be reached. Indeed, even the Young Marshal himself knew this to be true, and realized that anything other than a peaceful solution with the backing of the CCP would be detrimental not only to Chinese sovereignty at the hands of Japan, but to his own

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

interests as well. He knew that there was no way his army could withstand a campaign brought to bear against it from Nanjing, especially not without the support of the Red Army. In the capital city of Nanjing, two discrete factions arose, each with separate views about how best to resolve the situation in Xi'an. There was the position of the Secretary General of the *Lixingshe*, Deng Wenyi, which advocated a military solution to the problem. Then there was the faction of the *Lixingshe*, headed by Dai Li, and supported by Madame Chiang Kai-shek as well as T.V. Soong, which supported a peaceful negotiated settlement. Deng's position would almost have ensured that Chiang would be killed, or at the very least his life would be placed in great danger. Chiang's own belief in this would have extraordinary consequences for the *Lixingshe* in the days following his release.

One of the major problems facing the *Lixingshe*, and with Chiang's favoring of secret organizations that operated outside of the official circuits of the state apparatus more generally, was that they were accountable only to Chiang himself, and often could not be affirmed to exist in the first place. They operated according to the logic of plausible deniability. This became a particularly troublesome issue in the immediate aftermath of the Xi'an Incident. The fact that Zhang and Yang were able to orchestrate the kidnapping of Chiang alone signaled a monumental failure in the intelligence apparatus of the *Lixingshe*. After Chiang's capture, the limitations of the Blue Shirt/*Lixingshe* model of action with impunity came back to undermine their own power. This is illustrated well in the case of the hawkish wing of the *Lixingshe* under Deng Wenyi. Since Deng could not communicate officially with the KMT, because the *Lixingshe* operated external to official government channels, he took matters into his own hands in the panic that ensued after being notified of Chiang's capture. His primary

concern was that Chiang's captors might "send him either to the Soviet Union itself or to Xinjiang in the far West, then a Soviet sphere of influence," so he immediately ordered ground troops under the command of the powerful *Lixingshe* to surround Xi'an to prevent an envoy carrying the Generalissimo from leaving the city. Additionally, using the vast resources at his command, he commenced an aerial reconnaissance to monitor any activity that might suggest the transport of Chiang Kai-shek. This overblown sense of what Chiang's captors might do with him—like transporting him to the Soviet Union—merely confirmed the Young Marshal's criticism of Chiang's numerous secret intelligence networks: "Spy activities are, needless to say, essential, but the information they bring in should never be regarded as more than reference material; it cannot be taken as truth...How can one fail to make inaccurate judgments when one decides policies and positions on the basis of such information?"<sup>66</sup> Additionally, Deng, on his own initiative, sent a telegram in the name of the *Lixingshe* to two operatives in the Xi'an area (Deng was in Nanjing) ordering them to immediately prepare for a military response to the incident. Deng's desire to meet the challenge with a military response was not necessarily the overblown reaction of a slightly delusional spymaster, the official KMT response, as noted earlier, was to take up arms as well. The type of madcap response that emerged in the wake of Chiang's arrest merely reflected the instability of the often times paranoid and unpredictable rulership of Chiang Kai-shek. Every decision made by those left in nominal charge of the Generalissimo's rescue had to be calculated both in terms of selfish gains, but also the possibilities of an unpredictable retribution that would be meted out by Chiang should he be released. He Yingqing, a top military official, advocated an immediate military assault on Xi'an too. He dismissed Madame Chiang's pleas for a

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

peaceful solution to the incident, and for her husband's life to be a primary concern as a settlement was reached, as "woman's tears."<sup>67</sup> Luckily for his own future career prospects, *Lixingshe* member Dai Li took the opposite line and advocated for a peaceful negotiated settlement to the mess in Xi'an.

In the first several days after Chiang's arrest, the militant response faction seemed to have the upper hand in directing the resolution to the crisis in Xi'an. Indeed, many opportunistic KMT officials saw in Chiang's arrest a potential power vacuum opening up, and sought to position themselves well in the aftermath of what they gambled might be the Generalissimo's untimely demise. Dai Li, aware that his own future hung in the balance, decided—likely not without some deep soul searching—to advocate for a peaceful solution to the incident. This earned him the favor of T.V. Soong and Madame Chiang, but did not in his mind place him entirely in the clear from future reprisals. Dai's position was a delicate one. The fact that Chiang was captured in the first place placed blame squarely on him because it attested to his failure at gathering appropriate and up to date intelligence. It was also a signal failure on his part because he was officially responsible for overseeing intelligence meant to ensure Chiang's personal safety. His dilemma appeared to be lose lose. If Chiang died in Xi'an, Dai would almost surely be executed for his failure to uncover the plot beforehand. If Chiang survived, he would likely face punitive measures from Chiang himself for allowing the Generalissimo to lose such face. Dai needed to save Chiang, and distinguish himself in some way so as to not earn his ire. A fortuitous confluence of events converged to turn what appeared to be something like being caught between a rock and a hard place, into a situation in which

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 296.

Dai might catapult himself up in the ranks of Chiang Kai-shek's personal aides-de-camp. This came in the form of a letter addressed to Dai Li from the Young Marshal himself.

Dai and Zhang were old friends, and Zhang thought that perhaps despite differing political allegiances, Dai might be able to convince both the members of the *Lixingshe* as well as Chiang himself, that his intentions were noble. In his letter, Zhang laid out his and Yang's position, as well as their desire that the *Lixingshe* dispatch a negotiating team to Xi'an posthaste. Zhang additionally hoped that Dai might act as a liaison between the Xi'an rebels and Chiang Kai-shek. This was exactly the kind of unique opportunity Dai was looking for. His longstanding friendship with Zhang would ensure his own safety if he made the trip to Xi'an, even though it was the site of growing unrest as the locus of a renewed campaign of anti-Japanese nationalism. Also, Zhang sought Dai's help in the face of the growing threat of military reprisals from the KMT, and a decided lack of support from public figures of note with regard to his actions in Xi'an. According to one account, after receiving Zhang's letter, Dai Li "considered his options, drew up his will, and set out the very next day for Xi'an in the company of T.V. Soong and Soong Meiling."<sup>68</sup> In a dramatic conclusion to his brief imprisonment, the Christian Generalissimo was released to great fanfare on Christmas day. Zhou Enlai had persuaded Zhang and Yang Hucheng, against Yang's better judgment, to accept an oral pledge from Chiang to revivify the united front. With an oral agreement, rather than a written and signed contract, Chiang was released having nominally agreed to reorganize the KMT and allow all parties to participate in a renewed effort to rid China of the Japanese. Believing that his goal of a new united front against his most bitter enemy the Japanese

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 299.



had been met, Zhang surrendered himself to Chiang, after which he was placed under house arrest for the next five decades.<sup>69</sup>

Ultimately, it would be another eight months, after more Japanese belligerence at places like Marco Polo Bridge on July 7, 1937, and Hongqiao Airport in Shanghai on August 9, before Chiang Kai-shek would read Japanese aggression as serious enough to warrant him to officially collaborate in a second united front. In August 1937, the Red Army was officially incorporated into the NRA and renamed the Eighth Route Army, and in November the remaining CCP guerilla forces in central China were incorporated under the banner of the New Fourth Army. Before that, in the immediate aftermath of the Xi'an Incident, Chiang was mostly just infuriated that members of his *Lixingshe* had advocated a position that would have placed his life in danger. He ordered high ranking members of the *Lixingshe*, including Deng Wenyi and Zeng Quoqing (who Zhou had turned and convinced to pursue a peaceful end to the situation), dismissed and arrested. The *Lixingshe* subsequently declined in importance and ultimately disbanded in 1938. However, as war against the Japanese progressed in the late 1930s, and after the U.S. entered the fighting after the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Dai Li was to enjoy continued relevance as a crucial player in a spy network that would have deep ties to the U.S. intelligence apparatus in China during WWII. Indeed, Dai's Military Statistics Bureau (*Juntong*) would be instrumental in the rise of the Cold War model of U.S. trained anti-communist guerilla insurgency, which will be explored in the following chapter. That story interweaves in a complex yet instructive manner with the narrative of

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<sup>69</sup> After the communist victory in 1949, Zhang was transferred to Taiwan as a prisoner, and lived comfortably in Taipei until his release in 1993, at which time he moved to Honolulu where he died in 2001 at the age of 100. To this day, Zhang remains a hero in both Taiwan and China as a true Chinese nationalist and patriot who paid the ultimate price—his freedom—to unite his country against Japan.

the origins of the U.S. Cold War, as well as the particularly central role played by China in that moment. The origins of Chinese anti-communism, in particular the paranoid style spearheaded by Chiang Kai-shek, illustrates the deep-seated roots of the internal Chinese political conflict that would set the course of Chinese history for the remainder of the twentieth century. The U.S.' inability to understand the complex history of this division, and their insistence that the KMT and CCP were essentially similar nationalist parties that could be brought into line with a little elbow grease and American diplomacy, gave rise to elevated tensions in their rivalry, and led the U.S. fatefully down the path of support for the KMT, which functioned as a continual thorn in the side of American foreign policy during the global Cold War. The failure to recognize and process Chiang's anti-communism as a deeply irrational historical pathology doomed the U.S. to reprise this dynamic in a slightly altered form during its own postwar anti-communist crusade. An attempt to understand the genealogy of the global Cold War is impossible without an investigation of what, on the surface, appears to be an indigenous Chinese political problem. However much it may have been mostly confined to disputes within the territorial boundaries of a fractured Chinese state, the ultimate consequences of the KMT-CCP conflict (which can be traced easily to the two hot wars the U.S. fought during the Cold War, in Korea and Vietnam), were undoubtedly and dangerously global.

## Chapter 5

### **The Dixie Mission, SACO, and the Foundations of the Cold War Dynamic**

On July 21, 1944, one day before he was supposed to depart for Yen-an, China, wartime headquarters of the Chinese Communist Party, U.S. Army Colonel David D. Barrett received a vague memorandum from Colonel Joseph K. Dickey, then chief of G-2 (Army Intelligence) in the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater of operation, detailing for Barrett his mission once he arrived in Yen-an. In the preparatory rush leading up to the mission, officially called a “U.S. Army Observer Mission,” but later informally known as the “Dixie Mission,”<sup>1</sup> Barrett and two young political advisers from the State Department, John Paton Davies and John S. Service—both Foreign Service Officers attached to General Stilwell’s CBI command—had been so swept up in the possibilities that might be afforded by U.S. military and diplomatic relations with the Chinese Communists that they had failed to realize their lack of any official directives regarding the ostensible purpose of the mission itself. In a moment that failed to definitively clarify for Barrett his objectives in Yen-an, the future Commanding Officer of Dixie received the Dickey memorandum that likely left more questions unresolved than it provided answers. Dickey relayed to Barrett that “information” would be “particularly desired on the following subjects” including, but not limited to, “strength, composition, disposition, equipment, training, and combat efficiency of the Communist forces,” “utilization and

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<sup>1</sup> For the remainder of this chapter I will refer to the U.S. Army Observer Mission by its informal though more recognizable sobriquet, ‘Dixie Mission.’

expansion of Communist intelligence agencies in enemy and occupied territory,” “complete list of Communist officials (Who’s Who) [*sic*],” “evaluation of present contribution of Communists to the war effort,” and “evaluation of potential contribution of Communists to the war effort.”<sup>2</sup> The memorandum consisted of a single typed sheet, “unsigned, and without authentication of any kind...more in the nature of general instructions for the guidance of the mission rather than the sort of orders usually issued to a unit of the United States Army.”<sup>3</sup> As perplexing as the memo is for its uncharacteristic vagueness, it nevertheless highlights clearly the unorthodox dimensions of the Dixie Mission. The haphazard and cryptic nature of the U.S. Army intelligence approach to the Dixie Mission illustrates the larger problem of the disorganized U.S. political and military approach to the wartime situation in China. This chapter seeks to highlight some of the ways in which the U.S. approached its wartime intelligence-gathering relations with the Chinese, both KMT and CCP, in a manner that often operated at cross-purposes, and that ultimately led the U.S. into the enduring but catastrophic embrace of the KMT regime. This tenuous alliance was not the policy of the U.S. when it first entered the war against Japan in 1941, but its consequences had a devastating impact on U.S. global Cold War policy, and the history of how the U.S. came to be committed to the Military Statistics Bureau (*Juntong*), the KMT’s secret intelligence organization under the direction of Dai Li, yields new interpretations for the origins of the U.S. penchant for the funding and training of anti-communist guerillas during the Cold War. Once again, the Chinese scene proves to be indispensable to a construction of the global genealogy of the Cold War.

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<sup>2</sup> David Barrett, *Dixie Mission: The United States Army Observer Group in Yen-an, 1944*. (Berkeley: Center for Chinese Studies, 1970), 28.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

A little over a year earlier, in June of 1944, John Paton Davies had begun campaigning for a U.S. observer group to be sent to Yen-an. To Davies's mind, the Chinese Communists were an increasingly palatable alternative to Chiang Kai-shek's KMT party to oversee the unification of China in the war effort against the Japanese. Chiang's KMT was falling deeper into corruption, which coupled with spiraling inflation and low troop morale failed to engender the kind of political or military leadership that the U.S. believed it needed in its most important Asian ally. Indeed, there was substantial evidence that some of Chiang's best troops were being used to contain the Chinese Communists in the north, rather than fighting against Japanese troops.<sup>4</sup> This, and many other factors, encouraged Davies to broach the subject of an observer mission to CCP territory with CBI commander Joseph Stilwell. Although warm to the idea when it was brought to his attention, Stilwell could not give it much thought since he was at the time embroiled in bitter disputes with Chiang Kai-shek over the direction of Allied war efforts in the CBI theater.<sup>5</sup>

Not to be deterred by Stilwell's lack of direct action with regard to his idea, Davies took further steps by drafting an official memorandum to Stilwell on June 24, 1943, and sent along a copy to the Department of State as well. In this memo, Davies underscored once more the urgency with which the U.S. needed to get observers on the

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<sup>4</sup> Evidence of these and similar charges of corruption and a failure of leadership by Chiang's KMT can be found in the *FRUS* volumes for the war years (in particular the memoranda of John Paton Davies), and Joseph W. Esherick, ed., *Lost Chance in China: The World War II Despatches of John S. Service*. (New York: Random House, 1974), see esp. 3-161.

<sup>5</sup> Despite being a Four Star General, and U.S. commander of the CBI theater of operation, Stilwell was assigned to the role of Chiang Kai-shek's Chief of Staff as an act of deference to the Chinese leader in his own country. The two did not get along. Stilwell was recalled from his post in October 1944, not long after Davies proposed the idea of a U.S. observer mission, and was replaced by someone much more amenable to Chiang, Major General Albert Wedemeyer. The definitive biography of Stilwell remains Barbara Tuchman's Pulitzer Prize winner, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-1945*. (New York: MacMillan, 1971).

ground in CCP controlled areas. He noted that the last official U.S. observer to have set foot in Yen-an was Capt. Evans Carlson of the Marine Corps, who had done so in 1938.<sup>6</sup> Davies called further attention to the fact that Japanese forces were most concentrated in the north of China, and their second largest industrial base was also in the region.<sup>7</sup> Continued inaction from his commanding officer prompted Davies to issue another memorandum in January of 1944 urging the organization of an observer mission to communist controlled north China as soon as possible. In this memo, Davies also noted that the most capable Chinese military force dedicated to the defeat of Japan in the region was that under the control of the Chinese Communists, and that they were responsible for gathering the most sound and up-to-date “intelligence on the Japanese enemy available to us anywhere.” Davies decried the manner in which U.S. intelligence since Carlson’s visit had been “officially uninformed,” “conflicting,” and “second-hand.”<sup>8</sup> He also noted that

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<sup>6</sup> Evans Carlson is perhaps best known for his role as the leader of the famed “Carlson’s Raiders” who fought at Guadalcanal, and for importing the expression “Gung Ho!” into the English language. In Chinese, *he gong* means to work together. Carlson first developed interest in the Chinese Communists after reading Edgar Snow’s heroic description of them in *Red Star Over China*. He spent a significant amount of time in 1938 living and travelling with the CCP, and was impressed by their guerilla tactics. Carlson’s belief in the democratic nature of the CCP continued after the war, and is in evidence in his support of various left causes before his death in 1947. Of particular interest is his support of San Francisco’s Chinese American Democratic Youth League, a dedicated Marxist organization to whom he had sent congratulatory wishes on the occasion of its third anniversary in 1945. He wrote: “Youth is playing a dominant role in democratization of northern provinces [in China]. It is my fervent hope that all factions in China will soon unite embracing a genuinely democratic program designed to bring freedom and equality of opportunity and a decent livelihood to all the people. May Chiang Kai-shek Mao Tze Tung and Chu Teh be united in practicing the principles of Sun Yat Sen and may the foreign powers leave the Chinese people free to realize this high destiny.” Telegram from Carlson to Chinese American Democratic Youth League reprinted in official program of “The Third Anniversary of the Chinese Youth League,” Chinese American Democratic Youth League Miscellany, AAS ARC 2000/81, Asian American Studies Library, University of California Berkeley, carton 1, folder 4. Henceforth CADYL Papers. For more on Carlson’s perspective on war in China see Evans Carlson, *Evans F. Carlson on War in China, 1937-1941*. (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 23.

<sup>8</sup> Of note is a report sent to Lauchlin Currie, then acting as a special representative to Chiang Kai-shek from President Roosevelt, on November 13, 1942. It was “the first account I’ve seen for a long time from anyone who has actually come into contact with the Chinese Communists, and is on that account quite interesting.” It is from one Mr. Lautenschlager, an “elderly and very devout missionary at Chengtu.” Lautenschlager’s celebratory account should be read with a grain of salt to be sure, but he appears to have had some relevant insight, namely that the CCP had deep ideological ties to the Soviets, but were entirely nationalist, and

the communists posed the “greatest single challenge in China to the Chiang Kai-shek government.”<sup>9</sup>

Davies and others reporting for the State Department and OSS on the ground in China were becoming increasingly concerned about the possibilities of a postwar Chinese military and political field in which Chiang Kai-shek retained supreme power. As Chiang’s forces continued to suppress Chinese Communist engagements with Japanese forces in the northern areas, many within the U.S. intelligence apparatus (State Department, G-2, OSS, OWI) began weighing seriously the possibility that in what was becoming an increasingly likely clash between Chiang’s KMT and the CCP after the defeat of Japan, it might be better to begin building a relationship with what many saw as the lesser of two evils, the Chinese Communists. It’s easy to forget without the benefit of historical hindsight, and with the cumulative burden of almost five decades of an intense global Cold War, that the Soviets were at this time allies of the U.S. There were certainly fundamental ideological differences between the political ideology of communism and U.S. capitalism, but it was by no means clear in 1943 that these differences would contribute so greatly to the enmity that animated postwar global political culture until 1989.

This isn’t to say, however, that realists within the U.S. weren’t making political calculi in an attempt to generate a postwar situation that was more favorable to U.S.

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“now not very radical.” He even seems to believe that the CCP has reconciled the simultaneous existence of Christianity with communism. Speaking of a hospital in Yen-an, Lautenschlager wrote, “if it is not one of the seven wonders of the world, it is certainly the eighth.” Quoted in Lauchlin Currie, “Memorandum for the President: Re: Attached dispatch on Chinese Communists,” November 13, 1942, Lauchlin Currie Papers, Box 3: Fol. “China Communists,” Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University. (Henceforth Currie Papers).

<sup>9</sup> John P. Davies, “Observers’ Mission to North China,” January 15, 1944, Box 35: Fol 13, Stilwell Papers.

interests than it might be to those of the Soviets. To that end, it was additionally provocative that Davies highlighted two more important points in his memo. The first was that there was a strong likelihood that if the Soviets attacked Japan, it would be through northern China. Second, this hypothetical encounter was likely to engender closer relations between the Soviets and the Chinese Communists, who were to many observers at this point not yet so close that the U.S. couldn't present itself as the better friend to the CCP, which was true given the CCP's historical suspicion of Stalin. By 1944, the defeat of the Japanese was a near certainty, and U.S. concerns became framed in part by actions to contain the influence of the Soviet Union in postwar East Asia. The possibility that U.S. inaction might drive the CCP into an accelerated Sino-CCP alliance was an increasingly important selling point as Roosevelt became more disaffected with Chiang's intransigence and truculent leadership. According to Davies, "[t]he Chinese Communists have repeatedly indicated that they would welcome American observers. But future developments may cause their attitudes to change."<sup>10</sup> Indeed, he warned that "Chiang's blockade of the Communists and their consequent isolation are forcing them toward dependence upon Russia. An American observers' mission would break this isolation, and reduce the tendency towards dependence upon Russia and, at the same time, serve to check Chiang's desire to attempt liquidation of the Communists by civil war."<sup>11</sup> Cognizant of what was sure to be Chiang's dismissal of an observer group to communist controlled areas, Davies recommended that "the request come directly from the President," rather than the "ordinary diplomatic and military channels." Davies additionally recognized the degree to which Chiang's KMT was utterly dependent upon

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.



U.S. aid—in particular Lend-Lease—for its survival, and thought it might be useful to have Roosevelt cash in some of this “ample bargaining power” by suggesting the usefulness of an observer group.<sup>12</sup> After all, how could Chiang really refuse, when it would be in the service of the victory against the Japanese that he was ostensibly fighting for? Somehow Davies’ memorandum ended up on Roosevelt’s desk, and with his interest piqued, the president decided to bring up the issue of a U.S. observer group with General George C. Marshall, and to ask Marshall to take action.<sup>13</sup>

### **Origins of the Dixie Mission**

Despite having been pressured to agree to a second united front in the escalating conflict with the Japanese, by the early 1940s Chiang’s commitment to the alliance remained lukewarm at best. He continued to try to suppress communist resistance to the Japanese for fear that allowing them to expand their power base—even if it happened organically in their fight against Japan—might threaten his future viability as the *de facto* ruler of China. Even after the U.S. entry into the war, and in the midst of receiving lend-lease materiel from the U.S., Chiang continued to use his best troops to suppress communists rather than fight the Japanese. Plagued by an almost pathological anti-communism, Chiang “used eleven divisions—300,000 of his two-million man army—to surround the greatly feared Communist insurgency headquartered in Yen’an.”<sup>14</sup> To make matters worse, Chiang’s army was in marked disarray. While he had his most fit, best trained, and most loyal troops detached to blockade communist forces engaged in guerilla

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 23.

<sup>14</sup> John Colling, *The Spirit of Yanan*. (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 2004), 4. This is the first-person account of John Colling, an OSS officer attached to the Dixie Mission. Some estimates place the number of troops being used by Chiang to contain CCP forces at over 500,000.

skirmishes fighting the Japanese in north China, the recent conscripts into the NRA were a wretched group. Forced into the army, many new recruits died from malnutrition, disease, and other preventable causes before they even got into uniform. Wilbur Peterkin, a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army, and third commanding officer of the Dixie Mission, recalled travelling through KMT controlled areas in the summer of 1944 and the grueling scenes he witnessed. “Many dead soldiers were lying along the road and others were too sick to travel. Soldiers shot conscripts who tried to escape. We saw conscripts, arms bound behind them and roped together, marching down the road at bayonet point. The conscripts appeared to be very poor physical specimens.”<sup>15</sup> Some KMT soldiers who fared better were detailed to special units, like the Sino-American Cooperative Organization (SACO, about which more later), which was a clandestine spy agency that terrorized ‘progressive’ elements in China throughout its existence, but even those soldiers were far below average. Among the first recruits to undergo this U.S.-led training in guerilla tactics, hundreds suffered from scabies, conjunctivitis, and ulcerations. “The vision requirement had to be set at 6/15 instead of 20/20 because of the men’s poor eyesight.”<sup>16</sup> Many among the earliest recruits to stagger into the first SACO training camp, after an arduous trek on foot across hundreds of miles, had “blistered and bloody feet” and “were too weak to hold a gun.”<sup>17</sup> Ten percent of the inductees at SACO’s Linru camp had such bad cases of scabies when they arrived that they could not even walk on their own.<sup>18</sup> Foreign Service Officer John Service noted that “the condition of the

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<sup>15</sup> Wilbur J. Peterkin, “Dixie Mission Memoirs,” unpublished manuscript in Wilbur J. Peterkin Papers, Box 1: Fol. 1, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University. Henceforth Peterkin Papers. Quote is from p. 19 of manuscript.

<sup>16</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 295.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 499, n. 5.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 8.

conscripts and troops in Shensi and Kansu was...so poor as to almost beggar description...[o]ne foreigner has actually seen men near death from exhaustion or disease being beaten to death to save the trouble of carrying them.”<sup>19</sup>

In addition to the generally poor physical condition of the troops, corruption within the ranks of those higher in command ran rampant. This was particularly evident in the ways that KMT officials used U.S. lend-lease materials and other forms of U.S. aid to enrich themselves. According to a State Department memo to U.S. Ambassador to China, Clarence Gauss, dated November 11, 1942, medical supplies sent by the Red Cross were being hoarded by the military, while quinine dyed green was distributed to the public as medicine. Fabric sent for school children’s uniforms was being redyed and turned into clothing for sale on an open market, and American aviation tools were being sold on the black market.<sup>20</sup> According to one U.S. officer, “in the thieves’ market in Kunming you could see all kinds of Lend Lease goods on sale. A part for a jeep could be purchased for a price in the thieves’ market.”<sup>21</sup> Because the pay KMT officers received was not enough to feed their families, they often purposefully left the names of deceased soldiers on their rolls so as to receive extra food rations. Peterkin “knew of units with 200 names on the rolls who could only master [*sic*] 80 soldiers.”<sup>22</sup> Brigadier General Frank Dorn, who was serving as Stilwell’s chief of staff, conducted an informal “Gallup Poll” in one KMT Group Army and had some embarrassing things to say about the Nationalist’s military command. According to Dorn, the average Chinese soldier lived

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<sup>19</sup> John S. Service, “Military Movements Noted Along Road from Chunking to Lanchow,” July 2, 1943, quoted in Service, *Lost Chance*, 36.

<sup>20</sup> Memorandum from John S. Service to U.S. Ambassador to China, Clarence Gauss, John S. Service Papers, Ctn. 2: Fol. 5, Banc. Mss. 87/21, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Henceforth Service Papers.

<sup>21</sup> Peterkin, “Dixie Mission Memoirs,” 120, Box 1: Fol. 1, Peterkin Papers.

<sup>22</sup> Peterkin, “Dixie Mission Memoirs,” 119, Box 1: Fol. 1, Peterkin Papers.

under “the most miserable existence since Valley Forge.”<sup>23</sup> Dorn placed much of the soldiers’ misery on the shoulders of their superiors. “Many Chinese officers are absolutely incompetent to lead anything. Most of them are more concerned with the privileges that go with their rank than with their duties. Seldom do they look after their men.”<sup>24</sup> The ramshackle condition of the KMT army left little for the U.S. to be overly excited about as allies in the fight against Japan. Due to these and other powerful instances of weak leadership within the ranks of the KMT—whether as an effect of graft, corruption, or just plain cruelty—many U.S. observers on the ground in China, like John Davies and Jack Service, as well as the lesser known members of U.S. forces in China like Frank Dorn, Wilbur Peterkin, and Raymond Ludden, began thinking deeply about alternatives to backing Chiang Kai-shek as the sole ruler of China.

On December 9, 1941, just two days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the CCP issued a Declaration of War in the Pacific. In this document, which was transmitted to Washington D.C., among other places, the CCP declared its dedication to the global struggle against fascism. In an explicit linkage, the CCP tied its fortunes to that of the U.S. in the wake of the Japanese bombing of the U.S. military installation in Hawaii, claiming that “the Pacific War has commenced.” The CCP further celebrated the U.S. and Britain’s new Pacific engagement in the war against fascism as “a just war of liberation in defense of independence, freedom, and democracy.” The declaration further noted the historical continuities between the struggles against Japanese fascism that China had been fighting for nearly a decade, and those the U.S. and its European allies were now

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<sup>23</sup> Brigadier General Frank Dorn to General Joseph Stilwell, “Personal Opinion of the Chinese Army,” March 21, 1944, Frank Dorn Papers, Box. 1: Fol. 30, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University. Henceforth Dorn Papers.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

entering. China and the U.S. were now both victims of a shared international violation, the attack by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor was “identical to their [the Japanese] aggression against China over the past ten years,” and an analogue for the “German-Italian fascist aggression against Europe and the Soviet Union.” The world, the declaration exclaimed, had now been neatly divided into two camps, “the fascist camp that has launched the wars of aggression and the antifascist camp that is fighting wars of liberation.” The CCP called on all Chinese to continue in their “heroic war” against Japan, to side with anti-fascism (no mention is made here of the overlap between anti-fascism and imperialism, that was to come later), and to “mobilize all our strength, and struggle for the final overthrow of the Japanese fascists.”<sup>25</sup> This is a calculated document to be sure, but it also speaks to what at the time was still a sense of searching internationalism, and a certain leeway in experimentation within the CCP. Yes, the CCP was a member of the Comintern, but had not received a directive since Stalin called for a second united front more than six years earlier, and had not received direct aid from the Soviets in nearly a decade. Stalin famously called the CCP “margarine” communists. In the war against Japanese aggression, the CCP was in 1941 still very much open to the idea of building alliances with the ‘imperialist’ West—especially the United States.

Americans on the ground knew this to be true. Some even welcomed it. Clearly John Davies saw it as an imperative, and with the strong winds of fortune at his back, his pleas for an observer group to Yenan were being heard and heeded in Washington. By the time of the Davies memorandum in early 1944, tensions between CBI Theater

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<sup>25</sup> CCP Declaration of War in the Pacific (Dec. 9, 1941), reprinted in Anthony Saich, *The Rise to Power of the Chinese Communist Party: Documents and Analysis*. (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), 965.

commander Joseph Stilwell and Chiang Kai-shek had reached a point of high volatility.<sup>26</sup> A suggestion from Stilwell to Chiang was not going to get the U.S. anything. Although Davies recommended that Roosevelt himself apply gentle pressure on Chiang, the president may have felt increasingly disillusioned with Chiang as the Generalissimo's relationship with Stilwell deteriorated past the point of saving. According to Edgar Snow, by the time of the Stilwell recall in October of 1944, Roosevelt was "too puzzled and discouraged by the outlook in Chinese internal affairs, to feel that his personal intervention could any longer greatly influence matters."<sup>27</sup> Roosevelt did, however, broach the subject of a U.S. role in facilitating a closer working relationship between the KMT and the CCP when he met with the Chiang's at Cairo in November of 1943. Roosevelt made it clear to Chiang that the U.S. was not going to be party to a civil war in China, and that what was needed was a more united front against the common enemy, Japan. As Snow remembered it, Roosevelt said, "over in Cairo I told Chiang and Mme Chiang that they had to do something to get together with the Reds."<sup>28</sup> Whether he knew it or not, the U.S. was already following several contradictory paths, each with differing ideal outcomes with regard to the future of the Chinese state. One of these, the one with which we are concerned here, is a liberal internationalist one that sought to include the CCP in the war time, and potentially in the postwar, U.S. military and policy making world view.

Because of Chiang's continued anti-communist fervor, getting him to agree to a U.S. observer group in Yanan was not going to be an easy job. It not only threatened his

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<sup>26</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience*, 375-455.

<sup>27</sup> Edgar Snow, *Random Notes on Red China, 1936-1945*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), quoted from an extended excerpt in Colling, *The Spirit of Yanan*, 142.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

leadership as the de facto ruler of China, but also threatened to divert some of the lend-lease supplies that the U.S. gave the KMT to the CCP. Clearly, the evidence suggests that much of this U.S. materiel was being put to uses other than those intended, being both hoarded for a future clash with the communists, or sold on the black market. A stronger alliance between the KMT and the CCP was decidedly against the KMT's short-term interests in China. The entrance of the U.S. into the Pacific War was a blessing for many Chinese. They were tired and worn down from fighting the Japanese for over a decade, and the entrance of the Allied Powers into the war against Japan meant an almost certain victory, and a Chinese future free from Japanese imperialism. As allies of the U.S., China began receiving monies and other essential material for waging war. Many within the KMT thought this material might be better put to use not in the war against the Japanese, but against what was sure to be a civil war with the communists after the Japanese had been expelled from China. To this end hoarding of supplies became a rampant problem. Corrupt officials also sought to benefit monetarily from the illicit trade in U.S. aid, even if it meant clandestine trading with the Japanese. One American OSS agent in China recalled that "many high Chinese [KMT] officials were making too much money from their trade with the enemy to be happy about giving it up. The black market was making millionaires of many in power, and this would end with victory."<sup>29</sup> And so, a rapprochement between the CCP and the KMT, while beneficial to the interests of the Allied Powers in the defeat of Japan, held little appeal for many in the KMT high command. Indeed, in what limited engagements the KMT were having with the Japanese after December 7, 1941, they were content to let the U.S. do the bulk of the fighting.

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<sup>29</sup> Oliver J. Caldwell, *A Secret War: Americans in China, 1944-1945*. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), 49.

Davies worded the KMT's failures strongly in a memorandum from February 19, 1944, stating in no uncertain terms that

while China is at present independent, it is neither strong nor democratic; that the Chiang regime is unsound and unstable; that it has been singularly uncooperative with us in prosecuting the war against Japan; that counting on American help it threatens to engulf China in a calamitous civil war against the Chinese Communists; that its Russophobia is a future menace to its own and American relations with the Soviet Union. We therefore have little to gain from supporting the Chiang regime in its present attitude. We have much to gain from applying pressure on Chiang to cooperate and achieve internal unity or, if he is unable to do so, in supporting those elements in China which give promise of such development.<sup>30</sup>

To Davies' mind, "those elements" included the CCP.

Roosevelt had broached the subject of a KMT-CCP rapprochement earlier, as at Cairo, but on February 9, 1944, FDR sent Chiang a memo in which he very specifically nudged the Chinese leader in the direction of authorizing a U.S. group into CCP territory for intelligence gathering and other general observation. Strategically, FDR couched his request in terms of the developing war against Japan, gesturing at Soviet intentions in Manchuria to which the fanatical anti-Soviet Chiang would likely be receptive. On this Chiang and FDR were on the same page, they both sought to curb Soviet influence in China in a postwar situation. At this stage FDR was not averse to seeing that future with at least some involvement from the CCP, which was still relatively autonomous from the USSR. The president noted that

in addition to defeating Japan on the seas and in the air, we must engage and destroy the main body of the Japanese Army before we can surely attain the final victory. The principal concentration of the Japanese Army

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<sup>30</sup> John Paton Davies, "American Policy in Asia," February 19, 1944, Box: 35, Fol. 16, Stilwell Papers.



is in North China and Manchuria. We now begin with preparations to crush that formidable Japanese force.<sup>31</sup>

The problem was one of intelligence. Roosevelt warned Chiang that “information at present regarding the enemy in North China and Manchuria is exceedingly meager.”<sup>32</sup> He then continued to push Chiang on the importance of a U.S. mission to gather intelligence in the area, which was under CCP control, “to increase the flow of such information and to survey the possibilities of future operations, both ground and air, it appears to be of great advisability that an American observers’ mission be immediately dispatched to North Shensi and Shansi Provinces.”<sup>33</sup> The president ended with a question, “[m]ay I have your support and cooperation in this enterprise?”

Sensing a lack of desire and willingness on the part of Chiang, FDR decided to push further. In order to work his moral suasion on Chiang Kai-shek with regard to a softening of his blockade and offensive actions against the CCP in the midst of a war with Japan, Roosevelt dispatched vice president Henry Wallace to convince Chiang that a U.S. observer group was necessary. Wallace arrived in the wartime capital Chungking (Chongqing) on June 20, 1944. He had just come from a brief tour of the Soviet Union, where in Tashkent he had met with the U.S. Ambassador to the USSR, W. Averell Harriman, who updated him regarding an interview Harriman had had a few days earlier with Stalin regarding the situation in China. Stalin was of the same mind as Roosevelt, believing that Chiang was the only figure capable of holding China together at that moment, but that drastic measures would need to be taken in order to bring corruption and disorganization under at least a semblance of control. Harriman clued Stalin in to

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<sup>31</sup> President Roosevelt to Chiang Kai-Shek, February 9, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol.6*, 329.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

Roosevelt's desire to put pressure on Chiang to relax his anti-communist activities, and to liberalize his government in an effort to wage a more effective war against Japan. Stalin, having not forgotten the debacle that emerged out of his attempt to manage a united front under Chiang in 1926-7, advised Harriman that "[t]his is easier said than done."<sup>34</sup> Stalin cautioned Harriman to be aware of Chiang's many faults, especially the fact that "his army was very weak and many of his entourage were crooks and even traitors."<sup>35</sup> Worse yet, Chiang refused to let the CCP fight the Japanese. His fanaticism with regard to pacifying what he saw as an internal communist threat doubly diminished Chinese military strength; Chiang's best troops were squandered containing communism, and therefore the communists could not mount effective assaults against the Japanese because they were being restricted by their putative allies. When asked if he had any suggestions as to how the U.S. might best approach the rapidly deteriorating situation in China, Stalin suggested that "Chiang should be brought more strongly under American influence."<sup>36</sup> Stalin communicated that the U.S. could and should seek a leadership role with regard to managing China's domestic problem. With advancing German armies in Europe taking up most of Stalin's energy, and with the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943, the time was ripe for the U.S. to be ascendant in China. Clearly, Stalin was in some way washing his hands, at least temporarily, of the troubled situation in China. With the break-up of the Comintern, which "was a windfall for Mao Zedong," because it allowed the CCP to develop its own autonomous political line apart from Moscow, the U.S. might be able to

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<sup>34</sup> John Paton Davies, *Dragon by the Tail: American, British, Japanese, and Russian Encounters with China and One Another*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), 305.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 306.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

have an impact on directing that line in a mutually beneficial direction.<sup>37</sup> Progressive elements in the KMT believed that a more lenient policy towards the CCP would ultimately benefit a victorious Nationalist Party after the war because it would have to have good relations with the Soviets, who despite absolving themselves from any official ties to the CCP with the termination of the Comintern were still the leaders of world communism.<sup>38</sup> The U.S. did not believe the CCP to be completely denuded of any relationship with the Soviets, but understood that there was potential for a triangular postwar relationship between China, the USSR, and the United States that might serve all three of their interests. How this might look was a prophecy not to be contemplated at the moment.<sup>39</sup>

On the afternoon of June 21, 1944, Wallace met with Chiang while Foreign Minister T.V. Soong (brother of Mme Chiang) acted as interpreter.<sup>40</sup> The exclusion of U.S. Ambassador Gauss from these meetings was a move that was both “unwise” and “rude,” according to John Davies.<sup>41</sup> Without the senior U.S. diplomatic representative

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<sup>37</sup> John W. Garver, *Chinese-Soviet Relations, 1937-1945: The Diplomacy of Chinese Nationalism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 248.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

<sup>39</sup> For an astute study of how the triangular relationship between the U.S., China, and the U.S.S.R. did [play out during the Cold War see Gordon H. Chang, *Friends and Enemies: The United States, China, and the Soviet Union, 1948-1972*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

<sup>40</sup> T.V. Soong was a Columbia Ph.D. and somewhat of a financial whiz. He had not long earlier tried to orchestrate a power play to take over leadership of the KMT, representing a “modernist” element of wealthy, cosmopolitan, and elite Chinese, to little success. Indeed, he was lucky to occupy the post of Foreign Minister for Chiang at all—he was “kept on a short leash” after his bid at leadership. A China under Soong could never have been sustained. As John Davies pointed out, the so-called modernists were not a political faction, but a “cultural category” with no substantial power base. They may have had education and wealth, but they had few followers. Soong was “acute rather than wise, tricky rather than deft, arrogant rather than poised, alien rather than persuasively different. He could not make it [as the leader of China].” One thing Soong did manage to do during this turbulent period was enrich himself immensely—allegations that millions of dollars of U.S. aid made it into his personal bank account have never been disproven—and he made good use of his money and influence as a resident of New York, and as a prominent player in the China Lobby after the communist victory in 1949. For more on Soong’s pretensions towards Chinese leadership see Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 375-78.

<sup>41</sup> Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 306.

present, Wallace “quickly got down to business” and proceeded to launch into an embarrassing discourse belying the vice president’s very incorrect assumption that since the CCP and KMT were both Chinese parties that they were “basically friends” making a number of American references that were to Chiang probably “as unconvincing as they were mystifying.”<sup>42</sup> Having surely made a fool of himself, Wallace then continued to iterate to Chiang that any issue that could possibly result in conflict between China and the Soviets should be addressed at their meeting. Chiang, more interested in this than with being told that the KMT and the CCP were essentially compatible political parties, told Wallace that he too wished for peaceful relations with the USSR. For Chiang, his hope was to keep the Soviets out of the inevitable civil war on the side of the CCP. At this, Wallace mentioned the conversation Harriman had very recently had with Stalin, and Chiang asked if he might see a memorandum digesting their conversation. Having no memorandum of the conversation, Wallace suggested that Chiang have his Foreign Minister and brother-in-law T.V. Soong talk it over with John Carter Vincent, the head of the Division of Chinese Affairs of the State Department, who was one of the officials travelling with Wallace on his tour. In the conversation that followed, Vincent told Soong about Stalin’s suggestion that the U.S. take a leadership position in China. Soong and Chiang saw this as an opportunity to push the U.S. into service as a liaison between the KMT and the USSR at the expense of the CCP. One of the tasks with which Vincent had been charged by Secretary of State Cordell Hull before leaving Washington to accompany Wallace, was to ensure that Wallace did not make any promises that the U.S. could not keep. Accordingly, he warned Wallace not to agree to have Roosevelt arbitrate between the Soviets and the Chinese Nationalists. Having failed to finesse a deal with

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

Roosevelt negotiating on the behalf of the KMT, Chiang moved into another familiar piece of territory for him, his rancorous relationship with Stilwell.

At another meeting on June 22, Wallace broached the sensitive topic of the weak showing being made by KMT troops in central China. Chiang responded in what was by now a familiar refrain. The KMT had been valiantly resisting Japanese aggression for well-nigh seven years now, and had finally begun getting outside (mostly U.S.) help after the treacherous Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, only to be let down by Roosevelt when he made the decision to withdraw from the planned amphibious attack on Burma. Americans had little faith in the Nationalist Army, but Chiang insisted the problem was one of command and judgment, that is to say, poor command and bad judgment on the part of General Stilwell. Chiang further exploited his audience with the vice president by railing against the communists. They were, he said, subject to orders from the Comintern (which had been dissolved), and the low morale of the Chinese people and army was a direct effect of CCP propaganda.<sup>43</sup> It was their goal, he warned, to diminish Chinese resistance to Japan so they could consolidate their position. He further claimed that contrary to Stalin's assertion that the CCP was made up of "margarine" communists, they were in fact more communist than the Soviet Communists themselves.<sup>44</sup> While it's a useless project to debate who in fact were the more 'legitimate' communists, the CCP or

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<sup>43</sup> Chiang's claims here about CCP propaganda appear to be at some variance with the factual record. In a despatch from the U.S. Ambassador to China, Clarence Gauss, to Secretary of State Hull, dated February 16, 1944, it was actually the KMT who were embroiled in a vicious propaganda campaign against the CCP accusing them of committing "crimes" in the political, military, economic, and social fields that betrayed the "war of resistance" against the Japanese. A secret letter to the KMT Ministry of Organization called for the strengthening of counterinsurgency within the KMT not just through the usual channels of the secret police, but through loyal KMT party infiltration of both the CCP and KMT, to root out possible CCP spies at all levels. Gauss clearly recognized that sowing dissension like this on the part of the KMT in the midst of public lip service towards cooperation between the two parties "offer[s] little indication of conciliation on the part of the Kuomintang and are scarcely designed to create better feeling on the part of either of the two parties." Despatch. No. 2171, Gauss to Hull, February 16, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 339-40.

<sup>44</sup> Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 307.

the Soviets, it is helpful to take a brief look at how the CCP was using the dissolution of the Comintern to their best advantage in securing relationships with important players on the international scene. While formal ties to Moscow had been broken with the end of the Comintern, spurred by the increasing complexity of the international system and the role of revolution within that system, the CCP could still usefully deploy the idea of the USSR itself as a bargaining chip. It was in many ways now available to them as a kind of floating signifier. Both the KMT and the U.S. were gravely concerned about the role the Soviets would play in China in the postwar period, and Mao was unafraid to subtly use the threat of closer ties between the CCP and the USSR to push the U.S. towards a more progressive cooperative policy with the CCP. Overtures that stated as much were part of the impetus for Dixie in the first place.<sup>45</sup>

Wallace also broached the topic of a U.S. observer group into CCP controlled territory in his second meeting with Chiang. Chiang responded off-topic at first, laying forth the KMT requirements for a negotiated settlement between the two factions. These included support of the president (Chiang), support of the government (the KMT), and support for the war effort (which the KMT was keeping the CCP from fully doing since they were surrounded by the KMT). Chiang added that the KMT, should these hypotheticals be met, would require absolute obedience (Chiang's various secret police organizations could assure this), require the incorporation of the CCP armies (Eighth Route and New Fourth) into the ranks of the regular KMT army, and finally the CCP would have to agree to have territories under their control in north China subsumed under the leadership of the Nationalist Government. Evidently, all this was by way of a prelude

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<sup>45</sup> Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 307; Garver, *Chinese-Soviet Relations*, 254.

to his response to Wallace's request that he allow a U.S. observer group into Yenan, to which he replied in a disingenuous positive. If, he said, the conditionals he had just laid out were met by the CCP, then a U.S. observer group could go to north China to gather intelligence with his blessing. These observers would, however, be travelling under the auspices of the KMT, "*and would have no direct contact with the Communists*" by which Chiang most likely meant that U.S. observers were to have no relations with top CCP officials like Mao Zedong or Zhou Enlai.<sup>46</sup> Chiang recommended to Wallace that the best thing the U.S. could do to help secure a settlement between the KMT and the CCP would be to display "aloofness" towards them.<sup>47</sup> After having delivered the most roundabout and specious blessing for a U.S. observer group into CCP territory, one in which his list of conditionals were near certain impossibilities, Chiang gently warned Wallace, "please do not press" the issue of an observer group.

At their meeting the following day, with John Carter Vincent in attendance, Wallace and Carter did just that, and pushed for Chiang to approve a U.S. group to move into CCP territory to gather intelligence that might aid in the war effort. In particular, they wanted to conduct some reconnaissance regarding the potentialities of using CCP troops to rescue downed U.S. B-29 flyers. Strangely, with little persuasion, Chiang had a sudden about face and consented to the dispatch of a U.S. observer group into CCP territory, and without the absurd conditions he had laid out the previous day. Chiang must have had other plans brewing, more important than a small contingent of Americans visiting CCP territory. Plus, Chiang had recently allowed a select number of foreign

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<sup>46</sup> Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 307.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

journalists to travel into CCP areas, and to have continued to forcefully disallow U.S. military observers would have perhaps seemed strange. Thus was the Dixie Mission born.

Along with Wallace and Vincent, two experts on the China situation were also advising Wallace in his talks with the Generalissimo. First was John S. Service, who, along with John Davies, had been the Foreign Service Officers pressing most hard for the observer group to Yenan. He was also, like Davies, attached to Stilwell's CBI command as a political reporter, and had been sending important despatches that were making their way through Army, State, and even the White House, that were increasingly critical of KMT misrule and corruption. The second adviser was Owen Lattimore, who Chiang knew well in his role as a political adviser sent to him from FDR in 1941. Lattimore was a Johns Hopkins professor, and an expert on Mongolia, who was at the time of the Wallace trip heading up the Pacific bureau of the Office of War Information (OWI) in San Francisco.<sup>48</sup> Lattimore would later gain immense notoriety when Joseph McCarthy charged him with being "the top espionage agent in the United States, the boss of Alger Hiss."<sup>49</sup> Shortly before the Chiang-Wallace meeting, Service had drafted a digestive brief for the Vice President on the political situation in China, along with some policy recommendations. The brief was an essential distillation of Service's reports from the China field over the course of the three previous years. Given Wallace's busy schedule, he did not have a chance to discuss the brief with either Chiang or Service, and we don't know if he even had a chance to read it, but the report did receive wide circulation. It was

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<sup>48</sup> For more on Lattimore's tenure as an adviser to Chiang see Robert P. Newman's assiduously researched biography, *Owen Lattimore and the "Loss" of China*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 55-97.

<sup>49</sup> Newman, *Owen Lattimore*, 215.



reprinted by both the OWI and OSS, and distributed widely through the Army, Navy, and State Departments.<sup>50</sup>

Service did not pull any punches; it was, he later admitted, “assuming a good deal on my part,” but he had the blessings of both Gauss and Dickey (head of G-2 in CBI) to go ahead and be as forthright as possible.<sup>51</sup> The brief, titled “The Situation in China is Rapidly Becoming Critical,” was skeptical of U.S. beliefs that Chiang could possibly contribute to a stable democratic China in the postwar period, let alone be a reliable cornerstone for a *Pax Americana* in East Asia. Service highlighted the success of the Japanese policy with regard to China, which included allowing Chiang to foster his own demise through a process of “slow strangulation” as a natural evolutionary outgrowth of his monumental incompetence. Chiang had already decided, essentially in the immediate aftermath of Pearl Harbor, that he was going to exploit the Allied intervention in China’s long struggle against Japan to regroup, and let the Allies defeat Japan while he amassed resources and weaponry in the form of foreign aid to defeat the CCP in the coming civil war. By 1943, only the most obtuse observers of the China scene believed that Chiang wasn’t setting himself up to be as strong as possible in a civil conflict, and that he was content to let the U.S. defeat Japan for him. Lieutenant Colonel Morris DePass, who was OSS and had close ties to Dai Li, believed in late 1942 that “the Chinese [KMT] consider the war already won as far as they are concerned. They seem to feel that having held out against Japan for this long it is now our [the U.S.] turn.”<sup>52</sup> While the majority of the KMT

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<sup>50</sup> Service, *Lost Chance*, 137.

<sup>51</sup> Lynne Joiner, *Honorable Survivor: Mao’s China, McCarthy’s America, and the Persecution of John S. Service*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2009), 57.

<sup>52</sup> Morris DePass quoted in “Excerpts from Recent Communications Relating to China,” a report compiled by Lauchlin Currie on February 17, 1943, Box 3: Fol. “China Politics and Government,” Lauchlin Currie Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University. Henceforth Currie Papers.

armies were in poor shape, there were some divisions that were well-equipped and well trained, particularly in north China. According to Dave Barrett these troops were “capable of delivering effective blows against the enemy in their present condition, but unless there is a sudden change in Chinese policy these troops will be saved to guard the Northwest and watch the Communists in Shensi.”<sup>53</sup>

Chiang’s decades-long policy of placing primacy on the defeat of communism in China, while at one time not incompatible with a postwar China with him at the helm, had by 1944 dwindled to a near impossibility. Still, Chiang held steadfastly to the idea and refused to put his power behind a genuine united front against Japan. According to Service, he was playing into Japan’s hands perfectly, “China *is* dying a slow lingering death by slow strangulation. China *does not* now constitute any threat to Japan. And China *cannot*, if the present situation continues, successfully resist a determined Japanese drive to seize our offensive bases in East China.”<sup>54</sup> Service was of course correct, but Chiang was, like the Japanese, gambling on a payout for his own ineffectiveness as a political and military ruler. He had long used Japan in various guises as threats to push the U.S. to act in his interests. He now believed that the Allies were sure to defeat Japan, and was banking on a civil war in which he would finally eradicate the communists and set himself up as the ruler of China. His best short term position was to sit back and continue to let the chips fall as they were. American’s failed to see that Chiang’s *raison d’etre* was the annihilation of Chinese communism, and not the defeat of Japan. Contrary to the hagiographies bandied about in the Luce and Hearst press in the U.S., Chiang was

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<sup>53</sup> David Barrett quoted in “Excerpts from Recent Communications Relating to China,” a report compiled by Lauchlin Currie on February 17, 1943, Box 3: Fol. “China Politics and Government,” Currie Papers.

<sup>54</sup> Service, *Lost Chance*, 138. Italics in original.

not a particularly visionary leader. His political and military apparatus was one of the most corrupt in the entire world. According to Service, “the Kuomintang is a congeries of conservative political cliques interested primarily in the preservation of their own power against all other outsiders and in jockeying for position among themselves,” and was rapidly losing the reins of leadership because “it has lost touch with and is no longer representative of a nation which, through the practical experience of the war, is becoming both more politically conscious and more aware of the Party’s selfish shortcomings.”<sup>55</sup> While no visionary, Chiang was certainly an incredibly strategic thinker. He had long pressed shifting U.S. interests in China to his own ends. In 1942, during interviews conducted with Chiang on Currie’s second visit as Roosevelt’s personal representative, Chiang softly threatened the U.S. by confiding to Currie that “Japan has told us that if we are agreeable, she would come to an understanding with us, terminate the war and give us a fifty-fifty share in the direction of the new Asiatic Order. What kept us from accepting such an offer has been our disregard of material gain and our desire to uphold moral principles.”<sup>56</sup> Indeed. By the time those words spilled forth from the Generalissimo’s mouth, he was certain of U.S. defeat of Japan. Why ally himself with Japan, an empire in obvious decline? This would not have been an effective alliance if he wanted to continue as the sole Chinese autocrat in a postwar international system. Despite much lip service to democracy, Chiang was at best a misguided nationalist dictator, and at worst a plain fascist one, and one of the greatest tragedies of the twentieth century was the inability of the U.S. to see this clearly, and indeed in most instances the U.S. actively abetted the development of Chiang’s power. This failure during WWII of the U.S. to see that Chiang

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<sup>55</sup> Service, *Lost Chance*, 144.

<sup>56</sup> Digest of second Currie interview with Chiang Kai-shek, Box 4: Fol. “Second Trip to China Interview with Chiang Kai-shek,” 7, Currie Papers.

Kai-shek's anti-communism was an almost pathological motivator, played a significant role in the U.S.'s fateful irreversible turn against the CCP in the postwar period. There is ample evidence for the claim that Chiang was at heart a fascist.

In the early 1940s Chiang Kai-shek published a book called *China's Destiny* that articulated his vision of Chinese history, particularly its recent history at the hands of foreign imperialists, and charted a course for his vision of the nation's future.<sup>57</sup> It has often been referred to as 'a Chinese *Mein Kampf*.' In a report on the publication of the book, Currie, who was in China at the time, had less than flattering things to say about it. Despite no available translation ("the Chinese are seeing to that"), Currie was able to glean enough from the plan to suppress a translation to adequately illustrate some of the intricacies of Chiang's vision that might be at odds with what the U.S. stood for in the war years. According to Currie, "the Generalissimo's more Westernized advisers realized that complete translation abroad would be, to say the least, 'apt to create misunderstanding'."<sup>58</sup> In an effort to curb any kind of international scandal, Chiang's advisers, unbeknownst to him, reserved all foreign rights to the book and suppressed a complete translation. Chiang, on hearing "that his text had been monkeyed with hit the roof, stopping the whole business." After the lid had been placed on the project, foreign journalists were only allowed access to the KMT "Publicity Board summary gloss-over."

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<sup>57</sup> The first English edition of the book was released in 1947, with commentary and notes by Philip Jaffe, of later fame as one of the defendants in the infamous Amerasia Spy Case of which John S. Service was also a part. Service's report on the publication in China of *China's Destiny* can be found in "Report by Maj. V.F. Meisling on *China-Political*, enclosing a digest by John S. Service of Chiang Kai-shek's book 'China's Destiny,'" March 25, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, Vol. 1, 409-415. Service correctly assumed that the contents of the book would be embarrassing for the KMT were they to be known too far outside of China, "the authorities in charge of Chinese propaganda will continue to consider (rightly from their own standpoint) that the book is unsuitable for foreign consumption."

<sup>58</sup> Lauchlin Currie, "Comments on 'China's Destiny' by two American Observers in China," June 17, 1943, Box 3: Fol. "Chiang Kai-shek, Speeches and Writings," Currie Papers.

There appeared to be a considerable amount of effort placed on keeping a translation of the book from becoming public in the United States. One American OSS agent recalled that Chiang's book, "did not officially become available to Americans until after World War II because prudent Kuomintang chiefs feared it might be shocking to American sensibilities."<sup>59</sup> Evidently the publication of the book in China came as a shock to many Chinese as well, including many intellectuals "dashing whatever hopes they still had left that there might be a progress towards democracy" under Chiang. Ultimately, "the book, with its pre-occupation with the future military self-sufficiency of China, obscure doctrines of racism, and direct attacks on Communism and 'liberalism,' lets the cat right out of the bag."<sup>60</sup> Chiang's tract apparently reeked of some of the same racial supremacist discourse and revanchist rhetoric that was so popular among other fascist dictators. Among Chiang's ideas that were taught at the KMT Political Training Institute were: "The Chinese are the only racially pure people in the world, a chosen people who, in recent years, through no fault of their own, have fallen on evil times,"; "Western Civilization is fundamentally inferior to that of China because the Chinese possess superior spiritual values unknown in the materialistic West,"; "All barriers [to Chinese unity] must be destroyed,"; and "When the Chinese nation is once again strong, she will eliminate Western influences, and will demand the return of her ancient territories."<sup>61</sup> This was indeed a volatile bag of ideological puffery that Americans who were committed to securing a significant stake in a postwar China free from communism and amenable to U.S. interests might want to remain closed. Joseph Stilwell, commander of

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<sup>59</sup> Oliver J. Caldwell, *A Secret War: Americans in China, 1944-1945*. (Carbondale: University of Southern Illinois Press, 1972), 34.

<sup>60</sup> Lauchlin Currie, "Comments on 'China's Destiny' by two American Observers in China," June 17, 1943, Box 3: Fol. "Chiang Kai-shek, Speeches and Writings," Currie Papers.

<sup>61</sup> Caldwell, *Secret War*, 35.

the CBI Theater, also saw contradictory parallels between the KMT and the U.S.’ supposed fascist enemies. He wrote in his diary that the U.S. had been “forced into partnership with a gang of fascists under a one-party government similar in many respects to our German enemy.” He noted further that within the KMT there was “sympathy for the Nazis. Same type of government, same outlook, same gangsterism” and that Chiang was “not taking a single step forward or doing anything concrete to improve the position of China.”<sup>62</sup> On this last point, perhaps Chiang was even worse than the ‘real’ fascists.

In his digest for Wallace, Service underscored the fact that Chiang’s goals for China were not actually in the long term interests of the United States. In fact, Service argued, if Chiang was allowed to lead China on its current course, which U.S. actions seemed to indicate was its *de facto* policy, then the economic and political collapse of China was imminent, and would “have consequences disastrous both to our immediate military plans and our long-term interests in the Far East.”<sup>63</sup> To frustrated China experts on the ground, like Service and Davies, it was painfully clear that the U.S. was sowing the seeds for a harvest that was antithetical to the county’s professed interests in the region—at its most generous and in the broadest possible conception this might be loosely understood as military and political stability in the region. To Service’s mind, American policy in China—backing Chiang unconditionally—was only going to guarantee a bloody civil war, if not in the midst of the current Pacific War, then certainly in its immediate aftermath. The U.S. was plainly committing itself to the support of an

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<sup>62</sup> Barbara Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-1945*. (New York: MacMillan, 1970), 320.

<sup>63</sup> Service, *Lost Chance*, 145.

anti-democratic leader whose very idea of governance was perhaps closer in line to the fascism that the war to end all wars was putatively about, than it was to any grandiose conceptions of the Four Freedoms in which the U.S.' ideological stake in the war was so firmly entrenched. The further the U.S. fell into line in support of Chiang, the further it moved outside the proscribed boundaries of a liberal internationalist position. It was an alliance that did not square with the internationalism of the war's supposed aims. It is hard to wrap one's mind around the intransigence of American policy with respect to Chiang Kai-shek. The power of public opinion on the domestic scene, as articulated in and shaped by the Luce and Hearst publication's adoration of the Chiang's as China's Christian first family, no doubt kept Roosevelt at least partially mired in the morass of KMT support.<sup>64</sup> The structure of feeling within almost every branch of the U.S. apparatus in China was unanimous in its belief that Chiang was the leader of an ossified and corrupt political machine. Even before Pearl Harbor, in a report of a meeting between Currie and Zhou Enlai, Currie recognized that Chiang's position was not as strong as it had once been (it only continued to fall), and that his "strength is in surviving as a symbol of nationalism" and his "weakness lies in failure to resolve [a] number of contradictory policies."<sup>65</sup> More than three years later even the committed liberal cosmopolitan Currie was still towing the same line, that Chiang was an autocrat shot through with contradictions and heading a corrupt regime, but that with firm U.S. support there was yet hope to steer the KMT in a liberal democratic direction. How then did the U.S., by the war's end, find itself unalterably committed to the maintenance of the KMT regime? One

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<sup>64</sup> For more on the influence of the Luce press, and the press magnate's views on China, see Alan Brinkley, *The Publisher: Henry Luce and his American Century*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), esp. 313-351.

<sup>65</sup> Lauchlin Currie, "Notes on Conference with Chou Enlai at British Ambassador's Home," February 14, 1941, Box 3: Fol. "China Communists," Currie Papers.

can find in this story a critical hinge for understanding much of the postwar Cold War order. Indeed, the collapse of liberal internationalism in the U.S.-China relationship not only had immediate effects in the region in terms of a revolutionary civil war, but the outcome of that war—the CCP victory in 1949—would seal so much of the fate of U.S. history in the era after WWII, from the stalemate in Korea in 1954, to the defeat of U.S. forces by the insurgent Vietnamese communists two decades later. It was a trans-Pacific script that traversed so many of the most critical historical formations that directed U.S. foreign and domestic policy in the postwar period: anti-communism, civil rights, race, and the massive expansion of American empire and military power into the reaches of the Pacific. It is a clear genealogy of what Bruce Cumings argues has been a “Pacificist” (as opposed to an Atlanticist) framework and orientation that has marked American power ever since the great midwestern metropolises like Chicago demarcated the nation’s western limits.<sup>66</sup>

The depth of the U.S. commitment to Chiang ran so deep, indeed had immovable roots in the long history of the missionary ethos of projects like the Student Volunteer Movement, that even imagining alternatives to what was so apparently a bad political calculus on the part of the U.S. proved impossible. In order to understand how this policy became ingrained in the political unconscious of the nation, and numerous successive administrations well into the Cold War, it is necessary to place it into the larger historical trajectory of the rise and fall of liberal internationalism. During World War II, the United States’ policy in China was often a disordered and chaotic mess. Because of this, the various strands of a liberal internationalist position did not always follow a distinct

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<sup>66</sup> Bruce Cumings, *Dominion from Sea to Sea: Pacific Ascendancy and American Power*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).



pattern. Both the zenith and nadir of U.S. liberal internationalism occurred during the later years of the war, and can be clearly limned through a careful analysis of the competing and contradictory impulses embodied in two American wartime intelligence projects: the Dixie Mission, and SACO. In many ways, charting these arcs maps the very course of the rise of the Cold War in Asia itself.

### **Arrival in Dixie**

On July 22, 1944 a U.S. Air Force C-47 cargo plane approached the loess hills of Yen-an, in Shensi Province, China. On board was the first contingent of the U.S. Army Observer Group<sup>67</sup> which included several OSS agents who were there to set up weather stations to aid in U.S. aerial assaults on Japanese troops in northern China,<sup>68</sup> as well as Barrett and Service, and several others. The pilot, Captain Robert Champion, sighted a pagoda sitting astride a small peak, it was his guiding landmark, and began to bring the plane in for a landing. This was the first U.S. military plane to have ever flown to Yen-an, but Champion located his quarry with little problem. Yen-an had no signal tower to guide planes to safe landings, for planes were a rare occurrence, but several people lined up along the makeshift landing strip and gestured at Champion in an effort to steer him in for a trouble-free landing. After a smooth touchdown, the plane suddenly lurched and the front left end seemed to sink into the earth. Next, “there came a terrific blow... as if someone had struck [the plane] with a sledgehammer.”<sup>69</sup> Evidently, the landing strip at Yen-an had been built over some old graves, and the front left wheel of the plane had

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<sup>67</sup> The distinction of it being merely an ‘observer’ group as opposed to a ‘mission’ was one that Chiang pushed Wallace on.

<sup>68</sup> The OSS agents among the first contingent were Captain John Colling, Captain Charles Stelle, and Staff Sergeant Anton Remeneh. Colling, *Spirit of Yanan*, xxx.

<sup>69</sup> Barret, *Dixie Mission*, 14.

crashed into the resting place of some now disturbed corpse. The crashing sound on the plane's fuselage was the propeller, which having hit the ground when the plane sunk to the left had come off, and like a loose fan blade, spun itself in a counterclockwise semicircle and sliced into the plane on the pilot's side. To his great astonishment, luck, and relief, Champion had been leaning forward turning off some of the plane's controls when the propeller cut through the body of the craft, otherwise he would have been killed. Instead, he sustained but a minor scratch on his hand.<sup>70</sup>

Expectedly, the landing snafu caused some "considerable confusion" on the ground, but Zhou Enlai soon emerged out of the crowds to greet the startled passengers. Zhou proceeded to introduce the members of Dixie to the communist officials who had come out to greet them, and they were soon herded onto a truck "which I believe was all they had at the time in the way of motor transport" and headed off towards CCP headquarters.<sup>71</sup> Yenan was famed for the rustic cave dwellings of the communist leaders. Caves were dug into the loess hills, and in the inhospitable climate of northern China, the caves remained cool in the summer, and warm in the winter. The caves were "about 15 feet in length, cut into the steep hillside and lined with beautifully fitted blocks of hewn stone," and at its opening each cave had a door and windows set into wooden frames. The windows were covered in white paper which allowed some light to get through, but kept out the sand and dust that often swirled about. The floors were paved with grey bricks, held in place by sand instead of mortar.<sup>72</sup> It was in this idyllic setting that a critical

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 29.

chapter in the collapse of the liberal internationalist worldview and the origins of the Cold War unfolded.

### **Dixie at Work**

In mid-1944 Stilwell and the top echelon of the Army still believed that a U.S.-Chinese land force could be critical in the victory over Japan. Air Force General Claire Chennault, of Flying Tigers fame, believed, contrary to Stilwell, that the Japanese could be defeated with Allied air power.<sup>73</sup> It wasn't the best idea, but it continued to have traction because Chennault was Chiang's favorite, and he worked hard to secure as many supplies for the KMT as he could. Northern China would be the strategic terrain from which to launch this attack into Manchuria, a critical Japanese stronghold. Since the Nationalist Army was clearly not pulling its weight, it was in the U.S.' interest at the time to have as large and as strong a Chinese military force as possible for Stilwell's campaign into northern China. This was why Roosevelt and others in the military command thought it a good idea to liaise with the CCP to get a sense of their morale, efficiency, and potential for participating in an offensive on the Japanese in Manchuria if equipped with U.S. arms.

American willingness to engage seriously with communists in the fight against Japan is in hindsight both rather remarkable and yet quite logical. It was logical because

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<sup>73</sup> Chennault had fought in WWI, but had retired from the military due to deafness, but was recommissioned for service as the head of the Fourteenth Air Force, which included the famous Flying Tigers, or 1<sup>st</sup> American Volunteer Group (AVG). AVG was an ad hoc group of American volunteer pilots who rode into U.S. history in their now iconic planes with shark's teeth nose art. It was essentially a mercenary force of privately contracted pilots who were often paid large salaries for their work, and whose kill numbers were likely inflated. They received great acclaim and publicity in the U.S., especially in the early days of the war because they were ostensibly chalking up newsworthy victories in the sky, which counterbalanced the more grim picture of U.S. ground defeats in engagements with the Japanese.

the communists were U.S. allies in the war. The Soviet Union was an Allied Power, and Stalin was hardly being demonized in the U.S. press as a tyrannical despot. Quite the opposite, in fact. Images of ‘Uncle Joe’ were commonplace in the American wartime imaginary. While the Nationalists were the recognized government of the Chinese, and the Chiang’s were certainly the face of China to the American public, there was no reason that the U.S. could not also work with the CCP. They were putatively in a united front with the KMT, even if Chiang and his top-ranking KMT personnel worked hard at keeping the CCP from having any power within the central state apparatus or from receiving any U.S. aid in either monies, medical supplies, or military weaponry. There was no reason for any sort of a clandestine relationship with the CCP, any moves to forestall a liaison with Yanan was because of a long policy of trying to appease Chiang, and because of domestic pressures to recognize Chiang as the sole legitimate face of China. Indeed, Roosevelt no doubt felt the pressures of the domestic pro-Chiang lobby, but he also was very realistic about his primary aim of defeating Japan, and knew that in mid-1944 an alliance with the CCP who actually fought the Japanese rather than hoarded U.S. military supplies in preparation for a coming civil war would be to the benefit of a quicker peace in the Pacific. Roosevelt even told Edgar Snow as much in an interview. When Snow spoke with the President in early 1945 he asked the ailing Roosevelt whether or not it was possible to support two governments in China, the KMT and the CCP, to which Roosevelt replied, “well, I’ve been working with two governments there, and I intend to go on doing so until we get them together.”<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Colling, *Spirit of Yanan*, 145.

When the Dixie Mission began, General Joseph Stilwell was still in command of the CBI Theater and was operating as Chiang's Chief of Staff—it would have been a loss of face for the Generalissimo if a U.S. General had total control over his military forces. By all accounts Stilwell was a seasoned veteran of real combat situations, a soldier's soldier, and was singularly committed to his overarching task of defeating the Japanese and securing an Allied victory in the Pacific. He had little patience for people who got in the way of his primary goal, and because of this he did not get along with Chiang Kai-shek. In 1942, soon after Stilwell arrived in Burma, the Allied defense of that country collapsed, and Stilwell led a retreat with his staff out of Burma into Assam, India on foot.<sup>75</sup> The fall of Burma blocked off the only relatively easy supply route into China, and left the only remaining supply channel the treacherous air-route through the Himalayas known as 'the Hump.' The difficulty of transporting Lend-Lease materiel to China was now made even worse. The Burma Road was certainly easier, but its loss, combined with the U.S.' Europe-first strategy for fighting the war, did not make arming the Chinese any easier for the U.S. Arming the KMT had yet to prove itself a worthy undertaking in terms of net results, but it was nevertheless a necessity insofar as the Allied war effort was concerned. While the U.S. may have been following a general Europe-first strategy with respect to the overall war, the War Department and president were committed to a plan titled "Keeping China in the War" that depended on placating Chiang with as much Lend-Lease as possible to keep him from making good on his consistent threats to secure a separate peace with the Japanese.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> For more on the famed 'walkout' see Brigadier General Frank Dorn's first person account, *Walkout with Stilwell in Burma*, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1971), as well as Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 256-300.

<sup>76</sup> According to one OSS officer who had interviewed Zhou Enlai, Chiang's threats of a separate peace

To his dismay, Stilwell was burdened with the onerous task of having to orchestrate this delicate dance with the Generalissimo, as he was CBI commander and thus in charge of Lend-Lease, and it did not square with his no-nonsense attitude towards objectives and goals. Stilwell's position was that the Chinese, with adequate supply and training, could be as effective a fighting force as any, and that the main obstacle to creating a seasoned fighting Chinese force was the endemic corruption within the KMT military. According to Barbara Tuchman, Stilwell was "the opposite of a cynic—a believer and a doer."<sup>77</sup> He believed that "for China's sake, the war's sake, and his own [sake]...reform of the army" was the only possible solution for the Allied impasse in the CBI Theater. Stilwell was faced with an incredible barrier in reaching these goals, however: to wit, Chiang Kai-shek's insistence on maintaining the status quo, a status quo which was inimical to the prospect of developing a stable democracy in China. According to Service,

The growth of democracy, though basic to China's continuing war effort, would, to the mind of the Kuomintang's present leaders, imperil the foundations of the party's power because it would mean that the conservative cliques would have to give up their closely guarded monopoly. Rather than do this, they prefer to see the war remain in its present state of passive inertia. They are thus sacrificing China's national interests to their own selfish ends.<sup>78</sup>

This enervation in Chiang's government was carefully cultivated in the interests of maintaining a delicate balance of power. He surrounded himself with sycophantic yes men culled mostly from Whampoa cadets from the first three graduating classes. Chiang "made loyalty rather than ability the criterion of service" and was therefore "surrounded

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were just that, empty threats. The KMT maintained communications with the Japanese for no other reason than to "excite fears in Washington." Zhou quoted in Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 313.

<sup>77</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 304.

<sup>78</sup> Service, *Lost Chance*, 145.

by mediocrities.”<sup>79</sup> The less real effort he could ensure that his party need put into the war effort, the more stable his power base. Any change could upset the rickety architecture of power he had built up. It was for this reason that Chiang was such a supporter of General Chennault’s belief that Japan could be defeated through aerial assault alone. Chennault believed that with adequate supply of planes and weapons his air force could choke of Japan’s supply lines by bombing ships in the South China Sea, inevitably bringing the Japanese to their knees and thus the negotiating table. Chennault thought that with “500 combat planes and 100 transports” and “complete authority in this [CBI] theater” he could bring the war in the Pacific to a swift and decisive conclusion. This was a clearly appealing model for the Chiang *modus operandi* because it not only involved little to no effort on the part of Chinese Nationalist troops, but it would result in a massive influx of U.S. planes and materiel that would likely remain in Chiang’s hands once the Japanese had been defeated, and which he could turn around and use against the communists.

The Chennault plan was even more appealing to the Generalissimo given the massive reforms Stilwell had in mind for the Nationalist Army which would almost certainly result in a loss of power for Chiang. If Chennault was correct, then there would be “no need to reform the army and disturb the dangerously delicate balance of cliques and persons and war zone commanders which constituted Chiang’s teetering seat of power.”<sup>80</sup> Unfortunately for Chiang, Stilwell was not a person who gave up easily when he had set his mind to something. Stilwell’s perspicacity and tenacity would be tested severely over the course of the next year and a half, as his desire to reform the Nationalist

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<sup>79</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 321.

<sup>80</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 310.

Army pushed against Chiang's shrewd playing of the sentiment of American public opinion and Roosevelt's almost pathological need to placate Chiang's ever increasing demands for U.S. Lend-Lease.

Chiang, when pressed, could be a shrewd and calculating politician. And Stilwell pressed him hard. Because Stilwell was ostensibly in control of Lend-Lease aid to China, the most crucial channel of supply for Chiang's build-up for the impending civil war against the communists, he knew he could not be too recalcitrant with Stilwell. Likewise, Stilwell knew that he had an ace up his sleeve with regard to his plan for a large scale reform of the Nationalist Army in lend-lease. In order to keep what lend-lease that could make it as part of the limited monthly Hump tonnage flowing, Chiang had to at least put forth the image that he was open to reform of his fighting forces and a in favor of a revivification of the KMT offensive against the Japanese. There were limits though, he would "fight only in so far as failure to do so might cut off the flow of [Lend-Lease] supplies."<sup>81</sup> An underwhelming sense of the situation in Burma with regard to Chinese forces plagued Chiang. Despite sending orders to his armies in Burma on a daily basis, Chiang had little sense of the kind of trouble they were in. This stemmed in part from his failure to visit his troops, as most commanding generals did as a matter of course, but also from the culture of silence among his highest generals when it came to breaking bad news to the Generalissimo. His volatile temperament contributed greatly to the "Byzantine atmosphere" of the upper echelons of the KMT, and cultivated reluctance on the part of his subordinates to alert him to the crisis in Burma. This was all a part of the delicate balancing act that was the political catastrophe of wartime China. In a meeting

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<sup>81</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 304.



with the Generalissimo that took place not long after the walkout from Burma, Stilwell held nothing back as he told the Chiangs the “whole truth” of the desperate need for reform among his wretched army. According to Stilwell, it was a wholly unpleasant experience, “like kicking an old lady in the stomach.”<sup>82</sup> Stilwell proceeded to lay out for the Chiangs his plans for a massive reorganization of the Nationalist Army, the most important aspect of which was also the most distasteful to the Generalissimo and his wife. Stilwell wanted to reduce the total number of divisions in the Nationalist Army, and to concentrate available arms and other supplies into a more streamlined and less overburdened military. There were over 300 divisions, which were on average only operating at about 40 percent of their total strength because corrupt officers funneled monies meant to supply their troops for their own personal enrichment.<sup>83</sup> Officers became rich as troops under their command died of malnutrition and curable diseases. For many men in China there was no fate worse than conscription into the KMT army, it was the “equivalent to being sold into prostitution for a woman.”<sup>84</sup> Stilwell’s plan was to take thirty divisions, adequately train them, properly nourish them, and fully equip them for an assault on the Japanese that would reopen the Burma supply road. These thirty divisions would form the core of a 100 division army that would execute Stilwell’s strategic plan for taking back Burma, a three pronged offensive by the newly formed X-Y-Z divisions (X would be the core thirty divisions), which would open up land supply routes that could then be utilized to equip Chinese and U.S. troops in China with tanks and other supplies which could not be transported over the Hump. Once this rearming of the by then well-trained Chinese army were to take place, the time would be ripe for an Allied land

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<sup>82</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 305.

<sup>83</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 304-5.

<sup>84</sup> Caldwell, *Secret War*, 112.

advance into Japanese held territories that would result in the defeat of Japan. Chiang was less than thrilled by Stilwell's plan.

It took awhile to sink in, but eventually Stilwell came to the realization that Chiang was in fact invested in the failure of his armies in the fight against Japan. Failing was what he was doing, and this failure was generating a steady flow of money and material into the coffers of the KMT which would later be used against the communists, which was Chiang's major concern. He knew the Japanese would ultimately be defeated by the Allies, and the longer he could hold out and maintain the status quo, the better his chances were of retaining his tenuous grip on the power apparatus of China. Chiang believed that Stilwell's X-Y-Z forces "represented less a boon than a threat" and "he feared that an effective 30 divisions might come under a new leader or group, undermining or challenging his own control, and that Stilwell's plan to remove incompetent commanders would remove those loyal and beholden to him."<sup>85</sup> On this point Stilwell had to be careful when dangling the carrot of Lend-Lease in front of Chiang. Colonel Frank Dorn, who had walked out of Burma with Stilwell, warned the War Department that until the Allies regained control of Burma, all aid to China had to be given conditionally, under the strict understanding that it be used in ways that actually aided the U.S. war effort. If the U.S. did not follow such a policy, "the present regime will do nothing but hoard the material in order to perpetuate itself after the war."<sup>86</sup>

Making the task of reorganization of the Nationalist Army even more difficult for Stilwell was his awkward dual position as Chiang's Chief of Staff and his role as the

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<sup>85</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 317.

<sup>86</sup> Dorn quoted in Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 319.

commanding general of the CBI Theater, which was a command theoretically on par with Eisenhower's European Theater and MacArthur's Pacific one. Despite Stilwell's high rank with regard to the U.S. military command structure, in China he was technically Chiang's subordinate, and Chiang expected him to behave as such. When Chiang made requests for Lend-Lease, and they did not arrive in the quantity or with the speed with which he wanted, he blamed Stilwell for lack of trying, rather than take into account the reality of the situation which was that getting Lend-Lease via the Hump in a theater that was not a U.S. war prerogative was a difficult task. Instead, Chiang read the lack of Lend-Lease as bespeaking either a lack of influence on the part of his assigned Chief of Staff, or a lack of trying to act genuinely on the behalf of his superior. Madame Chiang once even attempted to bribe Stilwell by promising him a promotion to the rank of full general if he could get more Lend-Lease. Stilwell noted his outrage at what was outright graft in his diary.<sup>87</sup> The crisis in supply of Chiang's KMT came to a head in June of 1942. The Germans had pushed the Allies out of Tobruk back into Egypt, increasing the chances of a German advance into the strategically important Middle East. A cargo of B-24 bombers on their way to China were diverted and sent to Egypt instead. Outraged at what he read (correctly) as a lack of commitment to the Chinese resistance on the part of the U.S., Chiang countered with a threatening list of demands. Madame Chiang fumed that each time the British suffered a defeat, supplies bound for China were taken away, and as such, "there is no need for China to continue in the war."<sup>88</sup> Similarly incensed, Chiang himself demanded an answer from the U.S. and Britain as to whether the "China

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<sup>87</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 311.

<sup>88</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 312.

Theater is still regarded as meriting aid so that he may plan for [the] future.”<sup>89</sup> In what must have been a cleverly orchestrated verbal ballet, Madame Chiang then muttered in English that if China was not a priority, a separate peace with the Japanese might be in order.<sup>90</sup> Chiang came quickly to what was to him the heart of the matter, chastising Stilwell about the lackluster supply to China of the U.S.’ promised Lend-Lease. Only 10 percent of what Roosevelt had pledged for China had arrived, and the Generalissimo blamed Stilwell for this lack, calling him “disobedient,” and clarifying his belief that “as Chief of Staff to me, you are responsible for seeing to it that the promised material is forthcoming.”<sup>91</sup> Clearly, this would have rubbed Stilwell the wrong way. This isn’t to say that Stilwell didn’t have some sympathy for the Lend-Lease fiasco. Stilwell’s primary concern was defeating the Japanese, and the Chinese were going to need Lend-Lease to do it, but it was going to have to be distributed in conjunction with a reformation of the Chinese armed forces. Chiang, on the other hand, resented deeply the fact that he was not in control of Lend-Lease in his own country, especially since the British were. It smacked of an imperialist worldview to him, and he was no doubt partially correct in thinking so, but he failed to calculate the other aspect of Stilwell’s control of Lend-Lease, which was that unless it were closely monitored by the U.S., it would never see the light of day until the showdown with the Chinese Communists. Regardless, Chiang saw Stilwell as the face of his disgrace, and hated him for it. Chiang fired off a terse telegram to Roosevelt articulating his feelings that China was being neglected in the war, and on July 4, Roosevelt responded with an admonitory rejoinder, “the simple truth of the matter is that we are doing absolutely all in our power to help China win this war...[f]or you to

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<sup>89</sup> Ambassador Gauss to Secretary of State Hull, July 2, 1942. *FRUS, 1942, China*, 92.

<sup>90</sup> Ambassador Gauss to Secretary of State Hull, July 2, 1942. *FRUS, 1942, China*, 92.

<sup>91</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 312.

entertain any thoughts to the contrary leads me to feel that you may not appreciate the strategic picture as it appears to me.”<sup>92</sup>

Chastised, but not chastened, Chiang continued to push for more Lend-Lease than was possible as a *quid pro quo* for Stilwell’s X-Y-Z plan. He made a three-pronged demand to Stilwell, which included “(1) three American divisions in India, with the necessary auxiliary troops, (2) 500 combat airplanes, which meant 1000 since there must be about the same number in reserve, and (3) 5000 tons of supply by air monthly.”<sup>93</sup>

Chiang cavalierly waved aside Stilwell’s attempts to persuade him that his demands were not only inflated, but well nigh impossible. Stilwell told Ambassador Gauss that

the Generalissimo is sticking to these demands; he will not listen to reason; he will not accept figures showing that, for example, it is not possible to supply and service 500 combat planes in China (Stilwell mentioned that the supply of gas and bombs in the country would only service the present small air force we have sent in for six months in carrying out the limited missions assigned to them); he will wave aside information showing that it will be necessary to build five new air fields near Kunming to service the transport planes necessary to bring in 5000 tons a month—and 5000 tons a month represented about what it would take to service 500 combat planes.<sup>94</sup>

Chiang threatened that if his demands were not met, he would be forced to “make other arrangements,” the implication again being the threat of a separate peace with Japan.<sup>95</sup>

Though generally uneducated, and prone to bouts of irrationality, Chiang must surely have known to some extent that the impossibility of filling his tall order would result in a diminished compromise that might ultimately net him “the rich plum of half a billion

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<sup>92</sup> Roosevelt to Chiang Kai-shek, July 4, 1942. *FRUS, 1942, China*, 96.

<sup>93</sup> Ambassador Gauss, Memorandum of Conversation with Stilwell, July 11, 1942. *FRUS, 1942, China*, 110.

<sup>94</sup> Ambassador Gauss, Memorandum of Conversation with Stilwell, July 11, 1942. *FRUS, 1942, China*, 111.

<sup>95</sup> Ambassador Gauss, Memorandum of Conversation with Stilwell, July 11, 1942. *FRUS, 1942, China*, 111.

dollars U.S. currency” which would surely come in handy in a civil war.<sup>96</sup> Neither Gauss nor Stilwell took Chiang’s threats of a separate peace too seriously, but there appears to have been some concern over the unrealistic portrait of the Chiangs being bandied about in the popular press in the U.S.

Stilwell believed that domestic propaganda upholding the Chinese first family had gotten so out of hand in the U.S. that popular sentiment would have understood a Chinese temporary peace with Japan. Stilwell was chagrined at

the manner in which the Generalissimo and China have been built up by propaganda in the United States to a point where it might be possible for the Generalissimo to make a peace with Japan and yet get by with the people of the United States by saying that China has been isolated [by the closing of the Burma Road], can no longer receive outside aid, and perforce has had temporarily to make a peace with Japan, a peace which will be set aside as soon as China can regather strength.<sup>97</sup>

Gauss felt similarly. He lamented the fact that China had been put up on a pedestal in the U.S., and that Americans had been duped by the “rot” that “the Generalissimo, a great leader, has been directing the energetic resistance of China to Japan and is a world hero,” and further bemoaned the fact that China’s “‘prowess’ has been overplayed.”<sup>98</sup> Chiang’s threats to forge a peace with Japan were little more than a bluff that Gauss believed the U.S. should call. He felt that a modest amount of Lend-Lease should be sent to China for the successful prosecution of the war against Japan, regardless of the demands of other theaters, but nothing on the grand scale that Chiang was demanding. Ultimately, the position that Gauss took with regard to China was that it was “only a minor asset” that

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<sup>96</sup> Ambassador Gauss, Memorandum of Conversation with Stilwell, July 11, 1942. *FRUS, 1942, China*, 110.

<sup>97</sup> Ambassador Gauss, Memorandum of Conversation with Stilwell, July 11, 1942. *FRUS, 1942, China*, 110.

<sup>98</sup> Ambassador Gauss, Memorandum of Conversation with Stilwell, July 11, 1942. *FRUS, 1942, China*, 112.

had the potential to “become a major liability.”<sup>99</sup> China’s strategic asset lay in the fact that it was containing Japanese forces that might otherwise be used in other theaters, but this was not enough of an incentive for the U.S. to promote it to a higher priority.

The United States found itself in a terminally difficult position with regard to China. Roosevelt’s Europe-first strategy necessarily limited the amount of time, aid, and effort that could be put into the Chinese war project, and yet sentimental U.S. attachments to China as a historic site of friendship, and as a repository for America’s missionary impulse, however broadly that might be construed, were so deep as to be nearly unplumbable. This tension produced a kind of schizophrenic response on the part of the U.S. to China. On the one hand, historic commitments to uphold China’s territorial integrity and national sovereignty as articulated in the Open Door Notes animated liberals and conservatives alike in their desire to keep China from falling into the hands of the Japanese. On the other hand, a desire to win the war in the Pacific at all costs kept the U.S. involved in a number of overlapping and contradictory projects on the Chinese mainland, including, but not limited to: pretensions towards coalition with the CCP; bankrolling of a proto-fascist secret police, SACO, under the direction of Chiang’s aide de camp Dai Li and U.S. Naval Intelligence, thoroughly committed not only to crushing communism, but to suppressing any resistance to the KMT; OSS intelligence operations that often-times competed with SACO in its aims and were thus thwarted by Dai Li’s gendarmerie; and special emissaries whose single minded devotion to their directives could not be squared with conflicting information from the Foreign Service. This is only a partial list of the criss-crossing trajectories of the U.S. project in China during WWII,

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<sup>99</sup> Ambassador Gauss, Memorandum of Conversation with Stilwell, July 11, 1942. *FRUS, 1942, China*, 113.

but it serves well to highlight how an implosion was nearly inevitable. I have illustrated clearly the perils of an unalterable commitment to a leader as unstable as Chiang Kai-shek, but the alternatives pursued by the U.S. took the country further down a one way street that was inevitably going to dead end in a conflagration of epic proportions. The U.S.' inability to reconcile competing objectives with respect to wartime China, clouded as they were by multiple layers of domestic sentimentality and liberal internationalist realism, set the stage for the Cold War in Asia. The twilight of U.S. liberal internationalism arose not so much as a retreat from the values that the U.S. had historically held close to its heart and used to direct its international mission, but because of a logistical nightmare bred by irreconcilable positions taken with regard to a revolutionary situation whose roots sunk deep into the decade of the 1920s, when Chiang launched his bloody campaign to annihilate communism from within China. A failure on the part of the U.S. to mitigate the civil strife in China that they had witnessed from the fortified zones of the treaty ports, while continuously and conspicuously maintaining a foreign presence in an attempt to prolong 'business as usual,' stoked resentments that boiled just beneath the surface throughout and after the war. A failure to react swiftly to Japanese encroachments that would inevitably imperil U.S. interests in China, and the continuation of trade with Japan in war materials like scrap metal throughout the 1930s, ultimately forced the U.S. into the war officially backing Chiang as the leader of a putatively united China. Selfish national interests made it impossible for the U.S. to not pursue other options, like the communists, a coalition government, or a moderate third party, and this ultimately forced the U.S. into conflicting backchannel dealings that made their approach to China look haphazard and misdirected, and the consequences for this



were disastrous. The collapse of the U.S. liberal internationalist worldview are clearly illustrated in its relationship with the anti-democratic Chiang, and the collapse of that framework both signaled a shift and called into question U.S. commitments to democracy in a postwar international system. For this reason, the fall of liberal internationalism, and its termination in China especially, highlight the origins of U.S. unilateralism and superpower expansion during the Cold War. The global Cold War dynamic had clear antecedents in the U.S.' unclear mission in China both prior to and during WWII. Domestic pressures to keep Chiang propped up only deepened the U.S. role in an inevitable civil war that they piously believed was not their business to intervene in. However, the long and checkered history of intervention and non-interference only left both dominant parties in China unsure of where they stood with relation to the U.S. For the communists, wartime overtures towards coalition turned into bitter enmity after the U.S. intervened in the civil war on the side of the KMT. For the KMT, a reliance on the support of the U.S., while offering little to nothing in return merely deepened after WWII and drew the U.S. into a deep web of commitments that paved the way for wars in Korea and Vietnam. The U.S. had clearly kept too many cards in play in the China game, and the party the U.S. chose to back ultimately collapsed like a weak house of cards, in a manner that many had predicted and repeatedly warned Washington about.

### **SACO and the Architecture of the Cold War**

Just over three months after the first contingent of the Dixie Mission arrived in Yen-an, Oliver Caldwell, the son of missionaries, who had been born and raised in China, sent a report to his boss, Colonel John Coughlin, who was head of OSS in China at the

time. Caldwell was an OSS agent charged with gathering intelligence on another U.S. sponsored intelligence agency, the Sino-American Cooperative Organization (SACO) headed by Dai Li on the Chinese side, and aided and abetted by Milton “Mary” Miles, a U.S. Navy Commodore, who headed the U.S. side of the operation. At the time, OSS, unlike SACO, which was fanatically anti-communist by dint of its close association with Chiang, was attempting to liaise with the CCP in an effort to forge strategic partnerships in fighting the Japanese. The OSS attachment to Dixie was mainly tasked with creating a weather station to monitor atmospheric conditions to aid in planned aerial assaults on Japanese bases in northern China. Caldwell’s report, on the subject of the “Possibility of Revolt in China,” yielded some interesting information about the state of SACO and of the KMT in general. Caldwell believed that “the Chinese people were formerly united in loyalty to Chiang Kai-shek, and in their determination to fight Japan” but that by 1944 “this sense of unity and patriotism has undergone a marked change.”<sup>100</sup> Caldwell continued, “now one finds, in important sections of Chinese society, suspicion and distrust and shame directed at the National Government.”<sup>101</sup> He was “convinced that there has been since the first year of the war a revulsion of feeling towards Chiang, together with a great war weariness which has been induced at least in part by Chiang’s refusal to permit real popular participation in the war.”<sup>102</sup> This unrest and disquietude was, to Caldwell’s eye, likely to precipitate a revolt against Chiang’s government.

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<sup>100</sup> Oliver J. Caldwell, “Possibility of Revolt in China,” October 3, 1944, Box. 1: Fol. “OSS, 1944-1945,” Oliver J. Caldwell Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University. Henceforth Caldwell Papers.

<sup>101</sup> Oliver J. Caldwell, “Possibility of Revolt in China,” October 3, 1944, Box. 1: Fol. “OSS, 1944-1945,” Caldwell Papers.

<sup>102</sup> Oliver J. Caldwell, “Possibility of Revolt in China,” October 3, 1944, Box. 1: Fol. “OSS, 1944-1945,” Caldwell Papers.

Because he spoke Chinese fluently, Caldwell was attached to the KMT Political Training Institute Interpreter's School, and he was shocked by what he saw. Despite having taught at Chinese universities in the past, and having had many excellent students proficient in the English language, he was appalled by the ways in which the KMT seemed to send recruits to interpreter training with an almost congenital inability to learn the language. When he asked why, when he knew there were thousands of capable Chinese university students who would welcome the opportunity to serve as interpreters in the war effort, he was sent students of such low caliber, he was told that the students from the Western-style universities "were not taken because they had imbibed too many American ideas about democracy."<sup>103</sup> Presumably proficiency in the ideals of democracy was not something the KMT wanted in its Political Training Institute. Despite what appeared to be some sort of vetting of the students at the school, Caldwell observed that there was hardly unanimous support for the Generalissimo, he saw "open ridicule for Chiang and his government," and his students frequently laughed at any mention of "our great leader."<sup>104</sup> The English of some of the graduates of the interpreters school was so bad that they were even refused transport on an Air Transport Command (ATC) plane to Happy Valley, the headquarters of SACO. At Happy Valley, contrary to its name, some of these interpreters were treated horrendously. Caldwell recalled an instance where about a dozen or so new interpreters managed to escape from Happy Valley one week or so after arriving, and camped on the front steps of the home of the Minister of Education, begging him for protection from Dai Li. The minister sent the students back from whence

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<sup>103</sup> Oliver J. Caldwell, "Possibility of Revolt in China," October 3, 1944, Box. 1: Fol. "OSS, 1944-1945," Caldwell Papers.

<sup>104</sup> Oliver J. Caldwell, "Possibility of Revolt in China," October 3, 1944, Box. 1: Fol. "OSS, 1944-1945," Caldwell Papers.

they came, and later when Dai Li called a general meeting to address the mutiny, he is alleged to have beat his chest and said, “here is the monster. See, I am only a man like everyone else. I understand some of you don’t want to work for me. I am very sorry. You don’t have to work for me. You can go. But all I can give you as a farewell present is \$36, the price of a bullet.”<sup>105</sup>

The story of the power and influence of Dai Li, and the related story of the joint U.S.-KMT run SACO, is a critical chapter in the origins of the Cold War in Asia. Its existence not only set into play some of the dynamics that would characterize U.S.-KMT relations during the Cold War, but was animated by some of the same desires and insecurities that took full form in the postwar U.S. Cold War worldview. Some of the underlying architectures of the Cold War that are familiar to us today got their start under SACO, in the so-called Happy Valley, headquarters of SACO in the suburbs of Chungking.

Prior to the establishment of SACO, U.S. intelligence operations in China were run by a number of separate agencies, sometimes in collaboration, sometimes at cross purposes, and sometimes unbeknownst to one another. These included separate intelligence gathering agencies in the Army, Air Force, Navy, State Department, and the early Coordinator of Information (COI)—a precursor to the OSS—under the direction of ‘Wild Bill’ Donovan. This disorganized intelligence apparatus caused many problems in the prosecution of the U.S. war effort, and this was perhaps most salient in China where convoluted internal political struggles combined with complicated U.S. secret

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<sup>105</sup>Oliver J. Caldwell, “Possibility of Revolt in China,” October 3, 1944, Box. 1: Fol. “OSS, 1944-1945,” Caldwell Papers. As far-fetched as this story sounds, Caldwell claims to have had it corroborated from several different sources.

intelligence organizations to produce a volatile mix of intrigue, backstabbing, and double-crossing. The relative autonomy of the varied U.S. intelligence organizations was a major problem because they were all battling over the finite amount of resources that could be sent into China. As the head of the central KMT intelligence agency, *Juntong* (or Military Statistics Bureau [MSB]), Dai Li was, much like his boss Chiang Kai-shek, intent on playing U.S. intelligence agencies off against one another in an attempt to net himself as many American resources as possible. In this regard, SACO was a boon to Dai Li. As long as he could manipulate the terms of the agreement so that he maintained absolute control over the operation, he could receive U.S. aid to build up his secret service. In a message to Roosevelt, William Donovan, head of OSS, warned that SACO was for Dai Li, “an opportunity to receive material support and assurance that if OSS must be accepted in China, at least activities would be under his own control and constant surveillance.”<sup>106</sup>

Dai Li had proved himself to Chiang in Xi’an in 1936, and had since then risen to the highest rank in the intelligence apparatus within the KMT. It was rumored that he was so trusted by Chiang that he was the only person allowed in the same room as the Generalissimo without having to leave his firearm at the door. The MSB under Dai Li was no backwoods intelligence operation. In true goose-step with the overarching survival strategy of the KMT, its intelligence apparatus was the largest in the world. Dai Li’s power lay in carefully molding the belief that he had agents everywhere, and there is little evidence to counter this belief. Indeed, MSB was “generally believed to be larger in terms of operatives and more far flung in terms of geography than any other spy net in

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<sup>106</sup> Quoted in Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 286.

the world.”<sup>107</sup> Caldwell even claimed that Dai Li had seven million men under his command, most of them members of China’s secret societies.<sup>108</sup> One American military attaché described Dai Li in 1943 as exercising “more power than any other man in China today with the exception of the Generalissimo himself. He is said to be the only person that Chiang Kai-shek will receive at any time, any place.”<sup>109</sup> In 1946, U.S. Army sources estimated that Dai Li had 180,000 plainclothes agents working for him, with just under 25 percent working full time. Taking into account his military and uniformed personnel, it is reasonable to estimate that Dai Li had more than 325,000 agents under his direct command.<sup>110</sup> What kind of man had such extraordinary control over the flow of information in China?

Dai Li has often been called the ‘Himmler of China.’ Plagued with intense sinus problems, he was constantly sniffing, and always carried handkerchiefs in his pockets, and was perennially wiping his nose. He had a mouth full of gold teeth, yet was described by one as “a handsome, slender man with tiny, beautiful hands.”<sup>111</sup> He was a shadow figure, elusive, and always in the background, and yet omnipresent. One person recalls having attended a small meeting with Chiang Kai-shek, where important matters were discussed and he was one of few people present. It wasn’t until the end of the meeting that he noticed a man sitting silently in the corner, obscured in the shadows of the room, it was Dai Li. He impressed Oliver Caldwell as “brilliant, imaginative, ruthless, and unscrupulous...he was the enemy of almost every ideal of American democracy. He was

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<sup>107</sup> Quoted in Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 5.

<sup>108</sup> Caldwell, *Secret War*, 55. This number is surely exaggerated, but it underscores the crucial fact that there was a widespread belief that Dai Li had agents watching everyone’s every move.

<sup>109</sup> Quoted in Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 4.

<sup>110</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 5.

<sup>111</sup> Caldwell, *Secret War*, 73.

cold, hard, crafty, and brutal.”<sup>112</sup> Perhaps his ability to embody contradiction in both his physicality and his intelligence apparatus—omnipresence and absence—were what made him a consummate ‘spymaster.’ He was fanatically loyal to Chiang, and indeed had set out from the beginning to ingratiate himself to the Generalissimo and make himself indispensable to the leader. There are several competing stories circulating regarding Dai Li’s entrance to Whampoa, and his early dealings with Chiang Kai-shek.<sup>113</sup> The most compelling story has Dai Li travelling to Guangzhou (Canton) in 1926 with the specific goal of meeting with Chiang. He was introduced to the Generalissimo through Dai Jitao, president of Guangzhou University. Dai Li reportedly told Chiang that he wanted to pledge his fealty to the man like “the kind of follower who can crow like a chicken and steal like a dog.”<sup>114</sup> No doubt this made Chiang very happy, but he was not quite ready to entrust his private dealings to a stranger. Dai had by this time already been admitted to the fifth class at Whampoa, but expressed his intention to the Generalissimo that he wished to give up his place there “in order to remain as a servant at his new master’s side.”<sup>115</sup>

In order to ingratiate himself to his ‘new master,’ Dai Li “became a kind of human sponge, soaking up any information he came across that he thought might be of interest to Chiang.”<sup>116</sup> Dai would frequently write up a digest of these intelligence reports and place them on Chiang’s desk. At first, Chiang could not be bothered to read them, and often threw them in the wastebasket without so much as glancing at them. Dai Li, illustrating his doggedness and devotion, would pull these out of the trash, gingerly iron

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<sup>112</sup> Caldwell, *Secret War*, 73.

<sup>113</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 24-5.

<sup>114</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 25-6.

<sup>115</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 26.

<sup>116</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 26.

them, and replace them on the Generalissimo's desk. After a time, Chiang began to detect a certain genius in Dai's intelligence reports, and realized that this man's willingness to completely subordinate himself to the leader was an opportunity he should not overlook. Soon thereafter, Chiang "took [Dai] by the ear and told him exactly what he wanted him to do," to be a plant in the sixth class of cadets at Whampoa and act as Chiang's eyes and ears on the ground. Chiang was fanatically insecure about maintaining a reactionary ideological evenness at Whampoa, and Dai was to be his man to report on any tergiversations among the cadets. Dai Li's eagerness to subsume his will to that of Chiang Kai-shek belied another aspect of Dai's contradictory nature. It was what made him almost supremely powerful, but it was also what made him weak. He held steadfastly to the upholding of Chiang's belief that "if there are Communists there can be no me, if there is me there can be no Communists."<sup>117</sup> This meant that "Dai Li was powerful because he was a member of Chiang's inner circle. Yet his abasement to Chiang—his subservience to the Leader—was ultimately a sign of personal weakness."<sup>118</sup> Despite what may well have been a sense of personal weakness, in concert with the KMT regime, Dai Li was able to build, with U.S. help, a vast intelligence network throughout the war years that would indelibly alter the landscape of postwar international relations.

The origins of SACO illustrate clearly the problems that arose out of the lack of a centralized U.S. intelligence gathering agency during the war years. True, OSS was intended to be a centralized intelligence clearing house, but it never successfully did so

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<sup>117</sup> Quoted in Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 3.

<sup>118</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 3.



during the war, especially not in China.<sup>119</sup> After SACO's rise in infamy through its role as the institutional face of Dai Li, the most feared man in China, the "U.S. military, and especially the OSS and the U.S. Army, took pains to show that the collusion between Dai's MSB and the American's was, first of all, a Navy affair."<sup>120</sup> SACO began as a Navy affair, and mostly remained one throughout the war. On April 5, 1942, Commodore Milton Miles flew out of New York bound for the Chinese wartime capital of Chungking. He was headed to confer with Dai Li about a joint U.S.-China intelligence organization that would be primarily interested in organizing weather observatories in China. Miles had already met earlier with Xiao Bo, Dai Li's MSB Washington station chief, in a hotel in D.C. over cocktails to discuss the possibility for the joint agency, and had received the go ahead from his superior Admiral William Leahy for what was supposed to be "a relatively modest operation."<sup>121</sup> After his cocktail hour with Miles, Xiao Bo reported back to Dai Li the particulars of his conversation, and Dai secured Chiang's support to pursue a more official round of discussion about setting up a joint U.S.-China agency.

After being redirected from a landing in Burma, since the Japanese had gained control of the airport there, Miles landed in Kunming, and made his way to Chungking from there. Shortly after his arrival, Miles was taken to one of Dai Li's many safe houses, where he met the elusive spymaster for the first time. Miles recalled his first meeting with Dai:

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<sup>119</sup> For more on OSS in China see Maochun Yu's deft, but slightly biased account, *OSS in China: Prelude to Cold War*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996). Yu makes excellent use of Chinese language materials that earlier studies of OSS in China overlooked, and was also the first monograph to come out completely devoted to OSS in China after the opening of the OSS papers at the National Archives.

<sup>120</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 285.

<sup>121</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 287.

[t]he general kept us waiting less than a minute, and he entered with a smile, showing much gold bridgework. He was a slightly built man, not quite as tall as I—five feet seven perhaps—and he was dressed in the Sun Yat-sen kind of civilian suit made of khaki whipcord...He looked older, I thought, than he had appeared in the photographs Colonel Xiao [Bo] had shown me, and no picture I had seen had given even a hint of the lively snap of his wide-open and piercing black eyes...I had brought...a personal gift from me: a snub nosed, thirty-eight automatic pistol. It was identical to the one I was wearing and he put it on at once.<sup>122</sup>

At this meeting Miles expressed interest in taking a tour through Chinese-controlled territories, which reassured Dai that Miles wasn't receiving much intelligence from the British, whom Dai was in the midst of trying to oust from China. Dai promised Miles an upgrade in his residence as soon as "its previous occupant had vacated the premises."<sup>123</sup> Sure enough, several days later, Miles moved into the Grotto of Divine Mortals, the elegant mansion formerly occupied by the mayor of Chungking, but whose most recent resident had been none other than Herbert Yardley, head of MI-8, the U.S. codebreaking project of which he was head. A few days after relocating to his posh new quarters, plans that would result in SACO began in earnest as Miles was invited to Dai Li's staff conference.

Soon after, a banquet was held in Miles' honor by Dai Li, and Miles once again asked Dai Li if he could visit Chinese-controlled lands behind Japanese lines and to coastal territories. Dai was responsive, because he saw this as an opportunity to show Miles the expansive reach of the MSB, as well as to help further secure Miles' cooperation in the nascent U.S.-Chinese joint venture. Dai Li arranged for the trip with himself serving as a guide on the trek, which was to take place by truck and foot "through

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<sup>122</sup> Quoted in Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 288.

<sup>123</sup> Quoted in Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 288.

the southeastern mountain scarps to the rocky coast of Fujian province.”<sup>124</sup> The trip would provide Miles and Dai with a close encounter that would seal their friendship, and that would alter the course of U.S.-China relations. Miles was “easy to impress,” but Dai nevertheless pulled out all the stops on their journey. Although they were by day in territory ostensibly under the control of the Wang Jingwei (of former left-KMT fame) puppet government, by night MSB saboteurs scoured the cities for information to be relayed back to Dai Li. Even most chiefs of police in the Japanese-controlled areas were Dai Li’s men, who had known him from his police unit training days before the war. The most dramatic encounter with the Japanese on the trip was also the moment when SACO was officially born. The Japanese began conducting bombing raids while Miles and Dai Li were in the town of Pucheng, in northern Fujian province, and they were forced to seek shelter not in the safe houses that were a part of Dai Li’s vast network as usual, but in a rice paddy under darkness. As the two men lay under cover, being bombed from above by hostile enemy forces, Dai Li asked his interpreter, Eddie Liu, to proposition Miles:

Tell Mei Shendong [Miles’s Chinese name meant Winter Plum Blossom] I would like to have him arm 50,000 of my guerillas and train them to fight the Japanese. Can he do it?...The United States wants many things in China—weather reports from the north and West to guide your planes and ships at sea—information about Japanese intentions and operations—mines in our channels and harbors—ship watchers on our coast—and radio stations to send this information...I have 50,000 good men...They had been chosen from among those who had most reason to hate the Japanese invader, but they are armed with only what they have been able to make or capture and most of them are almost untrained. But if we are able to give you all you ask for, your operations will need to be protected and you cannot bring in enough men for that. So, if my men could be

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<sup>124</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 289.

armed and trained, they could not only protect your operations but could work for China too.<sup>125</sup>

Laying there in a rice paddy in southern China, under the blanketing roar of Japanese bombers, Miles took in what Dai was saying and was deeply intrigued. What Dai Li was asking for, and if Miles agreed to it, would be tantamount to the U.S. arming a guerilla army of 50,000 men who would be operating autonomously from the official forces of the U.S.' allies. Miles, unswayed by the widespread belief that Dai Li was either an assassin or "the head of a Chinese OGPU [a precursor to the Soviet KGB] with which anyone from the United States would be embarrassed to associate," and blessed with the imprimatur of Washington to make judgment calls within his larger directive of "harassing the enemy," decided that this fell within the purview of his orders and went ahead and began working with Dai Li towards the arming of 50,000 of his men.<sup>126</sup>

By September of 1942, Miles already had Navy men in Chungking laying the preparatory groundwork for what was to become SACO. That winter, Miles and Dai Li met officially at Dai's residence in Ciqikou and began formal talks to operationalize SACO. Miles began bringing in meteorological equipment, as well as arms and ammunition: Smith and Wesson revolvers, Colt .45 automatics, and Thompson submachine guns. By New Year's Eve, Miles and Dai Li had worked out an agreement that was initialed by T.V. Soong, the KMT Foreign Minister. The agreement stipulated a joint command of SACO, with the Chinese being given full direction of the organization under Dai Li, with Miles acting as deputy director, both parties would have veto power in the organizational decision making. A few days later, the initialed agreement was

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<sup>125</sup> Quoted in Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 289.

<sup>126</sup> Quoted in Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 290.

presented in Washington. George Marshall expressed some concerns about the division of power, and suggested that SACO be put under joint command, Dai Li and the Chinese under Chiang, with Miles and the Americans under Stilwell. Stilwell knew better than to embroil himself in SACO, and cabled Washington that it would be a headache for him to try to keep SACO under his control. "We'd get no cooperation from Dai Li that way. General Dai is super-secretive and super-suspicious, and would tolerate no one between himself and Miles."<sup>127</sup> He was likely correct. Instead, Stilwell recommended that SACO be brought under the purview of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who accordingly issued a directive acknowledging Stilwell's recommended command chain. And so what was in effect constituted was an OSS branch, under Dai Li and Miles, with U.S. Navy interests predominant. Donovan was forced to appoint Miles head of OSS in China, even though Dai Li resented the organization. Donovan's hands were tied since MacArthur would not allow OSS in his Pacific Theater, and so his only recourse was to let Miles control the China base for OSS' Asian operations. Despite Miles' nominal role in OSS, his first allegiance was to the Navy, and so in his role as the head of OSS in China he ensured that any intelligence gathered by SACO was communicated to Navy in Washington before it reached Donovan. This internecine battle over intelligence clearly illustrated a dynamic that was dangerous for the U.S.' larger goal of defeating Japan and maintaining a united China, however tenuous that unity might be.

By March things were looking official. A formal agreement was written up, and brought to Washington where it was initialed by George Marshall. Admiral Leahy then brought the agreement to Roosevelt, who gave it his approval. It was finally signed by

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<sup>127</sup> Quoted in Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 290-1.

Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox and T.V. Soong on April 15, 1943. Donovan, Xiao Bo, and Miles also signed the document, leaving a space for the final signatory, Dai Li, who affixed his signature on July 4<sup>th</sup>. There was some discrepancy between the Chinese and English versions of the agreement. True to KMT form, the Chinese version had the U.S. agreeing to the shipment of massive amounts of materiel—enough to “form five special services armed units, along with eighty operations units and operations squads,” and to organize thirteen SACO training classes, “four intelligence stations on the southern coast, a hydrology station, and a number of weather stations and broadcasting units.”<sup>128</sup> The English version was less concerned with particulars. It stated plainly that the purpose of SACO was to

attack...a common enemy along the Chinese coast, in occupied territories in China, and in other areas held by the Japanese...[SACO's] aim is, by common effort, employing American equipment and technical training and utilizing the Chinese war zones as bases to attack effectively the Japanese navy, the Japanese merchant marine and the Japanese air forces in different territories of the Far East, and to attack the mines, factories, warehouses, depots and other military establishments in areas under Japanese occupation.<sup>129</sup>

The SACO agreement greatly boosted Dai Li's standing within the upper echelons of the KMT because it blessed him with the imprimatur of the U.S. Whether this was intentional or not is beside the point, what matters and is of historical relevance is the fact that the head of the Chinese secret police, an organization that had deep roots in the pro-fascist Blue Shirts, was now in charge of a U.S.-trained and -bankrolled paramilitary organization whose primary goal was and had been gathering whatever forms of intelligence that could be used to further the power of Chiang Kai-shek. If this resulted in

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<sup>128</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 291-2.

<sup>129</sup> Quoted in Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 292.

the advance of U.S. interests in the defeat of Japan, it was almost coincidental. Dai Li's primary objective was to "receiv[e] and uphold...the will of the Leader, [and to] embody...and empathiz[e]...with the devoted thoughts of the Leader," and this effectively meant that he was committed to crushing communism within China.<sup>130</sup>

Unbeknownst to the U.S., they had just signed on to begin fighting communism in a civil war. This was a pattern that would come to characterize much of the Cold War, but this was 1943, and the U.S. was still fighting fascism in Europe and the Pacific, was still allies with the USSR—the nerve center of international communism, and the Cold War was theoretically at least two years away.

### **SACO's Happy Valley**

In order to understand the scope and influence of SACO—especially of the U.S. role in training Chinese MSB agents under the auspices of a joint U.S.-Chinese program—on the emergence and architecture of the Cold War it is necessary to gain a better understanding of the SACO training camps that the U.S. helped operate. During the three years in which SACO was active, over twenty-five hundred Americans, mostly in the Navy, served tours of duty with SACO. The vast majority served in its Happy Valley training camp, but also among the fourteen other training camps scattered throughout China, as well as in weather stations and coastal lookout points. Those stationed in Happy Valley and other training camps "combined a kind of boy-scout field-training program with instruction in the deadlier arts of assassination, sabotage, and small-group warfare."<sup>131</sup> Although a total of 26,794 students technically matriculated through the

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<sup>130</sup> Quoted in Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 3.

<sup>131</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 294.

SACO training program, it is estimated that the U.S. “trained” or “equipped” at least 50,000.<sup>132</sup> Looking back on the war, Miles claimed that SACO’s paramilitary forces totaled around 100,000, including 3,000 U.S. personnel. He also claimed, dubiously, that these forces were responsible for killing over 71,000 Japanese.<sup>133</sup> While Miles may have been slightly more aware of what the SACO guerillas were actually doing, and Dai Li most certainly was, it is safe to say that most of the Americans who worked in the camps training MSB guerillas believed they were outfitting and preparing soldiers for combat against the Japanese. To say they were grossly misinformed, however, is an understatement. According to historian Frederic Wakeman,

their misunderstanding of the situation was at times grotesque...some were shocked or incredulous to learn later that they had been identified with units that trained the most horrendous of the Nationalist regime’s secret police units charged with the persecution—including kidnapping, torture, and killing—of ‘progressive’ elements throughout Free China during the years that SACO flourished.<sup>134</sup>

The so-called Happy Valley, SACO’s training camp, was a bucolic basin area in the suburbs of Chungking of about twenty-four square miles. Above the valley were crests of pine-topped mountains looking down on three valleys, each with an idyllic looking stream running alongside a number of small farms. Against this idyllic backdrop, the U.S. constructed a fortified complex that transformed the rustic farmscapes into a series of eight hundred buildings in the three valleys. In addition to living quarters, the Happy Valley camp consisted of “a parade ground and armory, rifle and pistol ranges, classrooms, police dog kennels, pigeon cotes, radio communications shacks, a prison, and

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<sup>132</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 294.

<sup>133</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 294.

<sup>134</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 295.



interrogation facilities.”<sup>135</sup> The infamous Happy Valley prison, “about which unpleasant stories were told,” was located in the smallest northernmost valley.<sup>136</sup> It was ironically referred to as Bai Mansion, as it was the former residence of Tang Dynasty poet Bai Juyi, but was the dreaded SACO “concentration camp and torture chamber.”<sup>137</sup> The three camps that made up the larger Happy Valley complex were surrounded by electric fences and rigorously guarded by armed patrols tasked with shooting trespassers on sight. Local villagers were prohibited from passing through the area, and indeed roads to the valleys were blocked off. Former residents of the valleys were forced to pack up and move. Only Americans and Chinese with “special transit passes” could enter the hallowed areas within the electrified fences, and those who did not possess the passes, or who made it into Happy Valley by mistake, met with the rather unhappy fate of being “immediately seized and killed.”<sup>138</sup>

For Dai Li, one of the most important conditions of the SACO agreement was the provision for the U.S. training of Chinese in the techniques of modern policing. It was a dream of Dai’s to run a FBI-styled police force that would rival his competitor Chen Lifu’s (of the reactionary KMT CC Clique) Central Statistics Bureau (CSB). The U.S. wasted no effort in meeting Dai Li’s “most earnest wish—a wish so important to him that he was willing to trade almost any service for it,” and began setting up “a sort of ‘pilot’ FBI school.”<sup>139</sup> A motley group of American characters descended upon Happy Valley, constituting the specialists tasked to train Dai Li’s nascent Chinese FBI. This group soon “grew to include two dozen former FBI and Secret Service agents, ‘narcs’ from Treasury,

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<sup>135</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 302.

<sup>136</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 302.

<sup>137</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 302, 305.

<sup>138</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 302.

<sup>139</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 302.

veterans of the bomb squad of the New York City Police, fire investigators, state troopers, and a Mississippi district attorney.”<sup>140</sup> According to Miles himself, these Americans “were specialists in mayhem and protection,” and were there to teach Dai’s top agents about the latest in police techniques and policing devices: “weapons, lie detectors, police dogs, shackles, truth serum, [and] ballistic kits.”<sup>141</sup> The broad projects underway in training the Chinese at Happy Valley were almost too much for the Americans to keep a handle on, and Miles later admitted that the U.S. “had never been able to separate the police activities from guerilla activities.”<sup>142</sup> What is striking about Miles’s admission is the cavalier way in which it melds two very distinct projects into a single mission that would come to characterize so much of the clandestine operations of the global Cold War a decade later. In 1943, the U.S.’ primary goal, as stated in the U.S. version of the SACO agreement, was to arm and train Chinese guerillas in the name of speeding up the Allied victory over the Japanese in the Pacific. Instead, what they did was pass on the latest in American techniques in espionage and subversion, and deliver them straight into the hands of the most ruthless Chinese anti-communist and anti-progressive paramilitary and police organization.

In conclusion I’d like to briefly highlight some of the more ruthless mass killings perpetrated by SACO at Happy Valley that the U.S. knowingly (at least in some chains of command) supported during World War II. It is my contention that American support of these kinds of paramilitary and extralegal tactics was conditioned by the fact that the U.S. war effort was clouded by a consistent fog of victory at all costs. This was the same

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<sup>140</sup> Quoted in Wakeman *Spymaster*, 303.

<sup>141</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 303.

<sup>142</sup> Quoted in Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 303.

pattern of thinking that came to animate so many U.S. military projects during the Cold War, as the U.S. became entangled with anti-democratic and reactionary regimes across the world with the sole proviso that they were anti-communist. This was a model that was gestated within SACO and came of age during the height of the Cold War in the 1950s and 1960s. When Albert Wedemeyer took over command of the China Theater after the Stilwell recall in October of 1944, one of his concerns was with the training of Dai's proto-FBI in Happy Valley.<sup>143</sup> In a conference with Dai Li himself, Wedemeyer expressed his apprehension that SACO represented "American personnel and equipment...being used in political organizations."<sup>144</sup> Dai Li assured Wedemeyer that SACO was being solely used in the fight against the Japanese by calling attention to the fact that his MSB fell under the jurisdiction of the KMT military council, unlike his rival Chen Lifu's CSB, which was concerned with political intelligence and security. This raised the uncomfortable question of whether the killing of traitors (that is, anyone opposed to Chiang Kai-shek) was a political or a military issue, to which Dai Li responded that it was the latter, because it directly impacted the perpetration of the war effort against the Japanese by ensuring domestic unity. Wedemeyer remained unconvinced, he thought that "it *might* be political unless a clear-cut delineation were possible with respect to possible relationships to Japs vis-à-vis Communists."<sup>145</sup> Dai Li had to prove to Wedemeyer that the Chinese Communists were in fact acting in the interests of Japan in order to make liquidating them a part of a larger military strategy. Dai could not do this to Wedemeyer's satisfaction, however, and the China Theater

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<sup>143</sup> The Stilwell recall also resulted in the split of the CBI Theater into a China Theater, under the command of Wedemeyer, and a Burma-India Theater headed by Lt. General Daniel Sultan.

<sup>144</sup> Quoted in Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 303.

<sup>145</sup> Quoted in Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 304.

commander made it more clear to Dai by stating plainly that “he did not approve of Americans involvement in any way with the killing or punishing of Chinese,” to which Dai replied, “No Americans would be asked to do that; their job was to train Chinese to do it.”<sup>146</sup>

Despite some opposition to the activities of SACO, even from the high command like Wedemeyer’s, American training of SACO anti-communist guerillas continued unabated. This was one of the earliest examples of what became a common practice during the Cold War, “American special operations officers train[ing] police for intelligence-gathering purposes only to find themselves accused of connivance with the forces of right-wing dictatorship.”<sup>147</sup> At the very least, Miles was perfectly clear on the role he was playing in equipping Chinese to murder other Chinese who held progressive ideas at variance with the reactionary policies of the KMT. Dai, with the aid of the U.S., was making outright war on Chinese patriots and communists. Today, Happy Valley is a museum dedicated to teaching visitors about the atrocities that went on there between 1943–46. For example, after 1945, those arrested by the MSB in Xi’an for agitating against the KMT were sent to Happy Valley, often blindfolded and wrapped inside of gunny sacks, where they were tortured to death. After the CCP ‘liberated’ the region, peasants returning to Happy Valley found “heaps of mutilated corpses” which had been left behind by Dai Li’s death squads.<sup>148</sup> The museum now houses a photograph of one such mass graveyard, it is a picture of a “pit in which ninety-four bodies were found

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<sup>146</sup> Quoted in Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 304.

<sup>147</sup> Quoted in Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 304.

<sup>148</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 305.

bound with handcuffs made in Springfield, Massachusetts.”<sup>149</sup> One American visitor to the museum recalled his tour, “we turn a corner and see instruments of torture—bamboo slivers for driving under fingernails, a flexible steel whip said to be U.S. made, a nail studded club used in what was called Mourning torture.”<sup>150</sup> Tour guides will tell visitors that during the specious trials of prisoners at Happy Valley, both Dai Li and Milton Miles would sit in mock judgment, weighing evidence culled from confessions that were extracted by Americans using truth serum and lie detectors.<sup>151</sup> Perhaps one of the most chilling accounts of the depraved U.S.-sponsored mass murders of Chinese progressives that took place within the confines of the SACO camp at Happy Valley is recounted by a survivor. On the night of November 27, 1949, a little over a month after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, as the People’s Liberation Army drew near Happy Valley, and as KMT guards busily burned SACO files in the courtyard of the Bai Mansion, orders were given to kill all prisoners. What ensued was an orgy of violence that bears recounting at length as a grim reminder of the kinds of violence wrought in the name of freedom-as-anti-communism with the implicit blessing of the U.S. state:

The commandant arrived and soon after soldiers with submachine guns [presumably the Thompsons that Miles had delivered to Dai Li] took posts in front of the cell doors. A whistle blew. The soldiers thrust their guns through the square windows in the cell doors and fired. We sang *Internationale*. Some shouted slogans and cursed Chiang Kai-shek. *The firing lasted about twenty minutes*, ending when the screaming and singing died away. Then the whistle blew again. The soldiers went around back and fired through the rear windows for some minutes. The commandant shouted cease fire. Agents came into the cells and shot prisoners in the head. I was in a corner and the submachine fire only wounded me in the leg. The shot on my head missed and I lay quiet. They thought we were all dead but more than thirty were still alive. We got through the cell doors

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<sup>149</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 305.

<sup>150</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 505, n. 79.

<sup>151</sup> Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 305.

and burst into the courtyard. Some nineteen were killed there but fourteen of us got through a break in the wall.<sup>152</sup>

Scenes of destruction like these became more frequent in subsequent years, as the Cold War raged and the U.S. sought to contain communism by any means necessary. The tableau of death at Happy Valley on that November night should be read as a kind of primal scene of the Cold War, and serves as an apt reminder that the foundations for the Cold War were in large part laid in China, and blossomed out of the collapse of liberal internationalism signaled by the U.S. support of Chiang's regime. U.S. actions in China begat a cycle of violence that spread throughout the world in the postwar period and forever altered the landscape of human relations. It should be noted that infamous U.S.-run training schools for anti-communist mercenaries and guerillas, like the Department of Defense's Latin American training institute School of the Americas (now the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation) in Fort Benning, Georgia, got their start in SACO. There is a clear evolution of the architecture of the U.S. Cold War that links SACO to something like the School of the Americas, which was directly responsible for training thousands of shock troops in various U.S.-backed Latin American military juntas during the Cold War. In 1971, Oliver Caldwell, the OSS agent and child of former Chinese missionaries who had spent six months observing Dai Li and Happy Valley, wrote in his memoir of the war, "in retrospect, I believe Dai Li was an enemy of the United States in China in World War II. I believe our support of Dai Li was a disaster."<sup>153</sup> Writing in the midst of the U.S. war in Vietnam, which Caldwell strongly opposed, it is hard not to see a larger lesson that Caldwell was touching on, that in war, when one's judgments and actions become clouded by a singular focus on victory, enemies often

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<sup>152</sup> Quoted in Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 307.

<sup>153</sup> Caldwell, *Secret War*, 59.

become allies, or the distinction between the two can become so blurred as to be nearly invisible.

Over a decade of non-interference on the part of the U.S in the campaign of terror that Chiang unleashed on the communists beginning with the Northern Expedition, resulted in the U.S. being backed into a corner of having to support Chiang during the war as the *de facto* leader of a fractured China. Attempts to secure relations with alternative power bases, like the communists or a liberal third party, were ultimately thwarted by the power Chiang wielded over Washington, and that he exercised through consistent threats of a separate peace with the Japanese, and through the campaign of disinformation perpetrated by the publications of Henry Luce, and the Hearst and Scripps-Howard press and their frequent hagiographies of the Chinese first family. However genuine U.S. overtures were to the CCP during the war, the very fact that they entered the most volatile anti-communist battleground of the time on the side of the Nationalists predisposed the U.S. to options that would ultimately find them backing the forces of reaction. Chiang's secret intelligence organization ensured that a steady flow of information came in regarding U.S. policies with regard to progressive political elements in China, and Chiang reacted accordingly, in ways calculated to keep the survival of the KMT tied to the fortunes of the U.S.

A history of the rise of Chiang's break with the Soviets and the dissolution of the first united front, and the ascendancy of his fanatical anti-communism and his attempt to reconcile his ideological hatred for communism with his intense nationalism in a failed second united front, sets the stage for the core conflict of the Cold War. It did not begin in the contest between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, but in the death match between

Chiang's reactionary KMT and the CCP in the Shanghai Massacre of 1927. U.S. investments in China—military, monetary, and psychological—pulled them into a battle, the outcome of which the U.S. was woefully unprepared for. The Cold War began immediately after the defeat of Japan. Soviet entry into the war on August 8, 1945, made the CCP an official partner in the fight against Japan. But less than a week after Truman unleashed a second atomic blast on Nagasaki, the U.S., in collusion with the Soviets and the KMT, began mobilizing in a new alliance against the CCP by announcing that Japanese forces should only surrender to the KMT, and not to the CCP, even if the communists were in the area. Indeed, the Japanese, faithful to this order, continued to fight the communists as they awaited the arrival of the KMT. This seamless transition from WWII into active intervention in a civil war is what marks the beginning of the Cold War for the U.S. And U.S. participation in these early engagements of the Chinese civil war was contingent upon American retreat from a liberal internationalism that had defined much of U.S. foreign policy since Woodrow Wilson. Less than three weeks after the bombing of Nagasaki, the U.S. began airlifting KMT troops into Japanese-controlled areas of China, and while the Japanese waited for the KMT, they diligently engaged militarily with the Chinese communists on the side of the KMT and the U.S. Enemies had become allies in an armed intervention in a Chinese civil war. By early October, the U.S. had deployed over 53,000 American marines to ensure the peaceful surrender and repatriation of Japanese forces in North China, a task that could have been performed by the CCP who were still technically in a united front with the KMT. By the early winter, the U.S. had transported over half a million KMT troops by land and sea to accept Japanese surrenders, and while awaiting the arrival of the KMT, U.S., Soviet, and



Japanese forces held these key areas for Chiang Kai-shek, keeping them out of the hands of the communists. Deepening their position in the quicksands of loss at the hands of the populist CCP, the U.S. had no option by 1946 but to continue to back the losing Nationalists. The rise of anti-communism at home with the return of Ambassador Patrick Hurley and his accusations against the State Department paved the way towards McCarthyism. The history of the origins of Chinese anti-communism, and a study of the U.S.' convoluted war efforts in China do much to illuminate the origins of the Cold War. In order to more fully understand the complex relationship between the U.S., the KMT, and the CCP in an international context, and their impact on the formation of the global Cold War dynamic, it will be necessary to examine in greater detail the wartime experiences of Chinese Americans within the larger framework of racial democracy and World War II.

## Chapter 6

### **“International Solidarity of the Indestructible Type”: Race, Internationalism, and the Two Chinas in the Debates over the Repeal of Chinese Exclusion**

In a special message delivered to Congress on October 11, 1943, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt intoned that

by the repeal of Chinese Exclusion Laws, we can correct a historic mistake and silence the distorted Japanese propaganda... The extension of privileges of citizenship to the relatively few Chinese residents in our country would operate as another meaningful display of friendship. It would be additional proof that we regard China not only as a partner in waging war but that we shall regard her as a partner in days of peace.<sup>1</sup>

On December 17, 1943, Roosevelt signed the Magnuson Act into law, repealing a series of punitive and embarrassing Chinese exclusion acts, and ending the tenure of some of the most archaic and blatantly racist laws ever to grace American statute books. The China that the President referenced in his speech to Congress was not necessarily the same China many of the Senators, Congressmen, and Congresswomen in attendance conjured up in their imaginations as Roosevelt made an impassioned plea for an end to Chinese exclusion before them that October. As debates over the repeal of exclusion unfolded in the House during the summer of 1943, the dominant picture of China that emerged in the official transcripts of the government hearings, and within the pages and across the airwaves of the mainstream American media, was one dominated by the figure

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from a reprint of Roosevelt's message in *The New York Times*, October 12, 1943.

of Chiang Kai-shek, and his Kuomintang Party (KMT) which maintained nominal control of the wartime Chinese central government.

The powerful forces that converged to help create the dominant American perception of China included members of the American media, business, religious, labor, and political elite. These powerful Americans had deep financial, political, and psychic investments in Chiang Kai-shek's China. These were men and women who had built vast fortunes in China selling insurance and trading textiles; people who had labored intensively to spread the gospel of Christianity in the Chinese hinterlands; educators who had taught the Chinese about the most recent advances in Western medicine, political theory, and arts and letters, and helped build great universities in China that rivaled some of the best institutions of higher education in America. These were American liberals, in the broadest sense of the word, who yearned to see China reclaimed from the torpor of the waning days of the Qing Dynasty, men and women who longed to see their beloved China emerge from the blood and fires of war anew; strong, independent, and integrated into a capitalist world system with the U.S. at the helm. These were Americans who did see, or tricked themselves into seeing, a postwar China led by Chiang Kai-shek, a leader some, like Henry R. Luce, saw as a visionary, and in whom others, like Minnesota Congressman and former medical missionary in China, Walter Judd, saw at best an able leader who could keep China from succumbing to Japanese blandishments about a 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere' as an alternative to the declining European and ascendant American imperial system.

Roosevelt was imagining a somewhat more dynamic China. By mid-1943, the President was fully aware of reports from within China, transmitted by State Department

and other government and military officials, that Chiang was becoming increasingly authoritarian in his governance, and that the KMT was sliding further down the road of irredeemable corruption. Roosevelt was beginning to turn his attention towards the more radically-oriented Chinese Communist Party (CCP) under the leadership of Mao Zedong. By June of 1944, Roosevelt would authorize an official U.S. Army Observer Mission into CCP territory to assess their viability as an alternative leadership model for postwar China. Politically, intellectually, and militarily, China was a much more complicated scene than it was imagined to be in mainstream America. In this chapter I want to argue that the dominant perception of China, as it was crafted by a powerful group of people who would later gain some infamy as the so-called China Lobby, purposefully elided the dynamism of the more radical elements of the Chinese political landscape, like the CCP, in order to safeguard the possibilities inherent in a postwar Chinese regime sympathetic to American interventionist interests, figured across fields as disparate as finance, religion, politics, and education. The same people contributed to the early domestic waging of the Cold War by becoming outspoken critics of the State Department, within which many of the China experts who cautioned against uncritical support of Chiang were housed, and helping to fan the flames of McCarthyism which resulted in the dismissal of many China experts within the U.S. government.

However, while able to effectively silence the dynamic voices from the margins of the Chinese political scene within mainstream American discourses about China, the China Lobby could not keep more realist liberal internationalists within the government from reporting what they saw to be more competent Chinese leadership in the form of the CCP. By reinserting this alternative political vision of China into the historical frame,

new perspectives on a critical period in the transformation of American liberal internationalism, as well as insights into the origins of the Cold War, come to light. Reasserting the simultaneity of the debates over the repeal of exclusion with debates over the two Chinas necessarily uncovers a previously submerged historical terrain that traverses questions of race, internationalism, and citizenship in new and exciting ways. International scrutiny of American racism made the issue of repeal a war imperative, and Chinese Americans subsequently negotiated their newfound citizenship in ways that illustrate clearly the attenuated possibilities of full participation by a racial minority in American democracy, thereby clarifying tensions inherent in the implementation of an abstracted liberalism in a caste society. This is an important story because it illustrates the intersection of the twilight of American liberal internationalism with the emergence of Cold War anti-communism, and situates it in an explicitly racial frame. It also highlights the centrality of China to the emergence of the global Cold War dynamic. It is an important contribution to the burgeoning field of the new Cold War studies, as well as a timely example of the convergence of that field with Asian American Studies.

### **Race and Axis Propaganda**

In late May 1942 the Office of War Information (OWI) circulated a substantial study that dealt with the issue of “Negroes in a Democracy at War.” In a section titled “Is It More Important Right Now to Beat Germany and Japan or to Make Democracy Work at Home?” OWI investigators revealed some interesting findings. According to the study, many blacks in the U.S. thought of the war as “a white man’s war...fostered in part by the impediments to Negro participation and in part by doubts as to the benefits which

victory may confer upon the colored race.”<sup>2</sup> Longstanding victimization at the hands of a racist culture had instilled among many American blacks “a desire to see whites humiliated, to see white supremacy toppled by a people with darker skins.”<sup>3</sup> Indeed, Japanese military victories in Asia had given “many Negroes a measure of satisfaction.”<sup>4</sup> OWI field workers even reported that “Negro children show a pronounced inclination in their play to pretend that they are Japanese soldiers; they are fond of imagining that they are in a position to avenge themselves against white oppressors.”<sup>5</sup> When Swedish economist and future Nobel Laureate Gunnar Myrdal made his famed tour of the U.S., out of which came the monumental study *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (1944), he noted the shared anti-fascism among most African Americans, but he also provided the insight that some American blacks took “vicarious satisfaction in imagining a Japanese invasion of the southern states.”<sup>6</sup> To be sure, American blacks were not the only racial minority in the U.S. upset by the glaring disconnect between the country’s wartime rhetoric of freedom and democracy and its actual record on race.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Office of War Information Report “Negroes in a Democracy At War,” p. 21, May 27, 1942, Survey of Intelligence Materials No. 25; Decimal Files 811.4016; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD. Henceforth NARA.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Gerald Horne, “Race from Power: U.S. Foreign Policy and the General Crisis of ‘White Supremacy,’” *Diplomatic History* 23, no. 3 (Summer 1999), 452.

<sup>7</sup> The literature on the triangular relationship between African Americans, East Asia, and the United States is growing. See in particular John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), esp. 147-180; Marc Gallicchio, *The African-American Encounter with Japan and China: Black Internationalism in Asia, 1894-1945*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); and George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), esp. chapter 9, “‘Frantic to Join...the Japanese Army’: Beyond the Black-White Binary,” 184-210.

Although racial problems in America were traditionally figured in the stark terms of black and white, the inherent international aspects of the war necessarily complicated that binary view. Indeed, much Axis propaganda centered on the contradictory nature of the U.S.' domestic racial reality when contrasted with the commendable rhetoric of the universal declarations of the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms. Japan's wartime cry of 'Asia for the Asiatics' certainly fell upon many willing ears. In August 1942 Walter White, executive secretary of the NAACP, wrote to Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles, discussing his plans to write an article for the *Saturday Evening Post* in which he wanted to explore "the vicious way in which Tokio [*sic*], Berlin, and Rome are using the race issue in the United States, India, and elsewhere in appeals to the colored peoples of the Pacific, the United States, the Caribbean, and Latin America, to support the Axis and oppose the United Nations."<sup>8</sup> As much as many American officials may have wished to keep questions regarding the U.S.' rather abysmal record on race a separate issue from the waging of the war, ultimately Axis propaganda rendered that road closed. This was not from a lack of effort on the part of government officials in trying to downplay the power of Axis arguments regarding American racism. Apparently, despite the large problem posed by race-baiting Axis propaganda, the OWI did not bother to separate out "statements on the race issue" in its monitored material.<sup>9</sup> In a State Department draft of a response to White, it was suggested that Welles reiterate to the executive secretary of the NAACP that the war was not about the issue of race, but rather

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<sup>8</sup> Walter White to Sumner Welles, August 31, 1942, 811.4016/442; Decimal Files 811.4016; RG 59; NARA.

<sup>9</sup> Unsigned internal State Department Memorandum from the Division of Current Information, September 4, 1942, FW811.4016/442; Decimal Files 811.4016; RG 59; NARA.

“a conflict of the forces of predatory oppression and the forces of freedom.”<sup>10</sup> The draft further called attention to a statement published in the August 10, 1942 issue of *Contemporary China*, a reactionary Kuomintang (KMT) organ, which stated that

[i]nstead of a conflict of color or a conflict of races, the present world conflagration, in the East as well as in the West, must be thought of as a conflict of cultures, a conflict of the ways and views of life—the totalitarian versus the democratic; the ‘logic of nature’ versus the law of humanity; the biologic view that looks at human groups as mere animals versus the sociologic view that regards all human beings as equally respectable and dignified,

as a “well put” example of the distillation of the issues at stake in the war.<sup>11</sup> This suggests that in late 1942, there were still powerful officials within the State Department who seemed unwilling to place the question of race center stage in developing a plan to counter Axis propaganda that focused on America’s less than stellar record of domestic race relations.

Many ordinary Americans feared the power of Axis propaganda and its potentially destabilizing effects on the U.S. racial status quo. Even by the early 1940s officials within the U.S. government began to view a positive projection of their image abroad with respect to domestic race relations as a core component of U.S. war policy. Soon after the U.S entered the war following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Axis propagandists were “extremely quick in exploiting matters of this sort.”<sup>12</sup> For example, as

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<sup>10</sup> Draft of letter from Sumner Welles to Walter White, n.d., 811.4016/442; Decimal Files 811.4016; RG 59; NARA.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Historian Justin Hart has argued persuasively that official American cognizance and concern over the international implications of America’s deplorable record on race was expressed far earlier than the ‘Cold War civil rights’ historiography has periodized it. He argues that State Department and OWI actions in the early 1940s suggests a preoccupation within those organizations to create ways to defuse domestic tensions over race (with regard to Mexican Americans in the U.S. Southwest, and African American responses to Japanese power) brought about by international rather than domestic imperatives. See his essay, “Making



the streets of Detroit, Michigan, smoldered in the aftermath of the July 1943 race riot, an *El Paso Times* editorial titled “Watch Enemies Within” blamed the incident on the organizational efforts of “Axis agents.” According to the piece, “[i]nformation from Detroit is to the effect that signs of [Axis] organization were visible in a number of instances...[i]gnorance, or lack of understanding, provides a fertile field for Axis agents.”<sup>13</sup> Despite the suspect claims put forth in the article, it illustrates the concern some Americans had regarding Axis exploitation of domestic racial unrest. It also suggests the extent to which many Americans began to see domestic race problems as international military ones, and that Axis agents and propaganda were making America’s race problems visible in ways that might endanger an Allied victory. Axis propaganda, especially that coming out of Japan, cast the war in terms of race, and blatant symbols of American racism like Jim Crow laws, and the Chinese Exclusion Act, lent truth to their claims. By the end of 1942, the director of the OWI was actively encouraging racial reform in the U.S. in the interests of foreign policy when he told FDR that one certain way to minimize the effectiveness of Japanese claims “that this is a racial war...[is] if our deeds tell the truth.”<sup>14</sup> Indeed, among those Americans who didn’t believe the U.S. was already involved in a race war, some feared that U.S. inattention to race in the current war could foster the conditions for a total global race war in the not too distant future.

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Democracy Safe for the World: Race, Propaganda, and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy During World War II,” *Pacific Historical Review* 73, no. 1 (February 2004): 49-84. Quote is from p. 61.

<sup>13</sup> “Watch Enemies Within,” *El Paso Times*, June 24, 1943, p. 4; Enclosure No. 1 to Despatch No. 1799, “Transmitting Editorial from the *El Paso Times* Regarding Recent Race Riots in the United States,” from the American Consul General at Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, William P. Blocker to Secretary of State, June 24, 1943, 811.4016/575; Decimal Files 811.4016; RG 59; NARA. Consul General Blocker, in his letter of transmission to the Secretary of State, noted the importance of the question of race to the State Department during the war: “In view of the Department’s keen interest in the racial discrimination question, I have the honor to transmit herewith an editorial entitled “Watch Enemies Within” which was published this morning in the *El Paso Times*. This editorial will do much along this border toward ameliorating the racial discrimination question, and its publication has been very timely.”

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Hart, “Making Democracy Safe for the World,” 77.

## Fears of a Coming Race War

The war had undoubtedly placed issues of race, and American culpability and accountability with regard to its own deplorable record on race, at the center of debates over how the war should be fought in the Pacific. Fears of a new war arising out of the destruction of the current war preoccupied the thinking of many, and this new war was set to be a global race war against white supremacy and European and American colonialism. Myrdal had warned in *The American Dilemma* that unless the U.S. addressed the issue of race in the immediate postwar era, there was a decent chance that “later a new war [will] be fought more definitely among color lines.”<sup>15</sup> Clarence Meyer of the Standard Vacuum Oil Company urged the repeal of Chinese exclusion because it would engender

much good will...for a very minor concession in our immigration policy, and the good will which is concerned is vital to our national welfare, as without it we shall incur the risk of another war in which white supremacy may be openly challenged by the oriental races.<sup>16</sup>

By 1943 the Japanese had harbored a decades-long animosity towards American racism and its effects on their own bids for international power and prestige. President Woodrow Wilson’s rejection of a Japanese-proposed clause on racial equality to be inserted as part of the Covenant of the League of Nations at the Paris Peace Conference at Versailles in 1919 had not helped America’s image as the arbiter of global democracy in a post-World

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<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Horne, “Race From Power,” 452.

<sup>16</sup> Statement of Clarence E. Meyer, Representative of the Standard Vacuum Oil Co. *Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, House of Representatives, 78<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, on H.R. 1882 and H.R. 2309 Bills to Repeal the Chinese Exclusion Acts, to Put the Chinese on a Quota Basis, and to Permit Their Naturalization, May 19, 20, 26, 27 and June 2, and 3, 1943.* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1943), 234. Henceforth *House Hearings to Repeal Exclusion*.

War I international order.<sup>17</sup> Despite Wilson's putative commitment to the concept of "self-determination," he remained in many ways beholden to the racial worldview of his origins in the American south.<sup>18</sup> For him, self-determination rarely intersected with his views on the colonial question, it was more of a loose congeries of ideas that were roughly analogous to concepts of popular sovereignty and democratic forms of governance—to which he thought many colored peoples undeserving or ineligible. Indeed, contrary to more radical anti-imperialist articulations of self-determination coming from the left (it was a phrase that Wilson initially borrowed from Lenin) "Wilson hoped that self-determination would serve precisely in the opposite role, as a bulwark against radical, revolutionary challenges to existing orders, such as those he saw in the Russian and Mexican revolutions."<sup>19</sup> Other reactionary positions the U.S. took towards race set the stage for an imminent global racial conflict as well.

The Immigration Act of 1924 had only made the U.S. look worse to the Japanese in their stance on the question of race. For Minnesota Congressman and former medical missionary in China, Walter Judd, it was "[t]he single most important cause for our being at war with Japan" in 1943.<sup>20</sup> Judd further clarified his claim by stating in no uncertain terms that if the U.S. had not completely restricted the immigration of Japanese in 1924, but instead placed them under a quota system as they had Europeans, the U.S. would not be involved in a war with an aggressive and militaristic Japanese state. Judd believed that

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<sup>17</sup> Gerald Horne has shown the instrumental role played by the short lived African American led International League of Darker Peoples in the creation of the Japanese racial equality clause debated at Versailles. See his essay, "Race From Power," 448-449.

<sup>18</sup> For an insightful treatment of race, anticolonialism, and the presidency of Woodrow Wilson see Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

<sup>19</sup> Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 43.

<sup>20</sup> Statement of Walter H. Judd, *House Hearings to Repeal Exclusion*, 163.

the 1924 Immigration Act “undermined the genuine liberals of Japan, who were very friendly to us,” and the militarists had only to point to the truth that the U.S. “rewards you sentimental liberals by passing an exclusion act” to set the stage for the rise of an aggressive Japan that would cast its war in the Pacific in racial terms.<sup>21</sup> Pulitzer Prize winner Pearl Buck also believed that American racism against the Chinese and the Japanese had been the principle cause of the Pacific war. She stated before a House Committee that, “[t]he tremendous evil effect that our exclusion had on the Japanese many years ago...was the death blow of liberalism [in Japan]; we caused the death blow of liberalism at that time.”<sup>22</sup>

In 1942, former President Herbert Hoover, who had once worked in China as a mining engineer, assessed the war there through an explicitly racial lens. He inveighed,

we are looking through in the face of something new...The white man has kept control of Asiatics by dividing parts of them against the other...and generally establishing an arrogant superiority. Universally, the white man is hated by the Chinese, Malayan, Indian, and Japanese alike...Unless [Japanese] leadership is destroyed. The Western Hemisphere is going to confront this mass across the Pacific.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Statement of Walter H. Judd, *ibid*, 163-4.

<sup>22</sup> Statement of Miss Pearl Buck, *ibid*, 76. Buck’s periodization of the genesis of Japanese discontent is probably more accurate than Judd’s focus on the ill effects of the Immigration Act of 1924. The Gentleman’s Agreement of 1907, which effectively barred Japanese immigration to the U.S. was a tremendous blow to that nation, which had just two years before routed Russia in a war and entered onto the world stage as a great power. Indeed, earlier than 1924, an editorial in Marcus Garvey’s newspaper *Negro World* had stated that, “With the rising militarism of Asia and the standing militarism of Europe one can foresee nothing but an armed clash between the white and yellow races. When this clash of millions comes, and opportunity will have presented itself to the Negro people of the world to free themselves..The next war will be between the Negroes and the whites, unless our demands for justice are recognized. With Japan to fight with us we can win such a war.” Quoted in Horne, “Race From Power,” 449. Original can be found in Robert Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, Volume 1, 1826-August 1919*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 345.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Walter LaFeber, *The Clash:U.S.-Japanese Relations Throughout History*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1997), 217.

For some, by 1943 it was too late, “the race problem is with us now. [Repeal] is the way to solve it.”<sup>24</sup> Avoiding the issue of race altogether by failing to move on the question of repeal would only increase the scope of the race question after the war. Judd argued that “this will not be a racial war unless we make it so...there never will be a war between the white and colored races, if only we keep the largest and strongest of them, the Chinese, with us.”<sup>25</sup> Patrick Hurley, later to be appointed U.S. Ambassador to China, and a major torchbearer in the crusade against liberal internationalist China experts within the government that helped inaugurate McCarthyism, warned early in the war that unless the Japanese menace was crushed, it would soon “succeed in combining most of the Asiatic peoples against the Whites.”<sup>26</sup> Clearly, for some, like Walter Judd and Pearl Buck, China was the linchpin not only for success in the Pacific War, but for the peace to follow. For others, in 1943, the question of which political faction, the KMT, CCP, or perhaps a third force, would even lead that nation in the postwar era was still open for debate.

### **Japanese Propaganda and the U.S. War Effort**

As the war progressed, international scrutiny regarding the exclusion laws made their repeal an imperative part of the fight against the Axis powers. Axis propaganda that focused on racial inequality in the U.S. was having a detrimental impact on the American war effort. U.S. proclamations that they fought in the interest of freedom and democracy for the world began to ring hollow for those like the Indians, whose second-class status in the British colonial hierarchy was essentially being reinforced by America’s policy of

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<sup>24</sup> Statement of Walter H. Judd, *House Hearings to Repeal Exclusion*, 151.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Lafeber, *The Clash*, 217.

non-interference in Anglo-Indian affairs. The OWI expressed a particular concern over the effects of Japanese propaganda on African Americans. As one official wrote FDR, “the intensive Tokyo propaganda that Japan is fighting for the cause of all races against the white race...has had some effect on the Chinese; it has had more effect on the Filipinos, Malaysians, and the peoples of India. It even reaches, as you doubtless know, our own Negroes.”<sup>27</sup> One historian has shown that Japanese propaganda regarding American racism began much earlier in the century, noting that soon after World War I “Tokyo recognized that the aching Achille’s heel of the European powers—and their cousins in Washington—was their praxis of ‘white supremacy’ in Africa and elsewhere, which allowed Japan to more readily portray itself as a viable alternative to these nations.”<sup>28</sup> U.S. intelligence operatives even took careful notice of an African American radical political alchemy that combined a “colored movement” led by Japan with Russian Bolshevism.<sup>29</sup>

The effect of Japanese propaganda on the Chinese war effort was of particular importance to American officials in the 1940s. By 1943, “the exclusion of the Chinese...[was] no longer a question of domestic policy” but had been “pushed into the foreground by Japanese propaganda...seeking to destroy friendly relations” between the U.S. and China.<sup>30</sup> Illinois congressman Noah Mason, who sat on the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, clarified this point to Lewis Hines, the legislative representative of the American Federation of Labor, during the Congressional hearings on the repeal of exclusion, when he reminded him that Hines “[did] not seem to know

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<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Hart, “Making Democracy Safe for the World,” 70.

<sup>28</sup> Horne, “Race From Power,” 449.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, Horne notes that this “combination of ‘Colored Scare’ and Red Scare’ was taken quite seriously by Washington[.]” 450.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

that the proposition [for the repeal of exclusion] was not brought up by us [the House committee], it was not brought up by any group in this country; it was brought up by Japan itself in its propaganda operations and its broadcasts to the Chinese people, which has forced the issue to the front.”<sup>31</sup> While Mason may have been elastic with the facts, his sentiment was well registered and shared by many. The central concern over the repeal of exclusion was not the inherent injustice of a race-based restrictive immigration policy, but that the Chinese, an Allied power, might have their war effort weakened by a combination of inadequate lend-lease materiel from the U.S.—which was disproportionately being shipped to the European front—and Japanese propaganda about American racism and the presumed equality Chinese could expect from a Japanese-led ‘Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere,’ or an ‘Asia for the Asiatics.’

To be sure, American legislators were less concerned with the impact of repeal on the Chinese in the U.S., and more with how it would be a timely political maneuver in the U.S.’ strategic interests internationally. It would be, like the symbolic relinquishing of the rights of extraterritoriality granted by the U.S. on October 10, 1942—Double-Ten Day, akin to a Chinese Fourth of July—a “stroke of the greatest political wisdom.”<sup>32</sup> In an unanswered letter to Attorney General Francis Biddle, the NAACP’s Walter White expressed his fear that racism against blacks in the U.S. might “be used by the Japanese, through radio broadcasts and other means of reaching the colored peoples of the Orient, to create bitterness against the United Nations.”<sup>33</sup> According to Samuel Dickstein, Chair of the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, repealing exclusion “is

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<sup>31</sup> Statement of Lewis G. Hines, Legislative Representative American Federation of Labor, *House Hearings to Repeal Exclusion*, 180.

<sup>32</sup> Statement of Rev. John G. Magee, Minister of St. John’s Episcopal Church, *ibid*, 19.

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Hart, “Making Democracy Safe for the World,” 73.

really...in our own interest. There are certain forces in China trying to turn the people against...us by using our Exclusion Act as the basis for their propaganda.”<sup>34</sup> Repeal would yield great benefits at very little real cost. Indeed, many close observers of American racism believed that small ameliorative gestures could have far more potent outcomes. While in the U.S., Myrdal had noted the increased international scrutiny of American race relations, prompting him to write that, “concessions to Negro rights in this phase of the history of the world will repay the nation many times, while any and all injustices inflicted upon them will be extremely costly.”<sup>35</sup> Similarly, the OWI reported in 1942 that American “Negroes” are, “inordinately proud of their loyalty and are responsive to the most minute gestures of sympathy and appreciation.”<sup>36</sup> Most proponents of repeal were also supporters of putting Chinese immigration on a quota basis to be determined by the formula used in the Immigration Act of 1924, which would only be 107 Chinese. Even the Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion, which “played a decisive role in the passage of the repeal law,”<sup>37</sup> supported a quota of 107 Chinese, despite claims that their mission was to see the “elimination of all racial discriminations from our immigration and naturalization laws.”<sup>38</sup> Minnesota congressman Walter H. Judd, a former medical missionary in China, stated quite plainly that “all [Japan] needs to do is to start treating the Chinese and other Asiatics better than we treat them” before the

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<sup>34</sup> Statement of Roscoe C. Walker, State Council Secretary, Junior Order of the United American Mechanics of New Jersey, *ibid*, 52.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Paul Gordon Lauren, “Seen from the Outside: The International Perspective on America’s Dilemma,” in Brenda Gayle Plummer ed., *Window on Freedom: Race, Civil Rights, and Foreign Affairs 1945-1988*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 38.

<sup>36</sup> Office of War Information Report “Negroes in a Democracy At War,” p. 27, May 27, 1942, Survey of Intelligence Materials No. 25; Decimal Files 811.4016; RG 59, NARA.

<sup>37</sup> Fred Riggs, *Pressures on Congress: A Study of the Repeal of Chinese Exclusion*. (New York: King’s Crown Press Columbia University, 1950), 47.

<sup>38</sup> “Final Report to Members” Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion, November 30, 1943. Box 13: Fol. “Chinese Exclusion, Repeal of, 1942-1944,” Julean Arnold Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University. Henceforth Arnold Papers.



Chinese war effort broke down and they followed the road of appeasement towards the Japanese.<sup>39</sup>

By all accounts, the Japanese propaganda apparatus in China, and among Chinese in the U.S., was a well-oiled machine. Congressman Walter Magnuson, whose name ultimately appeared on the bill repealing exclusion, noted that “[t]he Japanese have had for many years a great propaganda machine in the Orient.”<sup>40</sup> Japanese radio broadcasts transmitted to the U.S. in English emphasized the many ways in which people of color in the U.S. were victims of racism beyond just restrictive immigration policies. One broadcast asked, “[i]f the Americans really desired to accord fair treatment to the Chinese, why don’t they repeal alien land laws which deprive the Chinese of the right to own property...or marriage laws...which forbid the Chinese from marrying persons of the white race?”<sup>41</sup> Another noted half-hearted commitments by the U.S. and British to rectify racist policies. “The United States urged Britain to return Hong Kong while Britain, on the other hand, asked the United States to revoke the [exclusion] law[s]” and as a result progress on “[t]he Anglo-American joint statement on the abolition of extraterritorial rights...has been halted.”<sup>42</sup> According to eyewitness accounts, Chinese of all classes were constantly made aware of the racially restrictive immigration policies aimed at the Chinese in the U.S. Carl Neprud, in his testimony at the House hearings to repeal exclusion, read aloud from Japanese controlled publications in Hong Kong that he had smuggled past Japanese gendarmes into the U.S. after being released from a Japanese

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<sup>39</sup> Statement of Dr. Walter H. Judd, Member of Congress from the State of Minnesota, *House Hearings to Repeal Exclusion*, 153.

<sup>40</sup> Statement of Warren G. Magnuson, *ibid*, 197.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, 85. Transcript of Japanese radio broadcast in English to South Seas, February 26, 1943.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, 84. Transcript of Japanese radio broadcast in English to the Western U.S., January 16, 1943.

prisoner of war camp, which carried headlines like, “American Ignorance Chiefly to Blame for Present War,” and “Chinese Now Turn More Toward Nippon.”<sup>43</sup>

Another witness at the House hearings recalled a conversation he had with a Chinese “ricksha man” who asked him when the Americans were going to be sending help to the Chinese in their war efforts against the Japanese. The American, Father Albert O’Hara, replied that the Americans would send help as soon as they could, to which the rickshaw puller remarked, “[t]hese various wars, just what are the causes behind them? There are certain elements there of racial superiority...How about your own treatment of Indians and Negroes, doesn’t that rest on the same solution?”<sup>44</sup> The issue of American racism towards Chinese and other people of color spread not just through radio and newspapers. Literacy rates in China were not high, and even fewer Chinese had radios, but “even though a Chinese does not read a newspaper, he gets a great deal of information through conversation. There is a grapevine telegraph all over China, and the news spreads in the most remarkable way throughout the country.”<sup>45</sup> The wide dissemination of anti-American propaganda, and its explicit focus on domestic racial problems, galvanized many Americans towards support of a policy of repeal of the Chinese exclusion acts as a necessary war measure.

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<sup>43</sup> Statement of Carl Neprud, *ibid*, 126.

<sup>44</sup> Statement of Walter H. Judd, *ibid*, 144.

<sup>45</sup> Statement of Dr. Arthur Hummel, Chief of the Asiatic Division of the Library of Congress, *ibid*, 28. For more on the phenomenon of the “grapevine telegraph” as an efficient and widespread method of information dissemination in China see Henrietta Harrison’s interesting essay, “Newspapers and Nationalism in Rural China 1890-1929,” *Past and Present*, no. 166 (February, 2000): 181-204. Although Harrison is writing of an earlier period, she discusses “oral forms of news transmission” and uses their existence as evidence that contradicts arguments that “the majority of the population who lived in the largely rural interior were ignorant” of contemporary news.

## The International Context of Chinese Exclusion

The Chinese have the unlucky distinction of being the only group to be excluded from the United States solely on the basis of their race.<sup>46</sup> The Japanese were effectively barred with the Gentleman's Agreement of 1907, the Immigration Act of 1917 designated an "Asiatic Barred Zone" which ended immigration from India, and by 1924, with the passage of the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act, all immigration from Asia was made illegal. But the Chinese, in 1943, remained the only group to be excluded from the United States because they were Chinese, and not because they hailed from a particular region of the world, however dubiously that region may have been construed. Indeed, despite being allies of the U.S. in the war effort, the restrictions placed on Chinese nationals travelling in the United States legally undermined the sovereignty of China as a nation. According to the provisions set forth in Section 6 of an 1884 amendment to the original 1882 legislation, Chinese who were of the few classes exempt from exclusion—students, teachers, merchants, and diplomats—had to provide a special certificate when applying for an American visa proving their legal right to enter the U.S. "By this provision the United States in effect does not recognize a passport of the government of China, which

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<sup>46</sup>The literature on Chinese exclusion is sizeable. For two differing perspectives on the debates leading up to the original Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 see Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998) and Lucy Salyer's classic study, *Laws Harsh as Tigers: Chinese Immigrants and the Shaping of Modern Immigration Law*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995). Alexander Saxton's *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971) is, despite its age, still an excellent work on the Anti-Chinese movement in California that led to the passage of the Exclusion Act. For life under exclusion see Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), and the essays in K. Scott Wong and Sucheng Chan eds., *Claiming America: Constructing Chinese American Identities during the Exclusion Era*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998).

is fully tantamount to not recognizing the sovereign power of that country.”<sup>47</sup> So strict were some of the particulars of the various exclusion acts that a

Chinese student booked for a certain college may have to travel hundreds of miles out of his way because he is not allowed to land at the port nearest his destination. A Chinese merchant in Mexico, who wishes to sail for China from San Francisco, must be accompanied by an immigration guard all the way from the Mexican border to the coast port, and has to pay the guard’s expenses en route.<sup>48</sup>

These were just some of the injustices the proponents of repeal sought to correct.

The question of exclusion and its repeal were at the forefront of the limited American war effort in the Pacific because of the importance of China in the U.S.’ overall Europe-first strategy. American officials had concluded that American interests in Europe were of primary importance, and the defeat of Hitler’s armies would take precedence over the defeat of Japanese forces. While America concentrated its energies in the European theater of war, it needed its largest Asian ally, China, to resist Japanese aggression for as long as possible. The limited availability of American military aid made non-military support all the more important in these early years of the war. In this way, the repeal of America’s antiquated Chinese exclusion laws became a war imperative, and an international rather than a domestic issue, because the gains it could produce in

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<sup>47</sup> Miscellaneous excerpted text relating to the repeal of the Chinese exclusion acts, Box 13: Fol. “Chinese Exclusion, Repeal of, 1942-1944,” Arnold Papers.

<sup>48</sup> “Our Chinese Wall,” pamphlet distributed by the Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion, Box 13: Fol. “Chinese Exclusion, Repeal of, 1942-1944,” Arnold Papers.

Chinese morale far outweighed their negligible impact on the real immigration of Chinese into the U.S.<sup>49</sup>

Public debates over the repeal of exclusion rested on several core assumptions. First, that flagging Chinese morale could be bolstered by a U.S. move to repeal its racist exclusion laws, and place the Chinese on at least nominal parity with immigrants from Europe and the Western Hemisphere. Many Americans hoped that a strong position taken with regard to the welfare of Chinese in the U.S. could increase the fighting will of Chinese troops, who had already been fighting the Japanese unaided for over six years. Despite fears among some that repeal might open up the floodgates of Asian immigration, and lead ultimately to ‘social equality’ among the races (the favored code word for desegregation), the overwhelming majority of proponents saw it for what it was, a symbolic gesture of limited consequence to the racial status quo.<sup>50</sup> The second assumption was that Axis propaganda, especially Japanese, was having a debilitating effect on the U.S.’ ability to wage a war in the name of freedom and democracy. For many, the surest way to subvert these Axis aims was to arm “the Chungking government

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<sup>49</sup> For insights into the international aspects of the repeal of domestic American exclusion policy see 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 (Summer 2003): 3-30, and L. Ling-chi Wang, “Politics of the Repeal of the Exclusion Laws,” in *The Repeal and its Legacy: Proceedings of the Conference on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Repeal of the Exclusion Acts, November 12-14, 1993*. (Brisbane, CA: Chinese Historical Society of America, 1994), 66-80.

<sup>50</sup> Throughout the Congressional debates over the repeal of exclusion, Louisiana Congressman, and staunch segregationist, Asa Leonard Allen, repeatedly questioned those testifying in favor of repeal whether or not they were in favor of ‘social equality’ as well. Most were not, but some, to their credit, stated unequivocally that they believed Jim Crow to be an outmoded and archaic system of oppression that had no place in the most progressive democracy in the world.

[with] one of the greatest counterpropaganda weapons it could have,”—repeal.<sup>51</sup> To be sure, the worst aspect of the laws and their second life as Axis propaganda was their undeniable truth. Pearl Buck testified before the House Committee debating repeal that “the Chinese have heard this [Japanese] propaganda and while they have not heeded it much, it has nevertheless been true. As a war measure, it would simply be the wisest thing we could do to make it impossible for Japan to use this sort of propaganda anymore, by making it untrue.”<sup>52</sup> Richard Walsh, president of the John Day Company, reiterated the point before the same House committee when he argued that “the unhappy fact is that all this is true. The most powerful propaganda is that which uses unquestioned facts.”<sup>53</sup> And the third assumption was that China held wonders unimaginable to even the most prophetic boosters of capitalism in the region. The historic lure of the fabled China market mesmerized proponents of repeal. J.J. Underwood argued for repeal on behalf of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, favoring it based on the organization’s fundamental belief that “unless we win this war there is not going to be any commerce” between China and the U.S.<sup>54</sup> Underwood made the further point that “the future commerce of the world rests on the Pacific. The European countries are broke. They are decadent.”<sup>55</sup> Many, like Congresswoman Frances Bolton, extolled the virtues and romanticized the image of a postwar China industrializing with American made tools, saying “[China] will

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<sup>51</sup> *Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, House of Representatives, 78<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, on H.R. 1882 and H.R. 2309 Bills to Repeal the Chinese Exclusion Acts, to Put the Chinese on a Quota Basis, and to Permit Their Naturalization, May 19, 20, 26, 27 and June 2, and 3, 1943.* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1943), 197. Henceforth *House Hearings to Repeal Exclusion*.

<sup>52</sup> Statement of Miss Pearl Buck, *ibid*, 68.

<sup>53</sup> Statement of Richard J. Walsh, President, John Day Co., Editor of Magazine *Asia and the Americas*, *ibid*, 80.

<sup>54</sup> Statement of J.J. Underwood, Seattle Chamber of Commerce, *ibid*, 213.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 215.

be one of our best customers, if she is our friend.”<sup>56</sup> Minnesota Congressman Walter Judd declared that “to prove our intention to treat China as an equal is not starry-eyed idealism or sentimental generosity. It is good hard business sense.”<sup>57</sup> C.V. Starr, chairman of American International Underwriters, was unsentimental in his reasoning for repeal stating, “primarily, I am a businessman and I prefer to look at this immigration problem as coldly and as realistically as I can.”<sup>58</sup> Indeed, Julean Arnold, one of the leaders of the Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion, had been a U.S. commercial attaché in China in the early decades of the century. A strong, independent, allied, and consumerist China was the keystone for many Americans’ visions of a postwar *Pax Americana*.

### **The Domestic Context of Repeal**

By the late spring and early summer of 1943, as the repeal of exclusion was debated on the floors of Congress, and within the pages and on the airwaves of both the mainstream and fringe media in the U.S., many Americans already evinced a familiarity with the terms of the debate, and felt in many ways a certain affiliation with the Chinese then suffering under the yoke of Japanese military aggression. This familiarity was no accident. Instead, it was the outcome of a very determined effort on the part of many Americans, as well as Chinese, in generating a sense of kinship between the peoples of

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<sup>56</sup> Statement of Frances P. Bolton, Member of Congress from the State of Ohio, *ibid*, 63.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Wang, “Politics of the Repeal of the Exclusion Laws,” 73.

<sup>58</sup> Statement of C.V. Starr, American International Underwriters, *House Hearings to Repeal Exclusion*, 243. Anecdotally, Starr’s company, American International Underwriters would later become American International Group, more infamously known as AIG, the insurance giant that was the recipient of over 180 billion dollars in U.S. Federal bailout funds in 2008-9. The East Asian Libraries at both Columbia University and the University of California, Berkeley are named after him. C.V. Starr is also alleged to have been a wartime OSS operative in China. According to a former business associate J. Arthur Duff, Starr had profited handsomely, if not completely legitimately, from monies paid to him by the OSS, money he then used to build AIG into one of the most wealthy global corporations. For more on Duff, Starr, and OSS see esp. Box 1: Fol. 2; Box 1: Fol. 11; and Box 2: Fol. 6 in the J. Arthur Duff Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.

the two nations. American perceptions of China have always played out on uneven terrain. Inflected as they were by the competing and often contradictory discourses of racism, respect, paternalism, and commercialism, American visions of China in 1943 bear some closer scrutiny.

The person who arguably had the largest impact on American views of China in the first half of the twentieth century was Henry R. Luce. Henry Robinson Luce was born in 1898 to a young Presbyterian missionary couple in the Shandong Province of China. China would forever hold a mythic place in the adult Luce's expansive imagination, despite his failure to learn the language of his birth country, or his limited contact with everyday Chinese, as he lived the sheltered youth similar to that of many missionary children in the early years of the twentieth century. What contact the young Luce did have with native Chinese was often with servants in the missionary compound within which he lived as a child. His father, Henry Winters Luce, had studied at Yale and Princeton, and had arrived in China a year earlier with his young wife, Elizabeth Middleton Root, who hailed from Utica, NY. Not long after the Luces had settled into the Chinese missionary life, Chinese attacks against Western missionaries during the Boxer Uprising forced the family to flee, seeking safety aboard a U.S. navy ship, from which they escaped to Korea. The Luce's return to China was behind the armored support of the American military, which had been dispatched to China to quell the uprising and to exact punishment against the Chinese.<sup>59</sup> After the dust of the Boxer rebellions had settled, the elder Luce became an influential figure in expanding Christian higher education in China.

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<sup>59</sup> For a careful study of the events leading up to the Boxer uprising see Joseph Esherick's award winning, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); for a more recent reassessment of the uprising as a modern anti-imperialist movement situated in an international frame, rather than a backwards looking one, see the essays in Robert Bickers and R.G. Tiedemann eds., *The Boxers, China, and the World*. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).



Against this backdrop, the young Luce formed a lasting image of America's role in China. Michael Hunt has argued that the examples set by Luce's father and other American missionaries in China, to take "a prominent place in China's education and defense nourished patriotic and humanitarian impulses that would shape Luce's career in a striking variety of ways."<sup>60</sup> The two most prominent inheritances the young Luce received from his father's generation of China missionaries was the "impulse to sermonize" and "a commitment to service that would take secular form."<sup>61</sup> Henry Luce would employ both of these strategies to great effect drumming up support for Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT in later years.

Luce's sheltered upbringing in China (he left at 14 to attend the Hotchkiss School in Connecticut), and three subsequent trips back to the country of his birth before the end of World War II (during which he almost only met with high ranking officials and dignitaries), constituted the extent of his experience with the country for which he became the most vocal American spokesperson. His limited intellectual familiarity with the country's history and culture did not deter Luce from proudly taking on the mantle of 'China expert.' Despite Luce's deep intellect, and his general inquisitiveness about the world in which he lived, the elegiac myopia that afflicted his thinking with regard to China resulted in "an ethnocentric, self-righteous, almost cartoonish conception of China."<sup>62</sup> Luce's crusades to bring the plight of the Chinese to the attention of the American public were so effective, that they would later become entrenched as the dominant view of China and the Chinese, despite alternative perspectives put forth by

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<sup>60</sup> Michael Hunt, "East Asia in Henry Luce's 'American Century,'" *Diplomatic History* 23, no. 2 (Spring 1999): 321-353. Quote is from p. 323.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

actual experts in the field. Luce's views, and those of his cohort, were the views that would ultimately frame the public debates over the repeal of Chinese exclusion in the U.S. The extent to which Luce, and the powerful men and women who shared his views on China, were able to paint an overwhelmingly popular yet misguided picture of Chiang Kai-shek's China as stable, progressive, and democratically inclined, should not be underestimated for its role in the direction early American Cold War culture took. The ultimate failure of their vision of a strong and independent China did much to catalyze the anti-communist movement in this country, and can be linked, as I demonstrate in this dissertation, quite clearly to the efflorescence of McCarthyism. During his carefully orchestrated visits to China, Luce worked hard to keep "inconvenient details" regarding China out of his mind if they conflicted with the singularity of his vision of a strong, independent, and democratic China under the leadership of the Christian first family, the Chiangs.<sup>63</sup> Between 1927 and 1942 Luce put Chiang Kai-shek on the cover of *Time* magazine seven times, once proclaiming Chiang and his wife, Soong Meiling, Man and Wife of the year in 1938, and even calling Chiang "the greatest soldier in Asia, the greatest statesman in Asia, America's best friend" in the leader's final cover story in 1942.<sup>64</sup>

Luce's publishing powerhouse was anchored by the triumvirate of *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune* magazines, and they single-handedly played an instrumental role in the popularization of a sympathetic image of Nationalist China in the U.S. from the 1920s to the 1940s. To Luce, China was a country with a deep history, a rich cultural heritage, and a nation filled with extraordinary promise and capable of greatness, if only guided by the

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 326.

right sort of hand. This was an entirely mythic China, immanent in the minds of the deeply evangelical cohort of American Protestant missionaries of which Luce's father was a part; men of the Student Volunteer Movement, like Sherwood Eddy, Horace Pitkin, and others. It was a grandiose idea crafted by missionaries and eager American businessmen in the early years of the century.<sup>65</sup> These Americans' vision of a new, modern, and reinvigorated China was deeply colored by the evangelical mission. According to those who knew him, the young Henry R. Luce was a man who "believed in God, the United States, and the Republican Party, though not necessarily in that order."<sup>66</sup> Although Luce never became a missionary himself, the ethic of the mission was what drove his passion for the pursuit of knowledge, and ultimately it was this same passion that would give rise to his belief that facts that constituted an unbiased 'news' could be brought into the popular sphere. This was in fact the core belief of *Time*. According to Luce, *Time* "was a magazine that appeared to be composed by one person, 'Not any one man...but a sort of Superman—the sum total of the very few men...who really 'make it.'" It was this joint effort at news journalism that made Luce believe his publications to be above reproach as messengers of objective fact. According to Luce, this strategy provided, "as nearly as possible a completely objective picture of the world in which we

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<sup>65</sup> The commercial aspect of this mythic China drew on a longer history of the idea of the fabled "China market," which reached its twentieth century apotheosis in Carl Crow's 1938 book *Four Hundred Million Customers*. The close links between commercial markets, early American international advertising, and U.S. intervention in the internal affairs of China are particularly highlighted in the career of Carl Crow. A journalist and pioneering adman in China, Crow was also the China station chief of President Woodrow Wilson's Committee of Public Information, the U.S. World War I propaganda apparatus that would generate a model for later organizations like the World War II Coordinator of Information, which would itself later be consolidated into the CIA, and the more official U.S. propaganda organization, the OWI. For more on Crow and early U.S. propaganda efforts in China, see Hans Schmidt's wonderful essay, "Democracy for China: American Propaganda and the May Fourth Movement," *Diplomatic History* 22, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 1-28.

<sup>66</sup> T. Christopher Jespersion, *American Images of China, 1931-1949*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 10.

live.”<sup>67</sup> As a matter of course, the China that Luce lauded in his publications was that under the leadership of the converted Christian Chiang Kai-shek. By promoting an image of China as similar to the U.S. in ways that spanned religion, geography, sense of humor, and family values, Luce was able to create and package a China that was “literally ‘made in the U.S.A.’”<sup>68</sup> Under Luce’s guiding hand even Hollywood became deeply involved in promoting an image of China as a friend of the U.S., and deserving of its generosity—but this was always a generosity that would be returned manifold through the potential market value of China’s population of over four hundred million. David O. Selznick, (who produced *Gone with the Wind*), at Luce’s subtle request, wanted to “build a show that will send 40,000,000 Americans to bed weeping for China and emptying their pocketbooks.”<sup>69</sup> During the war, the War Department even distributed a manual to the motion picture industry asking them to take care to present an image of China that “is a great nation, cultured and *liberal*, with whom, inevitably, [the United States] will be closely bound in the world that is to come.”<sup>70</sup> The explicit emphasis on China’s inherent liberal nature was indicative of the ways in which many Americans, like Luce, sought to construct an image of China in the U.S. mind as similar to America as possible.

A decade earlier the sympathetic portrayal of a Chinese farming family in Pearl Buck’s novel *The Good Earth* earned her the Pulitzer Prize.<sup>71</sup> The novel was translated into thirty languages, turned into a Broadway play in 1933, and won multiple Academy awards when it was turned into a Hollywood film in 1937 and viewed by over twenty five

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<sup>67</sup> Jespersen, *American Images*, 13.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 66.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, 63.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, 77. Italics in original.

<sup>71</sup> Gloria H. Chun, “‘Go West...to China’: Chinese American Identity in the 1930s,” in K. Scott Wong and Sucheng Chan, eds., *Claiming America: Constructing Chinese American Identities during the Exclusion Era*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 168-170.

million Americans.<sup>72</sup> That same year, a Gallup Poll determining which events had most captured American's interest during the year found that the Sino-Japanese War ranked above Roosevelt's Supreme Court battle and Amelia Earhart's tragic failed transatlantic flight.<sup>73</sup> Buck's influence on the American perception of China expanded beyond her literary pursuits. She also founded the nonprofit organization, East and West Association, whose goal was to promote "bilateral harmony and understanding" between the U.S. and China. Buck's call for aid to China went beyond its wartime needs, she specifically urged aid to China because "it was '*the oldest democracy in the world*'."<sup>74</sup> As I show in this chapter, Buck's voice was also crucial in the Congressional debates over the repeal of Chinese exclusion. The image of China that was produced for public consumption during these decades was very closely managed by people like Luce and Pearl Buck, and those who shared similar visions of China's future. This was decidedly *not* the China wracked by internal divisions as repeal was debated in the halls of Congress. It was most certainly not the insurgent China, gaining power each day, under the leadership of Mao Zedong. Luce, Buck, and others' China was the one that dominated the debates over repeal, and it was against the force of this imagined China that the more realistically oriented specialists within the State Department, like Jack Service, John Paton Davies Jr., Owen Lattimore, and others, had to contend. And it was the failure of this mythic China to succeed in the postwar world that galvanized attacks against China specialists who were deemed responsible for the dissolution of the dream.

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<sup>72</sup> Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 4.

<sup>73</sup> Esperson, *American Images*, 45-6.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, 71. Italics mine.

This fantasy of a friendly, democratic, fraternal, and ‘Americanized’ China, despite its mythic qualities, did have an impact on the lives of Chinese in the U.S. An increased awareness of China’s plight among white Americans, and the valor of the Chinese people in resisting the onslaught of Japanese militarism and fascism, generated new sympathies among Americans for Chinese both in China and the U.S. This opened up new spaces for Chinese living within the U.S. to craft new identities for themselves that were increasingly a part of more mainstream American life. They began to move out of the ghettoized sites of various Chinatowns, and participate more fully in the promises of American citizenship. On December 7, 1941, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor linked the fates of China, Chinese Americans, and the U.S. in ways that were stronger than ever before.

### **“International Solidarity of the Indestructible Type”: The U.S., China, and Chinese Americans During the Second World War**

On October 20, 1944, Francis Wai, a Chinese American army captain from Hawaii, was killed in combat at the historic Battle of Leyte in the Philippines. For his bravery, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest possible award for valor in combat action against an enemy force. According to Wai’s army citation he

“...distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action...finding the first four waves of soldiers leaderless, disorganized, and pinned down on the open beach, [Wai] immediately assumed command. Issuing clear and concise orders, and disregarding heavy enemy machine gun fire and rifle fire, he began to move inland through the rice paddies without cover. The men, inspired by his cool demeanor and heroic example, rose from their positions and followed him. During the advance, Captain Wai repeatedly determined the location of enemy strong points by deliberately exposing

himself to draw their fire. In leading an assault upon the last remaining Japanese pillbox in the area, he was killed by its occupants.<sup>75</sup>

Wai's family did not receive his Medal of Honor until May, 2000, only after Congress had mandated a review of the war records of Asian American soldiers in 1999.<sup>76</sup>

What is incredible is not Wai's bravery in combat. It is the fact that he was not officially recognized by the U.S. government until more than fifty years after the fact. Wai was only one of about 20,000 Chinese American men and women who served in the U.S. armed forces during the Second World War. Many Chinese American families had four or five sons serve in the U.S. military. Those that served suffered a combat-wound rate of near eighteen percent. Thirty nine percent of Chinese American veterans were foreign born, a number nearing the statistics for Union soldiers in the American Civil War. Ten percent of Chinese American soldiers were not citizens when they enlisted.<sup>77</sup> Hundreds of thousands more contributed in other less official capacities by working in the defense industries, raising money for war relief, and volunteering for organizations like the Red Cross. These are stories that are only recently coming to light.<sup>78</sup> Until now the majority of historical literature on Asian Americans and the Second World War has been about the unjust internment of over 100,000 Japanese Americans, of whom two-thirds were U.S. citizens, and the subsequent bravery of many of those internees who

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<sup>75</sup> Quoted in "Francis Wai: A Hero Remembered," *Asian Week*, July 26, 2001.

<sup>76</sup> Hawaii Senator Daniel Akaka spearheaded the move to upgrade the Distinguished Service Crosses that were awarded to Asian American veterans of the Second World War to Congressional Medals of Honor when he authored the section of the 1996 Defense Authorization Act mandating Congress to reexamine the war record of Asian Americans. Because of his efforts twenty one Asian American veterans were belatedly awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

<sup>77</sup> These numbers are from a distillation of a survey sent out by the Chinese Historical Society (CHS) in the early 1980s. Though not completely thorough, the survey had respondents that spanned across the entire U.S., including Hawaii and Alaska. The statistics were compiled by William Strobridge, a military historian working with the CHS. Him Mark Lai Papers, AAS2000/ARC80, Asian American Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley, Ctn.77: Fol. 21. Henceforth HML Papers.

<sup>78</sup> See esp. K. Scott Wong's recent work *Americans First: Chinese Americans and the Second World War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).

volunteered for military service despite, and often because, of their public persecution. Indeed, the segregated all-Japanese-American 442<sup>nd</sup> has the distinction of being one of the most decorated units for its size in the entire war. They are perhaps most often remembered as the unit that saved the “Lost Battalion” from the clutches of the Germans in the Vosges Mountains of France. The 442<sup>nd</sup> sustained over 800 casualties rescuing 211 members of the Texas National Guard, members of the 141<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, in what many consider one of the most important U.S. combat battles of the twentieth century. This has necessarily conditioned the mainstream American view of the role of Asian Americans in the war, which often includes a gap where the story of Chinese American participation in the war should be.

But the story of Chinese Americans and the Second World War is not entirely one of intense patriotic fervor and bravery. It is much more complicated. The repeal of Chinese exclusion in 1943 with the passage of Magnuson Act signaled in many ways an increasingly liberalizing tendency within the U.S. government towards the Chinese in the U.S. And yet, as I have demonstrated, the repeal of exclusion was in many ways mandated by the fact that China was a wartime ally of the United States; to be committed to the idea of fighting fascism abroad while actively promoting it at home was not good publicity for the fairly liberal Roosevelt administration. The U.S. war against fascism highlighted for an international audience the depth of racial inequality in America. Desegregation of public places was still more than a decade away. Many racial minorities took advantage of this moment. African Americans waged the “double victory” campaign, one against fascism abroad, and one against racism at home. The new availability of work in the defense industry for Chinese Americans was for many a



portent for their late but inevitable assimilation into the American mainstream. Popular representations of Chinese Americans in American culture had shifted from the offensive characterizations of Fu Manchu and Charlie Chan to ones where they were seen as equals and brothers in arms in the global struggle against fascism.<sup>79</sup> National publications like Luce's *Life* printed instructional pictorial diagrams teaching white Americans how to distinguish an enemy "Jap" from a friendly Chinese.

One week after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, C.T. Feng, the Chinese Consul-General in San Francisco, and KMT loyalist, had this to say about the U.S.' entry in the Second World War:

"[p]eaceful America gave Japan the benefit of the doubt. Now America knows the terrible truth about Japanese treachery... Sorrowful because of the great tragedy [the bombing of Pearl Harbor] which has befallen a good friend, China, nevertheless, is cheered by the thought that the awakening did not come too late... It may be stated, without reservation, that the current and resulting economic and military liaison between the United States and China will probably set a precedent for international solidarity of the indestructible type... To have had America as a friend has long been a heartening asset to China. To have America as a war ally now, provides, along with military co-operation, spiritual support, between half a billion peace-loving peoples, each individual in this vast mass motivated by ideals of democratic freedom."<sup>80</sup>

The dominant political voice in Chinatown, the KMT, was quick to speak up in praise of the U.S.-China wartime alliance. Like its political counterpoint in China itself, any

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<sup>79</sup> For more on negative portrayals of Asians in American popular culture throughout history see: Gina Marchetti, *Romance and the Yellow Peril: Race, Sex, and Discursive Strategies in Hollywood Fiction*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Robert G. Lee, *Orientalism: Asian Americans in Popular Culture*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999). For more on the shift during this period on American perceptions of the Chinese see: Colin Mackerras, *Western Images of China*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), esp. 59-79; Karen J. Leong, *The China Mystique: Pearl S. Buck, Anna May Wong, Mayling Soong, and the Transformation of American Orientalism*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); and for a compelling study on the transformation of American views regarding Asia more generally in the postwar period see Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

<sup>80</sup> "Terrible Truth is Now Known," *The Chinese News*, December 15, 1941.

increased aid or attention from the U.S. for the KMT was important for bolstering the party's image of its own international prestige. For a regime that was increasingly losing credibility, as well as military and political power, even abstract notions of prestige gained currency. For Feng, this was an opportunity to articulate an official position that firmly illustrated that the Chinese in the U.S. had known all along that the U.S. had been their friend and ally, and that this friendship was now manifest in their cooperation on the frontlines of the war against fascism. The alliance itself was not new, it just took on a tangible form. The idea that the U.S. was and had been a friend to China had roots in the nineteenth century. American power and prestige in China had been secured through what was a contradictory impulse to both protect and police Chinese sovereignty, as articulated by Secretary of State John Hay in his famed Open Door Notes of 1899. The war presented an opportunity for the Chinese in America to employ their Americanism in defense of both China and the U.S., and for many this was a particularly welcome blessing.

However, life for the Chinese in America was still ruled by a sense of fear and paranoia. Fear of racial violence because they could be mistaken for Japanese. Paranoia about their tenuous status as Americans because of proscriptive legislative limitations still placed on them despite the putative repeal of discriminatory statutes specifically aimed at the Chinese American community.<sup>81</sup> Many still saw the benefits of American democracy and freedom as a distant possibility. The sense of triumphalism heralded as the public face of Chinatown was tempered by many anxieties behind closed doors.

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<sup>81</sup> For an excellent legal history of discrimination against Chinese in the U.S., and their responses to legislative injustices, see Charles J. McClain, *In Search of Equality: The Chinese Struggle against Discrimination in Nineteenth-Century America*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

Tensions within Chinatown ran high. The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA), the business and political elite within Chinatowns across the U.S., who generally supported the reactionary KMT, successfully marginalized—and in many cases silenced—left wing opposition to their pro-KMT and pro-American rhetoric.<sup>82</sup> These tensions would ultimately transcend the borders of Chinatown. Indeed, debates about the future of China, the relevance of the Chinese Communist Party to that future, and the chances of a postwar U.S. alliance with one or both of the dominant political parties in China, came to dominate the American political landscape in the immediate postwar years and continued into the dark days of McCarthyism. Prospects about the CCP's possible role in future diplomatic relations with the U.S. were, however, subsumed during the war years by the reigning orthodox view, expounded by Luce and others, that Chiang Kai-shek was a strong and able leader with democratic pretensions, poised to lead China in the postwar international order as a strong ally of the U.S.

## **Chinese American Nationalisms and World War II**

The Chinese in the U.S. had historically been very active in homeland politics. The intentions of many of the original Chinese immigrants had been to work in the U.S., make a small fortune, and then return to their home villages rich and well respected men. Indeed, as Wong Ngum Yin wrote in a letter to his brother in China, “After years of planning and trading in America...property in China is regained, hundreds of *mous* of fields acquired and a mansion for the use of my maiden and myself is built. I clothe

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<sup>82</sup> For more on the suppression of the Chinese American left by reactionary forces within the KMT, see Renqiu Yu's now classic study of New York's left wing Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves: The Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance of New York*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992).

myself in the finest of fur garments and mount a fat horse.”<sup>83</sup> Psychic and financial investments in homeland politics retained their importance despite the fact that by the early decades of the twentieth century many Chinese knew they would probably never return home. Sustained poverty in their home villages made their work in the U.S. even more necessary, and the indefinite extension of the exclusion acts by Congress in 1904 made visits home more difficult, and the unification of families near impossible. Isolation from American culture and exclusion from the benefits of American citizenship made the fate of China an even more pressing issue. For many Chinese laborers, especially after the passage of the original Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, their fundamental purpose for living and working in the U.S. became the remittance of money to their families in China. For example, despite living in impoverished circumstances with six brothers and five sisters, Gong Yuen Tim was able to attend school for eight years in China before himself immigrating to the U.S. because of the remittances sent home by his older brother.<sup>84</sup> The linked fates of China and life for the Chinese in the U.S. became for many the cornerstone of their identity in America. This kind of a dual identification was necessary in many ways, not the least of which was the fact that at the time Chinese not born in the U.S. were “aliens ineligible for citizenship.” Although they might live the rest of their lives in America, many of these Chinese would never enjoy U.S. citizenship, and so the political crises convulsing China in the early decades of the twentieth century were of critical importance to them.

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<sup>83</sup> Quoted from Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 119. A *mous* is a Chinese unit of land measurement, five *mous* is equal to one acre.

<sup>84</sup> From “‘Just plain old luck and good timing’: Reminiscences of a Gold Mountain Man,” in Judy Yung, Gordon Chang and Him Mark Lai eds., *Chinese American Voices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 139. For a more detailed account of the system of remittances and their impact on the lives of relatives in China see Yong Chen, *Chinese San Francisco: A Trans-Pacific Community, 1850-1943* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), esp. 31-54.

In 1905, Chinese in China, the U.S., and elsewhere in the diaspora united in an economic boycott of American goods. Spurred by a number of injustices aimed at various Chinese American communities, including merchants and diplomats—who constituted the supposedly exempt classes from anti-Chinese legislation, a cross-class and transnational boycott of American goods was staged. According to historian Yong Chen, it was precisely the indiscriminate class nature of the attacks against the Chinese in the U.S. that allowed the boycott to gain momentum.<sup>85</sup> In September of 1903, a Chinese diplomat in San Francisco committed suicide because of the shame brought upon him by his treatment by the police in that city. At the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, representatives of the Chinese government, who had been invited to participate in the fair by the U.S. government, were detained and interrogated en route. Further losing face, many of the Chinese emissaries were closely monitored by officials of the Bureau of Immigration to ensure their quick departure after the fair.<sup>86</sup> In 1905, the Supreme Court barred federal district courts from hearing Chinese admission cases in *Ju Toy v. United States*.<sup>87</sup> Countless other indignities suffered by Chinese in both the U.S. and China at the hands of the U.S. government generated a transnational sense of shared outrage. The boycott was not only important in its role as a central moment in the consolidation of a transnational Chinese nationalism, but because it was a tremendous success as a political strategy. According to the *New York Times*, the dollar amounts of U.S. exports to China dropped significantly between May of 1905 and May of 1906. 1,306,310 dollars worth of copper export fell to 134,000; the amount of exported machinery went from 2,712 dollars to a meager 390; 9,707 dollars worth of ham sent to China in 1905 decreased over tenfold

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<sup>85</sup>Chen, *Chinese San Francisco*, see esp. 148-161.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, 152.

<sup>87</sup> Lee, *At America's Gates*, 125.

to 904 dollars. Even more glaring was the effect of the boycott on American oil exports. Over one million dollars worth of oil had been exported by the Standard Oil Company to China in November of 1904. In November of 1905 that number was 2,500.<sup>88</sup> Yong Chen argues that the financial impact of the boycott on the national economy may have been slight, but I think it is clear that its impact on certain trades was more than significant.

As I have argued earlier in the dissertation, this period saw the emergence of a nascent sense of Chinese nationalism spurred on by the increased globalism of modernity. This new sense of Chinese being-in-the-world was the motive force behind a new Chinese nationalism. Indeed, at this moment “Chinese Americans understood more clearly than ever before that their fate was linked to that of China.”<sup>89</sup> The shared culture and history of the Chinese diaspora in this era “achieved a new political dimension” that it had previously lacked.<sup>90</sup> The boycott became a cause célèbre among many reformers in the new modern China and was appropriated variously as a sign of coming gender equality, and as a symbol of the disconnect between the Manchu dynasty and the Han Chinese people.<sup>91</sup> Three decades later, this new nationalism was not on the wane. During the Sino-Japanese War (1931-1945) many Chinese in the U.S. once again linked their fate to that of the Chinese in China with cries of “to save China, to save ourselves.”<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> *New York Times*, Jun. 4, 1906, 2.

<sup>89</sup> Chen, *Chinese San Francisco*, 148.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, 149.

<sup>91</sup> Chen, *Chinese San Francisco*, 150. The Manchus are an ethnic minority that ruled China during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), and the Han are the dominant ethnic group in China, and certainly the group to which most Chinese in the U.S. could trace their ancestry.

<sup>92</sup> Yu, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves*, esp. 77-99.

## Chinese American Identities in World War II

The entry of the U.S. into the Second World War was seen by many Chinese across the diaspora as a blessing. It was an opportunity for them to employ a dual nationalism, to continue their affiliation with China's struggle against Japanese imperialism unabated, as well as claim a stake in America, the country in which they lived, and of which some were citizens by birthright and derivation. In May of 1942, Florence Gee, a student at Berkeley, California's Burbank junior high school, won a fifty dollar war bond as first prize in an essay contest sponsored by a local newspaper, the *Oakland Post-Enquirer*. Gees' victory in the "I am an American," essay contest was a point of pride in many parts of the Chinese American community. The *Chinese News* reported that

[t]he determination of two great fighting nations was voiced today in...words from Florence Gee's prize winning essay...[w]hether she was collecting funds for United China Relief or working in defense activities, Florence never forgot that her native land and China were allies against a common foe.

The paper praised Florence not only for her skill as a writer, but also because of the "realization of her duty to join the fight for freedom, the test of her right to say 'I Am An American' [sic]." In her essay, Florence shared with her readers that she had an uncle in the army, one in the shipyards, and a mother taking first aid. Her sisters were members of the civilian defense, and Florence was playing her part by "learn[ing] better citizenship" in a special club. In addition, she pursued other activities such as "collecting tin cans, tin

foil, metal tubes and papers.” According to Gee, “[t]hat which helps China helps America.”<sup>93</sup>

In an article titled “Chinese GIs Like Army Says Soldier At Buckley,”<sup>94</sup> Charles L. Leong, who later became editor of the *Chinese Press* after his service in the army, wrote “the average Chinese GI likes and swears by the army.” For Leong, the military was a way for Chinese in the U.S. to “heal...the fester” caused by the history of the Chinese “not getting a chance” in America. Indeed, “[t]o GI Joe Wong, in the Army a ‘Chinaman’s chance’ means a fair chance, one based not on race or creed, but on the stuff of the man who wears the uniform of the U.S. Army.” To Leong, being in the U.S. military also provided an opportunity to earn “the satisfaction of driving the Japs [sic] from China, [and] to keep the honor of their parents’ glorious homeland a shining jewel of the Pacific.” For Leong, as for Florence Gee, the fate of China and that of the U.S. were inextricably linked.

Despite the good cheer with which many Chinese Americans embraced the U.S. entry into the Second World War, the belief that it could only be a good thing for Chinese living in the U.S. was often fraught with a sense of anxiety. Although the Chinese had never before had as positive an image in the public consciousness as they did during the war, their racial identity was often a handicap in their day to day lives. In the December 15, 1941 issue of *The Chinese News* cited above, Chinese Consul-General C. T. Feng also wrote more practically about the wartime concerns of Chinese Americans. The same week that Pearl Harbor was bombed, the San Francisco Chinese Consulate, under Feng’s

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<sup>93</sup> *The Chinese News*, May 15, 1942.

<sup>94</sup> Leong is referring to Chinese soldiers stationed at Buckley Air Force Base in Buckley, Colorado.



leadership, began “issuing identification cards to all Chinese who wanted them, free of charge.” The identity cards were to be shown by the bearer to anyone who might mistake them for a Japanese, and to be proof of both their Chineseness and their loyalty to the U.S. The immediacy with which Feng proposed and executed the identification card program after the attack on Pearl Harbor clearly illustrates the sense of apprehension that continued to plague the Chinese American community despite the U.S.’ wartime alliance with China. Feng’s language seems to betray the urgency of the need for the cards. The consulate felt “impelled to render this service” as a result of “Chinese [being] stopped frequently to identify their nationality such as when crossing the various bridges, and because oftentimes elder Chinese could not speak understandable English.” Clearly, the Chinese in the area had been harassed within days of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. But this was not only harassment of Chinese immigrants spurred on by wartime nationalism or nativism. Feng also “pointed out that American-born Chinese may secure these certificates, if they so desire, and with no danger of impairing in any way their status as American citizens.”<sup>95</sup> The identification certificates proposed by the Chinese Consul General highlight several important threads in the delicate fabric of American race relations during the Second World War, and illuminate the tensions evident in the attenuated and provisional acceptance into mainstream American culture that a wartime alliance afforded to Chinese living in the U.S. The harassment endured by the U.S.’ Chinese allies at home was but one more piece of grist for the Axis propaganda mill to grind as they tried to expose the contradictions inherent in America’s professions to be fighting for freedom and democracy abroad, when their own house was so obviously in disorder.

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<sup>95</sup> “Chinese Consulate Issues Identification Cards,” *The Chinese News*, December 15, 1941.

## American Racism Becomes an International Concern

A concern with how people abroad might view domestic race issues in the U.S. critically reoriented many Americans towards a more internationalist worldview during the war. As many Americans were forced out of their inter-war isolationism, a new perception that how the U.S. was viewed abroad could have consequences on the outcome of the war gained traction.<sup>96</sup> A failure to address serious racial problems during the war might greatly upset the possibilities of a postwar racial status quo that favored whites. A particularly poignant example of this reorientation was the position taken by organized labor towards the issue of repeal. Historically, organized labor in the U.S. had been the most vocal proponent of Chinese exclusion. However, in 1943, despite the American Federation of Labor (AFL) taking an institutional stand against repeal, many AFL affiliates submitted letters to the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization in support of striking the exclusion laws from the statute books. The general executive board of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU),

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<sup>96</sup> There is a growing literature on American race relations and the international scene, most of it deals with the imperative to legislate for civil rights during the Cold War years. For a by no means exhaustive overview see Thomas Borstelmann, *Apartheid's Reluctant Uncle: The United States and South Africa in the Early Cold War*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), also Borstelmann's, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Kevin K. Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Brenda Gayle Plummer, ed., *Window on Freedom: Race, Civil Rights and Foreign Affairs, 1945-1988*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Renee Romano, "No Diplomatic Immunity: African Diplomats, the State Department, and Civil Rights, 1961-1964" *The Journal of American Ethnic History* 87, no. 2 (September, 2000): 546-579; and Penny Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Blow Up the World*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). For studies that deal with the pre-Cold War era see Marc Gallicchio, *African American Encounter with Japan and China: Black Internationalism in Asia, 1895-1945*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Justin Hart, "Making Democracy Safe for the World: Race, Propaganda, and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy During World War II," *The Pacific Historical Review* 73, no. 1 (February, 2004): 49-84; Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); and Penny Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

which represented 350,000 workers, sent a letter to Samuel Dickstein urging repeal, stating that “such [an] act would place the Chinese group on par with other groups in our national community...[and] would enhance American prestige all through Asia.”<sup>97</sup> The Cafeteria Employees Union, Local 302, of New York believed “that military and political necessity deems the repeal of exclusion be enacted as soon as possible.”<sup>98</sup> Similarly, the Building Service Employees International Union, Local 6, passed a motion on July 2, 1943 expressing the “vital importance” of dealing with “courageous Chinese allies on a basis of equality,” and noted that the passage of repeal would be “worth hundreds of war planes to Chinese and would speed early victory in [the] Pacific.”<sup>99</sup> Charlton Ogburn, who had been legal council for the AFL from 1933-1938, even testified that he believed AFL officials failed to “understand...the international implications...and improvement in our international relations” repeal would bring.<sup>100</sup> The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) sent Kermit Eby, of their department of education and research, to Washington to testify before the House committee. Eby noted the CIO’s awareness that repeal was an international issue that superseded domestic concerns, and was proud that his organization was “placing national interest above group interest.”<sup>101</sup> Of course, despite a genuine outpouring of support for the repeal of exclusion, it was not only a gesture of good will. It was a necessity because the Japanese propaganda was not only a detriment to America’s war effort, but true as well.

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<sup>97</sup> Letter from David Dubinsky, President, ILGWU, to Hon. Samuel Dickstein, Chairman, House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *House Hearings to Repeal Exclusion*, 251.

<sup>98</sup> Letter from Joseph Fox, Secretary-Treasurer, and William Messevich, President, Cafeteria Employees Union, Local 302, to Hon. Samuel Dickstein, June 2, 1943, *ibid*, 252.

<sup>99</sup> Letter from Merlin L. Cole, Secretary, Building Service Employees International Union, Local 6, to Hon. Samuel Dickstein, July 3, 1943, *ibid*, 252.

<sup>100</sup> Statement of Charlton Ogburn, *ibid*, 222.

<sup>101</sup> Statement of Kermit Eby, Department of Education and Research, Congress of Industrial Organizations, *ibid*, 99.

International concerns over race as the crucial factor in an international war for democratic ideals often exceeded simplified black-white binary thinking on race. Concerns over the question of Chinese Exclusion preoccupied many spectators of American racial inequality across the world, especially in India. This was due in part to the fact that Indians were themselves affected by restrictive American immigration laws. Congress passed an immigration act in 1917 that effectively barred all Indians from entering the U.S. by instituting a so-called “Asiatic Barred Zone” which included all areas of Asia and the Pacific that had previously been excluded from the provisions of the various restrictive immigration laws.<sup>102</sup> Also, many Indians were incensed over what they saw as the U.S.’ policy of non-interference on the question of the future of the British Empire in the postwar period. America’s hands-off attitude was as good as tacit approval for the British colonial program in the eyes of many Indians, as well as a symbol of America’s half-hearted commitment to global racial equality. The issue of Chinese Exclusion only fanned the flames of their righteous indignation. A July 10, 1943 article in the Bombay paper *Blitz* bore the provocative title, “A Disgrace to Civilization...Chinese Immigrants are American Prisoners!”<sup>103</sup> The author wondered how “after winning this war, there will be freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want and freedom from fear, *if there is no freedom of immigration?*”<sup>104</sup> While the movement to repeal exclusion captivated some in the Indian press, they did not necessarily see it as a preface to a more liberal position towards Indians in the U.S. For many Indians, it only made them “feel more keenly that bias against them remains in American immigration

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<sup>102</sup> For an overview of immigration restrictions against Asian Indians, and the Immigration Act of 1917, see Ronald Takaki, *Strangers From a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*. (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), esp. 294-314.

<sup>103</sup> Enclosure No. 7 to Despatch No. 953, 811.4016/654; Decimal Files 811.4016; RG 59; NARA.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

laws.”<sup>105</sup> Although Indians felt a certain solidarity with the Chinese on a racial basis, it did not necessarily mean that they “[felt] pleasure in seeing the Chinese obtain preferred immigration status compared with other Oriental peoples.”<sup>106</sup> Again, Indian observers’ trained eyes saw repeal not as presaging a new era in international race relations with the U.S. taking the lead, but as a stopgap war measure aimed at ameliorating the Nationalist Chinese in their waning resistance to an aggressive Japanese army.

If Americans, “recognized as a melting pot,” could not “present a solid front internally as well as on the field of battle” then victory was in jeopardy.<sup>107</sup> Unfortunately, the issue wasn’t one that could be solved by the varied races that constituted the so-called American ‘melting pot’ simply getting along together. Ameliorating racism did not hinge on educating ignorant and racist Americans. A more realistic perspective on American race problems came from the Indian press. American Consul in Bombay, Howard Donovan, took careful note of the “tremendous preoccupation with the question of racial prejudice in the United States” among Indians in his consular district.<sup>108</sup> According to a special bulletin put out by the underground Indian Congress movement “the Four Freedoms, the Atlantic Charter, the talk about democracy—all that applies to whites only.”<sup>109</sup> The Indian paper *The Social Welfare* bemoaned the fact “[t]hat the champions of democracy are not all for democracy is everyday becoming more evident. That their democracy is synonymous with the ‘supremacy’ of a white skin is often being proclaimed

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<sup>105</sup> “Indian Press Comment on the Proposed Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act,” American Consul at Bombay, India, Howard Donovan to Secretary of State, Despatch No. 1082, November 3, 1943, 811.4016/744; Decimal Files 811.4016; RG 59; NARA.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> Despatch No. 953, “Press Comment in the Bombay Consular District on Recent Developments in the United States, with Particular Reference to Racial Prejudice,” American Consul at Bombay, India, Howard Donovan to Secretary of State, July 19, 1943, 811.4016/654; Decimal Files 811.4016; RG 59; NARA.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

in actions if denied in words.”<sup>110</sup> Rather than seeing the nefarious machinations of Axis agents behind the race riots in Detroit, Indian observers noted the underlying systemic causes of racial unrest in the U.S. Indeed, it was the parallels they saw between their own conditions of oppression and those of American blacks that made the issue so prescient for them despite the vast distances and cultures that separated them. As one Indian wrote, “India will naturally sympathize with the oppressed Negroes of America as we know what it is like to live under the heel of White Imperialism.”<sup>111</sup> For many Indian observers, the Detroit riots “not only [brought] up the question of racial inequality in America but *the entire basis of the ideology behind the present war*. It is in the context of the Anti-Negro program that we begin to understand so many of the contradictions in the professions and practices of the Allied leaders.”<sup>112</sup>

### **Chiang Kai-shek Is Not China**

Exactly two weeks after President Roosevelt signed the Magnuson Act into law repealing exclusion, Foreign Service Officer John Paton Davies Jr., drafted a secret memorandum for the State Department titled “Chiang Kai-shek and China.” In it he made no mention of repeal, or its effects on the Chinese war effort, which suggests the limited effects of repeal on the actual China scene. He did, however, begin his report by saying that “[t]he Generalissimo is probably the only Chinese who shares the popular American misperception that Chiang Kai-shek is China.”<sup>113</sup> Davies’ insight illustrates one of the limitations of the literature on repeal. A preoccupation with repeal’s minute effect on

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid, Enclosure No.2 to Despatch No. 953, “Writings on the Wall,” *The Social Welfare*, June 26, 1943.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, Enclosure No. 1 to Despatch No. 953, “Free India Will Free the Negroes! Lessons of the Detroit Riots,” *The Bombay Congress Bulletin*, June 28, 1943.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. Italics mine.

<sup>113</sup> John P. Davies, “Chiang Kai-shek and China,” December 31, 1943, Box 35: Fol. 12, Stilwell Papers.

mitigating institutionalized racism against Chinese in the U.S. has kept most studies from delving into the complicated domestic political scene within China itself at the time. Neither L. Ling-chi Wang nor Karen J. Leong mentions the Chinese communists in their work on repeal. But the history of repeal might appear differently when reviewed from a new vantage point where the internal political disunity prevalent in China in 1943 is taken into account. Support of and sympathy with Chinese communists was not only characteristic of the American left. Many mainstream Americans, and indeed a substantial number of American officials and diplomats, had open minds about the political future of China during the war. The popular success of Edgar Snow's first-hand account of the heroic Chinese communists, *Red Star Over China* (1938), had generated large wellsprings of both respect and support for the CCP in the U.S. Images of them as agrarian democrats, not unlike American heartland populists of the late nineteenth century, colored many American imaginations. Even Pearl Buck, when asked about Chinese communists by the House Committee, responded by saying that they had "been very curiously mixed up there with an agrarian reform."<sup>114</sup> In June 1943, Owen Lattimore, FDR's special adviser to Chiang Kai-shek, warned the OWI that "as an American government agency we should deal with the Chinese Government or regular agencies of the Chinese Government, but should not get in the position of committing ourselves to the KMT, the political organization that controls the Chinese Government, as if it were itself the Chinese Government."<sup>115</sup> By late 1943 the CCP had gained enough strength that they no longer deemed it necessary to play the subservient role in the united front against Japan.

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<sup>114</sup> *House Hearings to Repeal Exclusion*, 77.

<sup>115</sup> Owen Lattimore to Joseph Barnes, June 15, 1943, Ctn. 77: Fol. 11, HML Papers.

In an interview with a “well informed Chinese,” John Davies discovered that when Chiang had directed KMT forces to blockade the communists instead of fighting the Japanese, KMT soldiers defected to the CCP in large numbers. According to Davies’ informant, “on one occasion, two companies had gone over to the Communists, but their rifles were returned by the Communists with a display of courtesy!”<sup>116</sup> The increase in CCP strength corresponded to an enervation in KMT forces. The increased independence of the communists, combined with skyrocketing inflation and economic instability, and “the growing restiveness of certain provincial and military factions” were all elements that could singularly or in combination “accomplish Chiang’s downfall.”<sup>117</sup> Chiang’s KMT military apparatus was far less unified than many Americans believed. In a confidential memorandum to Clarence Gauss, the U.S. Ambassador to China, Davies wrote, “the Chinese Army is not an army in the sense that we use the word army. Rather it is an agglomerate of feudalistic military forces held more or less together by personal loyalties, endowments, grants in aid, threats of superior weight and indifferent toleration.”<sup>118</sup> Despite a lack of confidence in his leadership capabilities, Chiang “did not appreciate fully his weakness in this new situation.”<sup>119</sup> By repositioning his forces to blockade the CCP, Chiang had “retrogressed to his prewar position as a Chinese militarist seeking to dominate rather than unify and lead,”<sup>120</sup> and was “pursuing a policy of

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<sup>116</sup> Report of John P. Davies, December 16, 1943, Box 35: Fol. 10, Stilwell Papers.

<sup>117</sup> John P. Davies, “Chiang Kai-shek and China,” December 31, 1943, Box 35: Fol. 12, Stilwell Papers.

<sup>118</sup> Confidential memorandum, “The Stilwell Mission,” John P. Davies to Clarence E. Gauss, March 9, 1943, Box 35: Fol. 6, Stilwell Papers.

<sup>119</sup> Report of John P. Davies, December 16, 1943, Box 35: Fol. 10, Stilwell Papers.

<sup>120</sup> John P. Davies, “Chiang Kai-shek and China,” December 31, 1943, Box 35: Fol. 12, Stilwell Papers.



conservation of strength. The Japanese approach the truth when they accuse the Chinese of seeking to make the far (the United States) [*sic*] fight the near (Japan) [*sic*].”<sup>121</sup>

American officials didn't only question Chiang's military maneuvers; his political acumen and mental fitness were under scrutiny as well. In trying to discern Chiang's authoritarian tendencies, Davies concluded that he

seeks to dominate because he has no appreciation of what genuine democracy means. His philosophy is the unintegrated product of his limited intelligence, his Japanese military education, his former close contact with German military advisers, his alliance with the usurious banker-landlord class, and his reversion to the sterile moralisms of the Chinese classics.<sup>122</sup>

After returning from the Cairo Conference, where Chiang's position as one of the 'Big Four' had been secured as a concession in the hopes of inducing Chiang to step up his opposition to the Japanese, his normally calm demeanor, his ability to “maintain the fiction that he is above politics”<sup>123</sup> had been unsettled. Both Stalin and Churchill had expressed their opposition to Roosevelt's idea that Chiang be included as a member of the Big Four, and Churchill made Chiang feel his displeasure at their meeting in Cairo in November 1943. Although Chiang had at first “gained a great deal of face” by his inclusion as a leader on par with Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill, his cold reception by the Prime Minister at Cairo unsettled him deeply. Upon returning to China, he lashed out during a graduation ceremony at a military academy where he was the guest of honor. When the band began on the second beat of the count, instead of the third, Chiang berated

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<sup>121</sup> Confidential memorandum, “The Stilwell Mission,” John P. Davies to Clarence E. Gauss, March 9, 1943, Box 35: Fol. 6, Stilwell Papers.

<sup>122</sup> John P. Davies, “Chiang Kai-shek and China,” December 31, 1943, Box 35: Fol. 12, Stilwell Papers.

<sup>123</sup> Confidential memorandum, “The American Stake in Chinese Unit: Proposals for Preliminary American Action,” possibly by Jack Service, John S. Service Papers, Ctn. 2: Fol. 36, Banc. MSS 87/21 CZ, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Henceforth Service Papers.

the bandmaster. At the same event, the Generalissimo verbally abused one of the presiding officials who drew his speech from his trouser pocket. According to Chiang, important documents were to be kept in the lower pockets of a man's jacket, and even more important papers were to be kept in the breast pocket. The audience's discomfort was sorely tested when "in a tantrum [Chiang] threatened to have one of the academy's officials executed for laxness in performance of his duties."<sup>124</sup> This was a far cry from the Chiang Kai-shek Americans read about in the pages of *Time* and *Life* magazines. Davies, who had been at Cairo, noted that this unstable behavior was "symptomatic of his present emotional instability." American officials knew it would be unwise to place all their eggs in the Chiang basket.

It wasn't just the Generalissimo who some China experts viewed with suspicion, it was his wife, Soong Meiling, or Madame Chiang Kai-shek, as well.<sup>125</sup> For cheerleaders of Nationalist China, like Walter Judd, and Henry Luce, Mme. Chiang was an icon of Chinese modernity. She was elegant, sophisticated, and cosmopolitan. She had a degree from Wellesley College, and spoke fluent English with a slight southern accent, as she had attended high school in Georgia. She was the youngest daughter of Charlie Soong, a Chinese Methodist who had built up his wealth selling Chinese bibles, and their family was arguably the most influential in China. Her oldest sister married H.H. Kung, a Yale graduate, the richest man in China, and the Minister of Finance; her other sister married Sun Yat-sen, the so-called Chinese George Washington and founder of the Republic of China; her brother was T.V. Soong, a Columbia University Ph.D. and high ranking KMT

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<sup>124</sup> Report of John P. Davies, December 16, 1943, Box 35: Fol. 10, Stilwell Papers.

<sup>125</sup> For a study on the international impact of Soong Meiling as both a first-lady and an icon, see Karen J. Leong's book, *The China Mystique: Pearl S. Buck, Anna May Wong, Mayling Soong, and the Transformation of American Orientalism*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), esp. 106-154.

official. Several witnesses before the House Committee to repeal exclusion based their testimonies on the fact that if Mme. Chiang couldn't be a citizen of the U.S., then the law ought to be changed. Many were, "stirred by the fact that no abler woman than Madame Chiang Kai-shek could not under our laws become an American citizen because of the country of her birth."<sup>126</sup> Will Rogers Jr., a California state Congressman, testified that when he heard Mme. Chiang speak before a special session of Congress on her U.S. tour earlier that year, "many of us sitting in the House felt embarrassed that...[this] exquisite woman of great charm and wide intelligence...was legally not good enough to apply for citizenship."<sup>127</sup> Indeed, historian Karen J. Leong argues that "[h]er image was both produced for American consumption and intended to appear American-made. Its true impact was not on China but on American attitudes toward China."<sup>128</sup> As she toured the U.S. extensively throughout early 1943, and spoke before many packed audiences, she was extensively profiled by the popular press. However, although her tour coincided with the debate over repeal, she did not once mention repeal in her public addresses.<sup>129</sup> She did speak privately in New York with the Chinese ambassador to the U.S. about the time being right to agitate for a repeal measure.<sup>130</sup> She evaded speaking about race, and failed to raise the issue of discrimination against Chinese in public forums. Her failure to evince a public concern over the welfare of Chinese in the U.S., many of whom as laborers she saw as beneath her station, bespoke a lack of concern for large numbers of her fellow

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<sup>126</sup> Statement of Charles C. Haas, President, American Hat Co., *House Hearings to Repeal Exclusion*, 91.

<sup>127</sup> Statement of Hon. Will Rogers, Jr., Member of Congress from the State of California, *ibid*, 226.

<sup>128</sup> Leong, *China Mystique*, 121.

<sup>129</sup> For more on Soong Meiling and her indifferent stance on repeal see Lorraine Dong, "Song Meiling in America 1943," in *The Repeal and its Legacy: Proceedings of the Conference on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Repeal of the Exclusion Acts, November 12-14, 1993*. (Brisbane, CA: Chinese Historical Society of America, 1994), 39-46.

<sup>130</sup> Leong, *China Mystique*, 150.

countrymen and countrywomen. When she did speak about assimilation and America as “the cauldron of Democracy” she did so with reference to white ethnics only.<sup>131</sup> While on tour in the America, Soong plead convincingly and effectively for the KMT cause.

Her interaction with American diplomats and officials in China garnered rather mixed reviews. Her imperious attitude and prima donna qualities rubbed some State Department officials the wrong way. Recalling his first meeting with Mme. Chiang, Jack Service, a State Department official, remembered her as “charming...but rather artificial” and was struck by how she had punned on his name, and assumed a superior attitude when she remarked in front of guests that she “hope[d] you’ll be of service to China.”<sup>132</sup> It was an indication that she treated some American officials like they were her servants, to be manipulated in the interests of the KMT. In September 1944, Harry Hopkins, a close adviser to FDR, joked that on an upcoming medical visit to the U.S. “Madame Chiang would probably be given several suites in a New York hospital, be pinned down under black satin sheets and from that setting summon Washington personages for most secret consultations. When they appeared they would discover that she really had very little to say.”<sup>133</sup> Hopkins made it clear that he had no intention of answering any such summons. As the Chiang’s political faction of the KMT lost credibility and stability throughout the early 1940s, the U.S. began to seek other possible alliances that might better serve their interests in the postwar period. Many U.S. government officials in China grasped the political situation and believed that Chiang’s primary concern was the maintenance of power, and not the defeat of Japan, or the institution of a stable

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>132</sup> Transcript of oral history interview with John S. Service, 166. On deposit at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Henceforth Service Oral History.

<sup>133</sup> Memorandum of conversation between Harry Hopkins and John P. Davies, September 4, 1944, Box 35: Fol. 18, Stilwell Papers.

democracy in China. American officials warned that “to the [KMT] regime the prosecution of the war against Japan is now of secondary importance.”<sup>134</sup>

To the more informed on-the-ground observers in China, the U.S.’ greatest hope lie with the Chinese communists, who many believed to be “more or less democratic nationalis[ts].”<sup>135</sup> In July of 1944 a small group of American officials arrived at Yen-an, the communist capital of wartime China. They were informally called the ‘Dixie Mission’ because they were behind ‘enemy’ lines. Roosevelt had authorized the mission as a way of feeling out the CCP, and to evaluate their potential as a possible alternative to the increasingly corrupt KMT. Additionally, he wanted to see how the communist military organization was, and whether he should send arms directly to Yen-an, since much of the military Lend-Lease to the KMT was being hoarded for the inevitable postwar clash between the CCP and KMT.<sup>136</sup> Initial reports from Yen-an were “extremely favorable.”<sup>137</sup> The Americans all shared the same extraordinary sense that they had “come into a different country and are meeting different people.”<sup>138</sup> The communists were so different from the KMT officials with whom the observers were used to dealing, one of them, who had been born and raised in China found himself “continually trying to

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<sup>134</sup> John P. Davies, “Policy Conflicts Among the United Nations,” September 17, 1943, Box 35: Fol. 17, Stilwell Papers.

<sup>135</sup> Memorandum by John P. Davies, June 24, 1943, Ctn. 2: Fol. 51, Service Papers.

<sup>136</sup> The Dixie Mission was an incredible moment in American liberal internationalism and I have written about it extensively elsewhere, therefore my account here will be necessarily brief and limited. For a thorough secondary source see Carole Carter, *Mission to Yen-an: American Liaison with the Chinese Communists, 1944-1947*. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1997). For two primary accounts by participants of Dixie see David D. Barrett, *Dixie Mission: The United States Army Observer Group in Yen-an, 1944*. (Berkeley: Center for Chinese Studies, 1970), and John Colling, *The Spirit of Yan’an: A Wartime Chapter of Sino-American Friendship*. (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 2004).

<sup>137</sup> John S. Service, Despatch No. 1, July 28, 1944, quoted in Joseph W. Esherick ed., *Lost Chance in China: The World War II Despatches of John S. Service*. (New York: Random House, 1974), 179.

<sup>138</sup> *Lost Chance*, 179.

find out just how Chinese these people are.”<sup>139</sup> They appeared to command popular support and were engaged in opposition to the Japanese in ways that the KMT were not. When one observer returned from an expedition with communist forces where he observed conditions behind Japanese lines, he reported that “there is active, aggressive resistance to the Japanese, and...[it]...is based on complete unity and solidarity of the people and the [communist] Eighth Route Army.”<sup>140</sup> This was a far cry from a report submitted the next day on “the need for greater realism in our relations with Chiang Kai-shek.”<sup>141</sup> Perhaps bolstered by the positive showing on the part of the CCP, Service reiterated both Lattimore and Davies’ belief that Chiang was the wrong horse to back. Chiang’s government was moving away from democracy, and further into utter authoritarianism, as Chiang evinced a “stubborn unwillingness to submerge selfish power-seeking in democratic unity” showcasing “sufficient evidence of the bankruptcy of Kuomintang leadership.”<sup>142</sup> Worse yet, the only way Chiang would stay in political power was through U.S. support, which Roosevelt felt compelled to give. FDR had been told that “the day when it was expedient to inflate Chiang’s status to one of the ‘Big Four’ is past,” because by 1944 the certainty of Japan’s defeat had rendered its propaganda about a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere a moot point.<sup>143</sup> Service advised in no uncertain terms that

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Service is reporting on Major Melvyn Casberg’s excursion with the Eight Route Army, quoted from Despatch No. 38, October 9, 1944, *Lost Chance*, 235.

<sup>141</sup> John S. Service, “The Need for Greater Realism in Our Relations with Chiang Kai-shek,” October 10, 1944. This was a seminal memorandum sent from Service to General Joseph Stilwell, and its contents would be used against Service later when he was persecuted in both the ‘Amerasia Spy Case’ as well as in later loyalty hearings during McCarthyism. Full text can be found in Esherick, *Lost Chance*, 161-166.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, 162.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid. 163.

the [KMT] is dependent on American support for survival. But we are in no way dependent on the Kuomintang... We do not need it for military reasons... We need not fear Kuomintang surrender or opposition... We need not fear the collapse of the Kuomintang... [and] we need not support the Kuomintang for international political reasons.<sup>144</sup>

Service was merely reiterating, perhaps with even more force, observations already transmitted to Washington by Davies earlier when he warned that

in this uncertain situation we should avoid committing ourselves unalterably to Chiang. We should be ready during or after the war to adjust ourselves to possible realignments in China. We should wish... to avoid finding ourselves... backing a coalition of Chiang's Kuomintang and the degenerate puppets against a democratic coalition commanding Russian sympathy.<sup>145</sup>

Service reassured American officials that the U.S. did not owe Chiang anything. He argued that "Chiang's own dealings with us have been an opportunist combination of extravagant demands and unfilled promises, wheedling and bargaining, bluff and blackmail... he has 'worked' us for all we [are] worth."<sup>146</sup> Similar official accounts of KMT corruption, and Chiang's authoritarian tendencies abound in the primary sources. They were not the despatches of a few radical left wing American diplomats, but can be said to represent a significant structure of feeling within the State Department. Indeed, Lauchlin Currie, a close economic adviser to FDR, confided to Jack Service during an interview that "the man across the street," by which he meant Roosevelt as the White House was just opposite Currie's offices, shared Service's "pessimism about the Kuomintang and [American] attachment to the [KMT]... our unquestioning support of it."<sup>147</sup> Currie had also confided to Service that Mme. Chiang's 1943 tour of the U.S. had

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 162-63.

<sup>145</sup> John P. Davies, "Chiang Kai-shek and China," December 31, 1943, Box 35: Fol. 12, Stilwell Papers.

<sup>146</sup> John S. Service, "The Need for Greater Realism in Our Relations with Chiang Kai-shek," October 10, 1944, *Lost Chance*, 164.

<sup>147</sup> Service Oral History, 25.

caused a “terrific furor” of propaganda favorable to the KMT and that it was a “*real* problem” that needed to be countered with a “backfire” against the maelstrom of publicity she had drummed up. According to Currie, Mme. Chiang was attempting to go over FDR’s head when she addressed the special joint session of Congress, in an attempt to undermine support of Roosevelt’s Europe-first strategy.

## **Conclusion**

Tensions within the U.S. government itself were high during this period. Outspoken American support for Chiang Kai-shek by such public figures as Pearl Buck and Henry Luce, and unequivocal support for the KMT in places like the Hearst publications, and *Time* and *Life* magazines constituted a strong bulwark against which the more democratically inclined liberal internationalists within the State Department, the president’s cabinet, and even the White House itself, found it hard to contend. A strong contingent of Congressmen and Senators—the so-called China Lobby, led by men like Walter Judd and William Knowland (who some critics called the ‘Senator from Formosa’), who were heavily invested in the Chiang regime, made the political cleavage in China a divisive political issue in the U.S. as well. While this internal debate did little to affect the smooth passage of the Magnuson Act, it is nevertheless an important part of the historical picture that informed American perceptions of, and actions towards and within a divided China. It sheds light on the transition in the 1940s of American political culture from one with relatively bright horizons for the triumph of a liberal internationalist perspective, to the repressive Cold War environments dominated by reactionary politicians like Joseph McCarthy and Patrick McCarran. It is no coincidence



that the administrations of both FDR and Truman came under investigation by McCarran's Senate Committee on Internal Security. In the political hurricane that became McCarthyism, China was the eye of the storm. The honest reporting of State Department officials like John Davies, Owen Lattimore, Jack Service, and many others, all of whom suffered greatly at the hands of McCarthyism, set the stage for a turn against liberalism and the rise of a stultifying political culture in which consensus and reaction were rewarded, and imagination was penalized. The role of China, and the ways in which the U.S.-China relationship informed the dynamics of the early Cold War are in evidence in a story of the repeal of exclusion that highlights the dynamism of the political scene within China at the time. Richard Johnson, who worked in the Office of Chinese Affairs in the State Department during the McCarthy years, later recalled that it "was a very cautious" time, in which even low level functionaries felt stifled.<sup>148</sup> Another official recalled that Fulton Freeman, a China specialist who shared Service and Davies' view on the communists, "had to have two-thirds of his stomach removed for a bleeding ulcer, he was under such emotional stress."<sup>149</sup> Another officer complained that "the top echelon was more motivated by domestic political considerations than...by U.S.-foreign developments. The China Lobby was a very potent force...Pro-Taiwan was built into the U.S. policy towards the two Chinas."<sup>150</sup> While the repeal of the archaically racist Chinese exclusion laws passed without much opposition in 1943, it is clear that the debates over repeal themselves, and the ways in which a certain image of China was crafted on the public side of those debates, had much to do with how American perceptions of China

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<sup>148</sup> Nancy Bernkopf Tucker ed., *China Confidential: American Diplomats and Sino-American Relations 1945-1996*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 65.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, 63.

became constituted and how the shattering of those images after the success of the CCP in 1949 helped usher in a period of incredible domestic repression in the U.S., and a concomitant retreat from the liberalism that characterized certain aspects of the Roosevelt administration's approach to China, like the Dixie Mission. That the rise of the China Lobby and its political allies coincided with the idealism in U.S. official circles over the dynamism of Chinese communism, and an accompanying disillusionment with Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT, suggests not only that they are part of a shared historical tapestry, but also that reading them together reveals new ways of understanding the interconnection of race and internationalism, and the coming tide of the Cold War, at a decisive moment in American history. That Chinese Americans saw both promise and peril at this moment highlights the incredibly rich historical terrain upon which American ideas of China rested during the war years, and the complicated ways in which foreign policy, war imperatives, and domestic racial conflicts intersected in ways that changed the course of history in both the U.S. and the world.

## Chapter 7

### **The Failures of U.S.-China Diplomacy and the Road to McCarthyism**

While Milton Miles was leading the U.S. into the KMT heart of darkness with his rogue Navy-OSS unit SACO, and while Roosevelt and the nation debated the repeal of Chinese exclusion, non-Navy OSS agents were in Yen-an, China, setting up weather stations to guide Allied flights on their assaults on Japanese strongholds in northern China. This conflict of interest within OSS underscores some of the confused and contradictory approaches the U.S. was taking towards the war effort in China. The last chapter dealt with the effects of U.S.-backing of reactionary Chinese forces in the KMT, and spelled out some of the impact that had on the origins of the Cold War. In this chapter, I'd like to further explore some of the same overarching themes about the ways in which a willy-nilly pick-as-you-go-along approach to the war in China ultimately backed the U.S. into a corner that made the robust anti-communism of the Cold War appear almost inevitable. In this chapter, however, rather than examining the U.S. backing the forces of reaction, I'd like to look at how attempts to work with progressive elements and with the CCP ultimately failed and led to the emergence of the Cold War formation that dominated the second half of the twentieth century. I am especially interested in limning the critical impact of the international, and events in China in particular, and situating them within the rise of the Cold War in the U.S. in a global frame. Rethinking U.S.-China relations from this vantage point sheds new light on the

crucial role played by Asia in the U.S.' formulation of its place in the world in the postwar period. The trajectory of the U.S.' relationship with the CCP during the war and immediate postwar years also signals the collapse of the liberal internationalist impulse, and marks the beginnings of a retreat from a modestly idealist notion of America's place in the world under the visionary globalism of FDR, towards the more realist policies carried out under the containment doctrines and skyrocketing growth of the national security state under Harry Truman.

### **OSS and Dixie**

In late 1943 OSS was seeking more detailed intelligence information than was readily available to them regarding the condition of the KMT military. To this end, William Donovan, head of OSS, thought he might be able to be able to plant some OSS agents within the SACO camps to report back about the quality of the Chinese soldiers being trained at Happy Valley and other SACO outposts. Donovan instructed John Coughlin, then head of OSS China, to, "obtain detailed information from the various camp commanders of SACO as to the organization and quality of Chinese troops with whom they are working."<sup>1</sup> Oliver Caldwell was one of the OSS agents dispatched to Happy Valley to gather such intelligence. Donovan was aware of the difficulties associated with trying to get straight answers from the KMT upper echelons regarding their abilities and intentions of fighting the Japanese, and so he was simultaneously organizing an OSS project that would bring OSS together with Yen-an, especially since the Chinese Communists often boasted of their intelligence infiltration of the KMT.

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<sup>1</sup> Yu, *OSS in China*, 158.

Donovan appointed Ilia Tolstoy, an OSS agent and grandson of the famed Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy, head of a secret OSS team that would attempt to liaise with Yen-an. Tolstoy was at the time working as a camp commander at SACO's Happy Valley.

At some point, OSS and the army realized they had overlapping interests in communicating with Yen-an, and sought to combine their mission. John Paton Davies, who played a large role in creating the personnel for Dixie (though perhaps not as large as Yu might have one believe), was opposed to having Tolstoy on the mission, as he was afraid that he had been "contaminated by Tai Li." Also, Davies added that "whether he liked it or not, [Tolstoy] would be considered a White Russian [by the communists] which was also not desirable."<sup>2</sup> Undeterred by Davies' rebuff, Tolstoy attempted some backchannel dealings to have him and a crew under his command attached to Dixie, but to no avail.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, in order to keep SACO out of Dixie, OSS members unaffiliated with Dai Li were sent to Yen-an.

There were still a significant number of OSS agents attached to the Dixie Mission, however. Major Ray Cromley was tasked with reporting to OSS on Japanese order of battle information, before the war he had worked for the *Wall Street Journal*. Captain Charles Stelle, an academic who had been born in China, was also OSS Captain John Colling was a demolitions expert who had been sent to Yen-an to train communist guerillas in his area of expertise. Lieutenant Louis Jones, a Tulane law school graduate, was an OSS demolitions man, as well as an intelligence reporter. Major Wilbur Peterkin, who arrived in the second contingent of the Dixie Mission, was also OSS and succeeded

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<sup>2</sup> Yu, *OSS in China*, 161.

<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed version of the Tolstoy-Dixie snafu see Yu, *OSS in China*, 159-163.

Barrett as the commanding officer of the outfit. Captain Paul Domke, who had previously taught in a missionary college in China and was fluent in Mandarin, was the group's radio expert. Staff Sergeant Anton Remenih was also a signal officer, and had been on staff at the *Chicago Tribune* prior to the war. He was an amateur radio enthusiast, and recalled after the war that the equipment they used in Yen-an was no better than that of amateur broadcasters in the U.S. Air Corps Major Charles Dole was the weather expert attached to Dixie. Perhaps because of the rift between the Miles-run Navy-OSS unit SACO and normal OSS, there was only one U.S. Navy member who was attached to the Dixie Mission, Lieutenant Simon Hitch. Hitch was one of the few men sent to Yen-an who did not have prior experience in China; he had been born in Seoul. Preparing for the possibility—and the probability—that SACO would infiltrate the work at Yen-an was probably a good strategy, as it was later intimated in Senate hearings that Hitch had been a SACO agent.<sup>4</sup>

The SACO OSS rift became most pronounced when it came to the objective of prosecuting the war effort as effectively and as efficiently as possible, which meant potentially arming the Chinese Communists. OSS had a clear objective in China that was often at odds with Dai Li and SACO. While Dai Li was invested in maintaining Chiang Kai-shek's crumbling power base through an impressive and expansive global intelligence apparatus, OSS' plan was more streamlined, "to penetrate into occupied

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<sup>4</sup>Testimony of John Emmerson, State Department Employee Loyalty Investigation, *Hearings Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 81<sup>st</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, Pursuant to S. Res. 231A Resolution to Investigate Whether There Are Employees in the State Department Disloyal to the United States, Part 1, March 8, 9, 13, 14, 20, 21, 27, 28, April 5, 6, 20, 25, 27, 28, May 1, 2, 3, 4, 26, 31, and June 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 1950.* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1950), reprinted in excerpted form in *The Amerasia Papers: A Clue to the Catastrophe of China, 2 Vols., Prepared by the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate, January 26, 1970.* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1970), 1731. Henceforth *Amerasia Papers*.

China and even Japan proper to facilitate the final defeat of Japan.”<sup>5</sup> The CCP, as long as they appeared committed to the larger goal of driving the Japanese out of China, caused the OSS little distress, and in fact remained potential collaborators. Dai Li, on the other hand, depended upon the suppression of the CCP, even though they were nominally the allies of the KMT, and by extension of the U.S. This was a contradiction that Dai worked to his great advantage with the SACO agreement, but one which caused the OSS no small amount of confusion. Indeed, because the Soviets were allies of the U.S., any OSS operation that could in any way be construed as anti-Soviet was prohibited. Collusion between Yen-an and OSS highlighted the variance at which OSS and SACO operated.

This is clearly illustrated in the OSS-Dixie snafu that ultimately resulted in Dixie commanding officer Colonel David Barrett’s failure to be promoted to Brigadier General, in early November of 1944, shortly after Stilwell had been recalled and replaced by General Albert Wedemeyer. If Stilwell was the consummate soldier *qua* field general, Wedemeyer had “the broad approach of a global strategist, was an orderly administrator, and comported himself with ponderous solemnity, even when affecting a bucolic simplicity supposedly characteristic of his native Nebraskan farmers.”<sup>6</sup> Although more sympathetic to Chiang than Stilwell, Wedemeyer was, in his early time in China in 1944, “favorably disposed to making use of the military potential of north China.”<sup>7</sup> Wedemeyer very early on asked OSS to train Chinese Communist guerilla units.<sup>8</sup> This had less to do with any liberal tendencies Wedemeyer may have harbored, since he was rather

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<sup>5</sup> Yu, *OSS in China*, 275.

<sup>6</sup> Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 372.

<sup>7</sup> Letter from Raymond Ludden (Foreign Service Officer attached to Dixie) to Wilbur Peterkin (Barrett’s executive officer, and third commanding officer of Dixie), September 12, 1978, Box. 2: Fol. “Ludden,” Wilbur J. Peterkin Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University. Henceforth Peterkin Papers.

<sup>8</sup> Yu, *OSS in China*, 185.

conservative politically, than it did with his concern for getting his job done as efficiently as possible. This approach, however, often resulted in his appearing to officers “who knew him well that he was two-faced and not to be trusted.”<sup>9</sup> This was an opinion which Raymond Ludden came to share. Wilbur Peterkin came to feel very strongly that Wedemeyer had been selected by Chiang Kai-shek to succeed Stilwell “because of his mediocrity,”<sup>10</sup> and that he “lacked the qualifications for his job”<sup>11</sup> and sarcastically wrote that “if [Wedemeyer] was qualified to be a Lieutenant General I ought to be Governor of Washington State.”<sup>12</sup>

In any case, with Wedemeyer’s blessing, his chief of staff, Major General Robert McClure, with the aid of David Barrett, began planning a large scale project that would make use of Chinese communist help in landing U.S. soldiers into south China to repel recent Japanese gains in the region. Earlier in the month, on November 3, 1944, Davies, who was in Yen-an at the time, and Barrett, had been summoned to a secret meeting by Zhou Enlai and General Ye Jianying, the chief of staff of the Communist army. They suggested a plan to Davies and Barrett that would consist of a joint U.S.-CCP force in a “Normandy-style landing” at the CCP-controlled port city of Lian Yungang, a strategic center for the allied war effort because it contained railways that connected northern and southern China.<sup>13</sup> Yu reads this as an attempt on the part of the CCP to get the U.S. to help foment the collapse of the KMT. In late 1944, there were moments when “even

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<sup>9</sup> Ludden to Peterkin, September 12, 1978, Box. 2: Fol., “Ludden,” Peterkin Papers.

<sup>10</sup> Peterkin to Carolle Carter, November 9, 1976, Box. 2: Fol., “Carolle Carter,” Peterkin Papers.

<sup>11</sup> Wilbur J Peterkin, “Dixie Mission Memoirs,” 110, unpublished typescript, Box. 1: Fol. 1, Peterkin Papers.

<sup>12</sup> Peterkin, “Dixie Mission Memoirs,” 115, Box. 1: Fol. 1, Peterkin Papers.

<sup>13</sup> Yu, *OSS in China*, 184.



Kunming and Chungking were in danger of being captured by the Japanese.”<sup>14</sup> A massive diversion of U.S. supplies to Lian Yungang, as Zhou and Ye were suggesting, might have resulted in the fall of Chongqing, which would have likely crushed the KMT. Davies suggested that the plan be implemented as a joint OSS-CCP venture. Davies’ ideas regarding an OSS-CCP joint effort were complicated by the fact that Roosevelt’s newest personal emissary to China, Patrick J. Hurley, was arriving in Yen’an on November 7 to attempt to broker a *modus vivendi* between the KMT and the CCP. Perhaps in order to keep a delicate plan still in its infancy from being derailed, Davies kept Hurley out of the loop with regard to the tentative collaboration between the U.S. and the Chinese Communist forces. An alternative to the Zhou-Ye plan, as it then stood, was crafted by Barrett, and consisted of the U.S. organizing, arming, and equipping a force of approximately 5,000 CCP soldiers, who would, under the command of an American officer, move in on Nationalist held territory in China.<sup>15</sup>

By December 15, this McClure-Barrett plan was ready to be presented to the CCP. McClure assured Barrett that the plan had the blessing of Patrick Hurley, who had been appointed Ambassador to China two weeks earlier, after Gauss’ resignation following the Stilwell recall. On that day, Barrett flew back to Yen’an to confer with the CCP leadership about his plan. Davies was also aboard the flight, as was Colonel Willis G. Bird, an OSS agent. Barrett, in his personal account of the Dixie Mission, notes that Bird’s mission, as he understood it (and the implication is that it was distinct from the McClure-Barrett plan), was to “consult with Communist leaders concerning what

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<sup>14</sup> Yu, *OSS in China*, 184.

<sup>15</sup> Carole J. Carter, *Mission to Yen’an: American Liaison with the Chinese Communists, 1944-1947*. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 140.

cooperation with and support of United States forces they were prepared to offer should the latter land on a part of the Shantung coast under Communist control.”<sup>16</sup> William Donovan had dispatched Bird to Yen-an after learning that the CCP was eager to participate in a joint operation with the U.S. Donovan was planning an upcoming visit to China, and wanted to set some things in motion prior to his arrival, as did others who believed that OSS could play an important role in the swift conclusion of the war. For three days after Barrett’s return to—and Bird’s arrival in—Yen-an, “extensive plans were drawn and huge deals were made between OSS and the Chinese Communists.”<sup>17</sup>

What Bird, Barrett, Davies, Service, and Ludden discussed with the CCP leadership was of great historic significance. Although, as the historical record bears out, little actually materialized from these talks, it is important to note that in some official U.S. circles (in this case OSS and the State Department) the CCP was a force with which Americans were willing to deal. This was due in large part to the political and military inefficacy of the KMT regime, and the increasingly clear likelihood that the CCP was in China to stay, and that it enjoyed growing popular support, which could not be said about the ailing Chongqing regime. Several months later, Bird laid out the terms he was willing to offer the CCP during his December visit. These included, “provid[ing] complete equipment for up to twenty-five thousand [communist] guerillas except food and clothing,” the establishment of a “school to instruct in use of American arms, demolitions, communications, etc.,” and “to supply at least one hundred thousand Woolworth’s one shot pistols for People’s Militia.”<sup>18</sup> Shocked by the very generous

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<sup>16</sup> Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 76.

<sup>17</sup> Yu, *OSS in China*, 186.

<sup>18</sup> Bird’s memorandum quoted in Yu, *OSS in China*, 187.

offers being made on behalf of the U.S. by Colonel Bird, the CCP responded with a mixture of excitement and unease. Because they understood that a plan of this magnitude must surely receive the approval of Chiang Kai-shek before implementation, CCP officials expressed their concern to Bird. He assured them that OSS remained “very hopeful.”<sup>19</sup> In order to cover all possible bases, Ye Jianying asked Bird if OSS had a contingency plan should the Generalissimo disapprove of the plan (which he in all likelihood would) even if the relevant authorities in the U.S. gave it the green light. Bird’s response was startling. Recalling the exchange in late January 1945, Bird wrote, “everyone laughed at the question including himself [Ye], and I said something to the effect that army personnel obeyed orders and we would do whatever our government instructed us to do.”<sup>20</sup> What Bird told the CCP that day was in effect that the OSS could make decisions and take actions without the approval or authorization of the Chinese central government. Washington’s imprimatur was enough for OSS to act.

On December 27, 1944, Barrett returned once again to Yen-an on an errand for Wedemeyer’s chief of staff Robert McClure. As before, Barrett had been told that Hurley had authorized his mission. This time Barrett was to inform the Chinese Communists of a plan “which specified that American airborne units totaling 4,000 to 5,000 well-trained technicians should be sent to Communist-held territories to demolish and sabotage Japanese installations.”<sup>21</sup> McClure presented this plan to the KMT Minister of War, General Chen Cheng, to whom McClure clarified his belief that he and Wedemeyer—who supported the plan—both believed that the U.S. had the right to fight its enemies

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<sup>19</sup> Bird quoted in Yu, *OSS in China*, 188.

<sup>20</sup> Bird quoted in Yu, *OSS in China*, 189.

<sup>21</sup> Carter, *Mission to Yen-an*, 141.

anywhere in the world and by any means necessary. This was a stance that would come to dominate U.S. Cold War thinking, especially as it manifested itself in the form of proxy wars and U.S.-bankrolled anti-communist insurgencies across much of the world's peripheries. In China, in 1944, however, McClure and Wedemeyer were talking about backing communist insurgents against Japanese fascists because their putative allies, the KMT, were an ineffectual and even disinterested fighting force. For his December 27 trip to Yen-an, McClure ordered Barrett to inform the CCP brass that after the Allied defeat of Germany the U.S. might send a paratrooper division into China, and Barrett was to ask whether in the event of this landing, the CCP felt they could supply the U.S. divisions with food and shelter. The U.S. would take care of arming the soldiers. McClure stressed to Barrett that the nature of these discussions was purely exploratory, that there was nothing even in the works. And of course, as MacArthur's island hopping campaign became more successful the possibility of using China as a base of operations for the final defeat of Japan became less likely. This did not, however, keep the Chinese in Yen-an from sensing that there was the possibility of a longer term relationship at stake between the U.S. and the CCP. So much was this the case that on January 10, 1945, a cable from Yen-an's OSS team to Wedemeyer, informed the theater commander that Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai wished for Wedemeyer to arrange a trip for one or both of them to visit Washington to meet with Roosevelt.

This promise made by Colonel Bird of OSS in Yen-an, and the separate terms that Barrett was communicating on behalf of McClure and ostensibly Wedemeyer, would have serious repercussions. OSS was playing a dangerous game by keeping Hurley in the dark about their plans to arm large numbers of communist guerillas. Hurley's response to

the fiasco would really set the stage for much of the red-baiting that would cripple the State Department in the postwar years as well as sow the seeds for the rise of the Senator from Wisconsin.

Hurley had been loosely tasked by Roosevelt with the impossible goal of negotiating a truce between the KMT and the CCP. As this dissertation has shown, and as the historiography makes clear, the KMT were in the game of milking U.S. support for their putative efforts in fighting the Japanese, but were really just stockpiling military materiel and financial aid for personal gain and for the impending civil war with the Communists. Hurley was on a fool's errand, and he pursued his mission accordingly, as I will detail later. For now though, it is important to note that for understandable reasons Hurley was incensed when he found that OSS had gone behind his back to negotiate with the CCP, who he believed would see OSS overtures as ample reason for them to stop trying in good faith to reach an agreement with the KMT. On January 12, 1945, while in Chiang Kai-shek's compound discussing the "newly hardened attitude" of the CCP towards Hurley's efforts at negotiation, a message from Yen-an, presumably intercepted by Dai Li's agents, was leaked to Hurley. The intercepted message included information that "the Communists had full and complete information of a U.S. plan to assist them with arms, equipment, and U.S. personnel, which would by-pass the Central Government and that the knowledge of this plan to the Communists had made them more or less reluctant to negotiate any further with the Central Government."<sup>22</sup> Hurley, as he was wont to do, became apoplectic. Two days later Hurley fired off an angry message to the President in which he laid out his understanding of the Bird trip to Yen-an. He believed it

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<sup>22</sup> Yu, *OSS in China*, 190.

contravened his directive to, “prevent the collapse of the national Government, sustain the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek, unify the military force of China, and as far as possible to assist in the liberation of the Government and in bringing about conditions that would promote a free unified democratic China.”<sup>23</sup>

Upon receiving the message from Hurley, Roosevelt immediately ordered Admiral Leahy, who himself had recently been party to a plan to assist Chinese Communist guerillas, to have General George C. Marshall to conduct an investigation of the incident. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of January, Marshall accordingly cabled Wedemeyer demanding a thorough report of the negotiations that had gone on in Yen-an, and his recommendations for any action that should be taken to address the breach. Upon hearing from Marshall, Wedemeyer was distressed for several reasons. The first was that unlike the previous ambassador and commander of the CBI Theater, Gauss and Stilwell respectively, who had had a tumultuous relationship, Wedemeyer and Hurley lived together, and in fact had a gentleman’s agreement to share any and all relevant information regarding their jobs. For this reason, Wedemeyer was angered by the fact that Hurley had sent his message to the President without first telling him. Instead, Marshall dropped a bit of a bomb in his lap. Hurley claimed that he could not have possibly had time to confer with Wedemeyer before dispatching the message, as the theater commander was out of Chongqing.

What Wedemeyer’s investigation into the Bird-McClure-Barrett negotiations in Yen-an ultimately revealed was indicative of the loosely administered and competing intelligence command within China. Wedemeyer’s first response to Marshall, which he

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<sup>23</sup> Hurley quoted in Yu, *OSS in China*, 191.

took a week to send, merely sought to free his subordinates, namely McClure, from any culpability with regard to the negotiations with the CCP. Donovan's proposed visit to China had caused OSS in China to try to act quickly and hammer out a plan for a joint U.S.-CCP venture that would earn the OSS chief's approval, but Wedemeyer cautiously failed to mention anything about OSS in his initial response to Marshall. Unsatisfied with what may have been a deliberately confusing message, Marshall rejoined with a memo demanding an answer on three very clear points:

A: was there any plan prepared by U.S. personnel of your headquarters regarding employment of communist troops which contemplated bypassing the Generalissimo? If the above is true who formulated the plan and what was its status? B: More detail is desired on the specific facts upon which you and General Hurley do not agree as indicated in the last sentence of your message. C: Do you believe it is advisable for the President to contact the Generalissimo on this matter? If so, along what lines should the President's message be formulated?<sup>24</sup>

Mortified that a plan hatched by McClure and Barrett in his absence from Chongqing, but with his loose approval, had spiraled into an incident that might involve Roosevelt sending an apology to Chiang, Wedemeyer quickly drafted a reply clarifying that no foul play had occurred. Wedemeyer believed that any collaboration orchestrated by McClure and Barrett that was to happen between the U.S. and the CCP would first have to be approved by the Generalissimo before it could be operationalized. He believed his subordinates were acting on this assumption as well. It appears that it was Bird, who was on the same visit and exploring a slightly more ambitious plan of directly arming the communist guerillas, who told the Communists in no uncertain terms that OSS was willing to go over Chiang's head in order to speed up Japan's defeat. The confusion of the two separate OSS plans, both being discussed with the communist leadership over the

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<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Yu, *OSS in China*, 192.

same week in December, had simultaneously augured the increased power of the CCP, as well as highlighted some of the internally contradictory policies of the U.S. One of the many reasons that the U.S. maintained a policy of supporting the KMT as the *de facto* government, while simultaneously fighting the Japanese to the best of their capabilities, was that the latter part of that policy equation necessitated working with the Communists.

Despite this contradiction within the mission of the China war effort itself, Wedemeyer decided it was best to close the book on this incident as soon as possible. Wedemeyer believed that McClure and Barrett had acted within their mandate, which was to present the Communists with potentialities, but to offer no guarantees. Wedemeyer was thus angered by Hurley's implication that Wedemeyer's subordinates had acted secretly or in bad faith. There is no doubt that by early 1945 Hurley was suffering from at least mild paranoia with regard to his mission in China. He had already had a singularly mystifying about face with regards to his negotiations between the KMT and the CCP, and was prone to acts of belligerence uncharacteristic of a man in his position of authority. Indeed, not long afterwards, at a cocktail party hosted by Wedemeyer, Hurley, "livid with rage," challenged McClure to a fistfight.<sup>25</sup> Wedemeyer broke up the scuffle, afraid that the muscular McClure might seriously injure the aging ambassador. To clear the air, McClure was sent away from Chongqing to Kunming to head a new organization, the China Combat Command, and Barrett was removed as commanding officer of Dixie and reassigned as McClure's chief of staff, presumably for his role in the incident. Barrett fared much worse than McClure, however. He had been nominated by Wedemeyer for a promotion to Brigadier General, which generally meant

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<sup>25</sup> Carter, *Mission to Yenan*, 143-4.



that the promotion was a certainty. As Barrett recalled, “I thought I had it made, for in the past to be nominated for promotion by an officer in the position of General Wedemeyer was invariably followed by publication of orders announcing the promotion.”<sup>26</sup> Barrett ended up retiring from the army without a general’s star. Barrett remained bitter that he had been hung out to dry, despite being told repeatedly that his role as liaison during the negotiations had been cleared with Ambassador Hurley. In any case, Barrett believed that either Generals McClure or Wedemeyer could have stepped in and said that he, only a Colonel, had merely been following orders. Since McClure never suffered heavily as a result of the incident, it is safe to say that Wedemeyer protected him and perhaps allowed Barrett to take the fall.

The historiography seems to be rather unclear regarding the extent to which the Davies-McClure-Barrett and Bird OSS plans overlapped. According to Yu, in his exhaustively researched revision of the revisionist account, Wedemeyer messaged Marshall that, “General McClure sent Lt. Col. Willis H. Bird of the OSS with Barrett and directed him [Bird] to explore with the Communist military authorities the feasibility of using a Special Unit for operations in areas under the control of Communist forces.”<sup>27</sup> This would appear to be definitive confirmation that the plans were at least in part intertwined. Carolle Carter, however, reads the two plans as separate, and writes in her account that,

independent of Barrett but on the same day that the McClure Plan was presented, Lieutenant Colonel Willis Bird, the deputy chief of OSS China who had flown to Yen-an with Barrett, entered into negotiations with the Communists on behalf of the OSS. Wedemeyer, of course, knew that OSS

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<sup>26</sup> Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 78.

<sup>27</sup> Wedemeyer to Marshall quoted in Yu, *OSS in China*, 192.

was in his theater and in the Dixie Mission, but he did not know everything about the extent of the organization's involvement with the group.<sup>28</sup>

Carter paints a rather unflattering portrait of Bird as well, as a kind of northeastern city slicker, graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Finance, and former executive at Sears Roebuck. Carter's Bird was a vainglorious man, perhaps out of his element, playing cloak and dagger in a conjured Chinese frontier, his immanent ensemble completed by the set of pearl-handled revolvers he purportedly carried around with him at all times.<sup>29</sup>

Yu's argument is based on a close examination of OSS archives, and Carter's is based on OSS documents as well on oral histories of participants in Dixie, so each account is replete with its own potential drawbacks. The larger point that remains despite whoever's account is the more accurate, is that OSS was operating two missions at cross-purposes, and that there was a significant communication breakdown between OSS and the army and State Department, intentional or otherwise. As I argued in the previous chapter, this endemic disorganization placed strain upon important people tasked with cleaning up the impossibly messy situation in China. One of these people was Patrick Hurley, whose failed mission in China laid the groundwork for so much of what emerged in the U.S. as the nightmare of McCarthyism. Before detailing Hurley's mission, it is important to give a little background with regard to the liberal internationalists within the State Department attached to Dixie that would later so earn Hurley's wrath.

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<sup>28</sup> Carter, *Mission to Yenan*, 144.

<sup>29</sup> Carter, *Mission to Yenan*, 144-5.

## **John S. Service and the Importance of Dixie**

One of the most important documentary records from the World War II China field that survives largely intact is the substantial body of reports that John (Jack) Stewart Service wrote which made their way through all branches of military intelligence, the State Department, OSS, and often times even reached the White House. Critical to this rich cache of sources were the dispatches that Service transmitted during his stay in Yen-an, China, while he was attached to the Dixie Mission.

Service arrived in Yen-an with David Barrett and the first contingent of Dixie participants on July 22, 1944. Service had been born in China, in Chengdu, the son of missionaries, and he spoke Chinese fluently. He had gone to the Shanghai American School in the late teens with John Paton Davies, and the two were friends of long standing. Service attended Oberlin College, and after graduating, he attended one year of graduate school in art history before taking the examinations to enter the Foreign Service. In 1933, after successfully passing the Foreign Service exam, he went back to China to serve as a clerk in the American consulate in Kunming. Thus began Service's career in the country of his birth. In 1943, Davies requested that Service be attached to Stilwell in CBI as a political reporter, like Davies himself. Service and Davies' incisive expertise was not necessarily emblematic of the general kind of knowledge that American Foreign Service Officers (FSO) stationed in China held. The background of the China branch of the U.S. Foreign Service was, according to Service himself, "by and large more liberal

than the Foreign Service as a whole.”<sup>30</sup> Unlike many other Foreign Service stations, those who worked in China were often times “either China-born, or mid-western, this and that.”<sup>31</sup> Presumably, being the child of early-twentieth-century missionaries predisposed one to a more ecumenical outlook than what might be the norm within the State Department. According to Service, “the great majority of the people in the Foreign Service were probably good, rock-ribbed Republicans...from very conservative backgrounds...families with some money, social position, Eastern establishment.”<sup>32</sup> Service had himself voted Socialist in 1932.<sup>33</sup> This kind of ecumenicism didn’t always translate into a depth of knowledge about the political realities of China, however. Indeed, recalling the Foreign Service in China in the early 1940s, Service noted with some chagrin the story of a FSO named Clarence Spiker who had been stationed in China since Service himself had been a young boy. Spiker, by the dawn of the war already too old for field work, was instead working in intelligence research for the State Department. Service remembered being called in for a conference with Spiker, who had been amazed by some of the intelligence reports he was receiving from Service.

Apparently he’d asked to see me because he was very perplexed by references in...reports from Chungking that I’d written in ’42, ’43, about different factions and groups and cliques in the Kuomintang. He didn’t know anything at all about them. So, I had this odd experience of sitting and talking to this man I’d known as a boy, when he was consul in Chungking, and telling him almost in A-B-C terms about the Political

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<sup>30</sup> John S. Service, “State Department Duty in China, the McCarthy Era, and After: 1932-1977,” interviews conducted by Rosemary Levenson, Regional Oral History Office, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1978. Transcript on deposit at Bancroft Library. Quote is from p. 143. Henceforth Service Oral History.

<sup>31</sup> Service Oral History, 143.

<sup>32</sup> Service Oral History, 143.

<sup>33</sup> Service Oral History, 143. Service did not remain devoted to the Socialist cause in later years. He believed that Roosevelt was moving the U.S. in a vaguely socialist direction, but “at a reasonable pace, [in] an evolutionary way.” Quoted from transcript, 143-4.

Science Group, the CC Clique, the Whampoa Clique<sup>34</sup> ... This poor old guy who had spent all his life in China just seemed to be amazed. He didn't know any of this, hadn't really apparently been concerned about it.<sup>35</sup>

Clearly, the kind of intelligence being gathered and evaluated by informed and educated officers in the field, like Service and Davies, was essential to an informed prosecution of the war effort by the U.S.

Although Service had admittedly voted socialist in 1932, he was by no means a communist, or even a moderate leftist. Like many of his cohort, the China-born children of missionaries, Service was by his nature an internationalist with liberal inclinations. Through his upbringing in China, and formative years of university schooling in the U.S., he was able to utilize a more globalist approach to craft his complex understanding of the wartime world. His expertise on the Chinese Communist situation was not an outgrowth of his own political leanings, rather it was a calculated professional move founded on a shrewd assessment of his assignment in China. After the New Fourth Army incident in January of 1941, Service sensed that the Chinese Communists were

going to be a critical issue... so it seemed to me I should concentrate on Communist politics... This specialization was a career decision. It was not a decision based on my own political sympathies particularly. It was looking for something that was going to be the main—the ball game.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> The Political Science Group within the Kuomintang was an organization of like minded intellectuals, many of whom were political scientists, who held high positions in the KMT apparatus and believed that China should push forward on a conservative model with a ruling intellectual elite, not unlike the old scholar mandarin classes of dynastic China. The C.C. Clique was headed by the two Chen brothers, Chen Lifu (head of the MSB and archrival of Dai Li) and Chen Guofu. The Chen's uncle, Chen Qimei, had been a mentor to Chiang Kai-shek as a young man, but was assassinated by Yuan Shikai, and because of this association with Chiang the brothers came to rule the organizational operations of the KMT party police (through the MSB) and the Executive Yuan of the party itself. They represented the extreme right wing of the party. For more on the Whampoa Clique, see chapter 4.

<sup>35</sup> Service Oral History, 145.

<sup>36</sup> Service Oral History, 182. In January of 1941 Chiang Kai-shek ordered the Communist New Fourth and Eighth Route Armies to withdraw from their positions in Anhui and Jiangsu. On January 5, the communist troops were surrounded by a force of 80,000 KMT soldiers and ambushed, in the fighting that ensued

Once Service arrived in Yen-an, he set about taking a reading of the political situation he encountered there.

### **John Service's First Impressions**

John S. Service's first impressions of Yen-an were unequivocally positive. Six days after his arrival, Service set down to write up his first report. In that short time he had already found an opportunity to meet with the top officers of the Communist leadership, as well as grill several journalists who had been in the area longer than he. Service immediately noticed, in stark contrast to Chongqing, that Yen-an exhibited "an absence of show and formality" and that the "relations of the officials and people towards us, and of the Chinese among themselves, are open, direct, and friendly."<sup>37</sup> The top CCP officials mingled with the people freely. The dedication of the ordinary people in Yen-an astounded Service. Students from all over China flocked to Yen-an to participate in what seemed to Service like a "nerve center of important happenings," and they spoke often of returning to their home villages to spread their revolutionary work.<sup>38</sup> Again, unlike in KMT controlled territories, in Yen-an "the war seems close and real. There is no defeatism, but rather self confidence. There is no war weariness."<sup>39</sup> Service felt free to move about Yen-an and its environs and to make his observations undisturbed, and

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casualties were high. This was another moment of treachery on the part of Chiang Kai-shek; the CCP and KMT were still putative allies at this time. The New Fourth Army incident is widely regarded as the turning point in the dissolution of the second united front. For a brief overview of the incident see Spence, *Search*, 464-6; and for a thorough recounting of the incident from a viewpoint sympathetic to the CCP see Gregor Benton, *New Fourth Army: Communist Resistance along the Yangtze and the Huai, 1938-1941*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 511-616.

<sup>37</sup> Service, "First Informal Impression of the North Shensi Communist Base," July 28, 1944, in *Lost Chance*, 179.

<sup>38</sup> Service, "First Informal Impression of the North Shensi Communist Base," July 28, 1944, in *Lost Chance*, 180.

<sup>39</sup> Service, "First Informal Impression of the North Shensi Communist Base," July 28, 1944, in *Lost Chance*, 180.

without the feeling that he was being watched or followed. This was a situation wildly different than what Americans could expect to find in Chongqing, where agents of Dai Li and Chen Lifu were keeping U.S. political reporters under strict surveillance, and where the censorship of the media was intense.

At Yen-an, “it was all very informal...Mao Tse-tung might drop by for a chat in the evening, or Chu Teh, or we could go over and see them almost anytime on very short notice...If [we went], it might be a ‘stay for lunch’ sort of thing.”<sup>40</sup> Service likened the dynamic atmosphere at Yen-an to a “Christian summer conference,”<sup>41</sup> or “a rather small sectarian college. There [was] a bit of the smugness, self-righteousness and conscious fellowship.”<sup>42</sup> Service saw clear parallels between the YMCA in which his father had played such a prominent part, and the attitude that prevailed in Yen-an. “Talk about your YMCA sort of spirit of optimism and so on, this was it to the nth degree. Everything is positive, everything is good, we’re going to win, we *are* on the winning road.”<sup>43</sup> Overzealousness aside, it was clear that Yen-an represented something vastly different from the KMT controlled areas of China. The budding self confidence, the belief in the moral righteousness of the communist cause, the emboldened “morale, esprit, this was something that hit [Service] right away.”<sup>44</sup> There was an attention to efficiency that was sorely lacking in KMT areas where, it appeared to many, that the bureaucratic runaround was just another tactic to delay any unsettling of the status quo. In Yen-an, “if you asked for things, yes, they said they’d do it, and it was done, promptly, in fact, efficiently. In

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<sup>40</sup> Service Oral History, 272.

<sup>41</sup> Service Oral History, 272.

<sup>42</sup> Service, “First Informal Impression of the North Shensi Communist Base,” July 28, 1944, in *Lost Chance*, 182.

<sup>43</sup> Service Oral History, 272. Emphasis in original.

<sup>44</sup> Service Oral History, 272.

Chungking nothing was efficient. Nothing seemed to work and everything took a long time.”<sup>45</sup> Ultimately, Service found himself in agreement with a news correspondent who had spent a considerable amount of time studying China, who told him, “we have come to the mountains of north Shensi, to find the most modern place in China.”<sup>46</sup>

### **First Interview with Mao Zedong**

Although Service met with Mao immediately upon the observer group’s arrival, he was not to sit down with the leader for a formal interview until a month later, on August 23. They did speak briefly and informally at a dinner given for the observer group on the evening of July 26. At this welcome dinner, Service sat beside Mao, and they had a chance to discuss a few items of interest, but not in great detail. Mao expressed to Service his pleasure at Service’s inclusion as a member of the mission, and that he’d heard of Service’s interest in the Chinese political situation in Yen’an from Zhou Enlai. Mao also explored the possibility of the U.S. setting up a formal consulate at Yen’an, but Service thought it would be difficult if not impossible, if for no other reason than the fact that there were so few Americans in northern China. Mao agreed with Service on the impracticality of a consulate, but also mentioned that “he had raised the question because an American military group would withdraw from Yen’an immediately after the cessation of hostilities against Japan which was just the time of greatest danger of a Kuomintang attack and civil war.”<sup>47</sup> A month later, at their first formal interview, Mao and Service

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<sup>45</sup> Service Oral History, 272.

<sup>46</sup> Service, “First Informal Impression of the North Shensi Communist Base,” July 28, 1944, in *Lost Chance*, 182.

<sup>47</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 2 “Desire of Chairman of Communist Central Committee for Continued American Representation of Diplomatic Character at Yen’an,” July 28, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 685.



were able to discuss these, and other, matters in much greater detail and at much greater length.

The first interview between Service and Mao was a meeting of great historic importance. It marked one of the high points of U.S.-CCP relations, and of U.S. liberal internationalism more generally. While a number of American journalists had interviewed Mao and other members of the CCP leadership, a conversation with Service would almost certainly reach the White House.<sup>48</sup> It was no short affair, lasting six hours. Mao was very concerned over the question of U.S. policy, particularly as it related to China during the war and in the immediate postwar period. He thought that U.S. policy was a “vital concern of the Chinese people,”<sup>49</sup> particularly because he knew the U.S. was going to be the preeminent power in the Pacific region after what was by then the certain defeat of Japan. In particular, Mao was curious how the U.S. was going to act in relation to pushing China towards genuine democracy. Mao believed that the Chinese needed to achieve some sort of a stable form of democratic government before the war was over if there was going to be any chance of avoiding a civil war between the CCP and the KMT. To that end he discussed American support of a proposal to establish a new government through a convention of all the major political parties extant in China. Service found the interview particularly illuminating, and wrote in his memorandum to Stilwell that he believed Mao’s statements during the interview to have been “the clearest indication we

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<sup>48</sup> For a digest of interviews between American foreign correspondents and the CCP leadership see John S. Service, Report No. 3 “Views of the Communist Political and Military Leaders” with enclosed memoranda of interviews with Mao, Zhou, Zhu De, and Lin Biao, *Amerasia Papers*, 690-717.

<sup>49</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 “Interview with Mao Tse-tung,” August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 786.

have yet received of Communist thinking and planning in regard to the part they hope to have in China's national affairs in the near future."<sup>50</sup>

Coincident with the arrival of the Dixie Mission in the Chinese Communist capital, and something of which Service took diligent note, was the presence of the most important leaders of the CCP in Yen-an. Service noted that it could not have been because of the mission itself, because many of the communist leaders had begun their treks to Yen-an well in advance of Chiang's authorization of the mission. Service asked Mao about the concentration of leadership at Yen-an, and he responded that they were there for "conferences to prepare for the counter-offensive."<sup>51</sup> Despite Mao playing his cards close to his vest, it was clear to Service that among the matters under discussion by the CCP leadership were, "the weakening of the Kuomintang and the deterioration of conditions in Kuomintang China...the probable development of the closing stages of the war in China...[and] the probable strategy of the Kuomintang toward the Communists in these last stages and immediately afterward."<sup>52</sup> According to the CCP, the U.S. could play a formative role in the fate of democracy in China, and they sought U.S. support towards this end. At least this was the case in August of 1944. Service didn't believe that the CCP war effort was necessarily contingent upon U.S. support of the regime; he stated clearly that the Communists were "not going to stop fighting. But they may be more interested in directly extending their control, and less willing to sacrifice their strength and advantages

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<sup>50</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 "Interview with Mao Tse-tung," August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 787.

<sup>51</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 "Interview with Mao Tse-tung," August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 787.

<sup>52</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 "Interview with Mao Tse-tung," August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 787.

to over-all United Nations strategy.”<sup>53</sup> Service did suggest in his report of the interview that

We [the U.S.] have the ability to bolster the Kuomintang and keep it in power; we will determine the development of the war in the China theater; we can, if we wish, prevent civil war and force the Kuomintang toward democracy. These American policies will decide whether the Communists must play a lone hand and look out for themselves, or whether they can be assured of survival and participation in a democratic China and so cooperate wholeheartedly in the war. The Communists want our understanding and support; they are anxious to do nothing to alienate us or compromise that support.<sup>54</sup>

This wasn't quite a policy recommendation, which Service did make, but it was certainly a push in the direction of the U.S. taking greater responsibility for its role in bolstering the KMT regime, and to think deeply about the possible long term consequences of a policy of unconditional support for an anti-democratic party and government.

Despite the popular belief that would come to dominate U.S. discourse about the CCP by late 1945, in August of 1944 Service could still write with relative openness that the Chinese Communists “believe, for the sake of China’s unity on a democratic basis, that...Russian participation [in postwar reconstruction] should be secondary to that of the United States.”<sup>55</sup> Service reckoned that, by mid-1944, the CCP was the more potent force in the event of a civil war either amidst or immediately following the current war against Japan. Japan was going to be defeated, that was only a question of time, but what the U.S. really stood to gain from its actions in Yen-an and the rest of China for the remainder of the war, was a stake in the postwar alignment of Chinese power. Service believed, along

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<sup>53</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 “Interview with Mao Tse-tung,” August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 788.

<sup>54</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 “Interview with Mao Tse-tung,” August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 788.

<sup>55</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 “Interview with Mao Tse-tung,” August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 788. Of course, it was in part for writing such things that Service would later be blamed, along with others like Davies, that he had “lost China” to the communists.

with Mao and others in the CCP leadership, that the U.S. held the key to the fate of China, even if civil war were already an inevitability. Although there would later be cries in Congress and throughout the domestic public sphere that U.S. policymakers, especially those ‘China hands’ in the State Department, had ‘delivered’ China to the Communists, when Service sat down to talk with Mao in the summer of 1944 the United States very much had the ball in its court. This was a time of extraordinary potential for fostering a relationship with the CCP that could be turned towards U.S. postwar interests. The U.S. had during the course of the war, at times at least, maintained a rather flexible policy towards China. Indeed, Roosevelt himself had told Edgar Snow that he was working with two governments in China and that he would continue to do so. However, despite this potentiality, what ultimately happened in China was that the U.S., for many reasons, some of which will be illuminated here, but in their entirety would and have filled volumes, was backed into a corner of pursuing a policy of unconditional support for Chiang Kai-shek’s bankrupt KMT regime. This was in large part a result of the blundering policy of the aging and senile Patrick Hurley, who would begin the chorus that the State Department had been infiltrated by communists and had ruined the possibility of democracy in China. None of this is to say that any course pursued by the U.S., either propping up Chiang (as they did), or arming and supporting the Communists (which they did not), would have altered the by then inevitable trajectory of American global hegemony in the postwar period. It is, however, to make the case for an important and decisive moment in global history that could have dramatically altered the course of events in Asia during the Cold War.<sup>56</sup> This is not in pursuit of positing counterfactuals to

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<sup>56</sup> For a compelling argument that Asia in 1945 marks the origins of the Cold War see Marc Gallicchio, *The Cold War Begins in Asia*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

determine whether a ‘chance’ was indeed ‘lost’ in China in 1944-5, the U.S. clearly miscalculated its policy aims by supporting the corrupt KMT regime, but rather an attempt to illustrate a complex genealogy of empire that has traceable continuities with the fall of the Qing Dynasty, the penetration of Christianity into the Chinese heartland, and the mishandling of U.S. foreign policy in a global war against fascism.

Mao began his first interview with Service by detailing the history of CCP-KMT relations since the founding of the CCP. He stated plainly that the central problem in China was the problem of the relationship between the two parties. At each successive stage of cooperation between the two warring parties, Mao argued, the KMT was forced to work with the CCP as a matter of political survival, and never in the actual interest of Chinese unity. This was true for the period preceding the Northern Expedition, and was certainly true for the current period of cooperation. Mao cited five factors that compelled the KMT into a united front for the current war against Japan, “1. The Japanese attack 2. The pressure of foreign opinion 3. The enduring strength of the Communists—exploited at Sian 4. The will of the Chinese people—to resist Japan 5. The internal weakness of the KMT—which made it unable to defeat us.”<sup>57</sup> While clearly trying to paint the CCP in as positive a light as possible, and to paint the KMT in the most negative way, Mao nevertheless outlined for Service a very clear picture of the CCP’s capabilities, its perceptions of its own abilities, and its ideas about its future, both with or without U.S. assistance. The inevitable end of the war against Japan was going to be a great turning point, and Mao urged Service to ensure the U.S. did not misstep at a critical moment. Mao noted that the CCP was stronger than it had ever been before, and that strength was

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<sup>57</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 “Interview with Mao Tse-tung,” August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 789.

only growing, and with that growth came a marked decline in the power of the KMT. This was a particularly dangerous dynamic, because the increasing powerbase of the CCP, which corresponded to an enervation in KMT power, only forced the KMT to act more belligerently and desperately to destroy the communist bogey as quickly as possible, and for reasons that would benefit their own survival towards which end they sought to enlist as much U.S. support as possible before the termination of the official war.

The KMT was weak and ineffectual, but not without political imagination and calculation. It was clear to them that the U.S. had multiple operations going in China simultaneously, and not all of those converged into a single unified objective with regard to China. Other than the loosely coalescent idea that the U.S. was committed to maintaining China's territorial integrity and backing the Nationalist Government—which was not technically the same as backing the KMT because party and government were not coterminous—and the defeat of Japan, U.S. strategy in China was fairly incoherent. In any event, Mao's overtures towards Service regarding increased U.S. support of the Chinese Communists did not fall on deaf ears. He had an ally in Service, and not because Service was a communist: he was not. Quite the contrary, Service continually iterated in his dispatches that his guiding interest was for maintaining the U.S. pole position in China after the war. Mao detailed the repression that was endemic to KMT-controlled zones:

the liberals, students, intellectuals, publicists, newspaper interests, Minor Parties, provincial groups, and modern industrialists (who have been disillusioned and see no future for themselves in Kuomintang bureaucratic industrialization) are numerous. But they are disorganized, disunited, and

without power. Over them Chiang holds the bayonets and the secret police.<sup>58</sup>

Given these factors, Mao said, a Kuomintang initiated civil war was inevitable for reasons of maintaining and perpetuating their tenuous grasp on power. Mao believed, and was correct, that the CCP would defeat the KMT in this inevitable showdown, but also believed that the U.S. was the only power that could render the civil war a moot point through direct intervention. Mao stated in no uncertain terms that he was not averse to the U.S. taking an active and interventionist stance with regard to the political situation in China, if for no other reason than the fact that U.S. inaction would affect all of Asia, and “*become a major international problem.*”<sup>59</sup> Mao evinced a larger general concern for the limits of U.S. internationalism in the postwar period. He understood that the postwar world was one where a kind of fluent internationalism would be required of nations seeking relevance on the global scene, and accordingly expressed his concerns to Service about the likelihood of “an American swing back toward isolationism and a resultant lack of interest in China.”<sup>60</sup> Interestingly, with regard to Mao’s concerns over the U.S. stance towards postwar internationalism, Service replied—not speaking on behalf of the U.S.,

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<sup>58</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 “Interview with Mao Tse-tung,” August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 789. In May of 1943 Lauchlin Currie had made note in a memorandum to Roosevelt that these groups, “university faculties, lower ranks of the Bureaucracy,” represented the true friends of the U.S. in China. According to Currie, KMT anti-imperialism was impelled mostly by “a desire to conceal the absence of any positive reform program and partly out of a desire to stir up and keep alive the distrust of Western powers and discredit their democratic pretensions.” Men like Dai Li could not be trusted “to be motivated in the slightest way by any feelings of friendship for us or gratitude for what we may do.” Currie reached the same conclusion that so many Americans who had actually visited China did, “we are dealing with a large group of men who have definite interests with which they fear we may interfere, who have no particular affection for us, and who are determined to secure as much from us as possible while parting with as little as possible.” Lauchlin Currie, “Some Reflections on American Chinese Policy,” May 18, 1943, Box. 5: Fol. “Memos FDR 1943,” Currie Papers.

<sup>59</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 “Interview with Mao Tse-tung,” August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 790. Emphasis in Service’s original report. Mao told Service that, “the hope for preventing civil war in China therefore rests to a large extent—much more than ever before—on the influence of foreign countries. Among these *by far the most important is the United States*. Its growing power in China and in the Far East is already so great that it can be decisive,” *Ibid*.

<sup>60</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 “Interview with Mao Tse-tung,” August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 790.

but on his own—that America had “a long and special interest in China” and that because the U.S. was uniquely positioned to “have no internal reconstruction problem as a result of war destruction,” but instead a “greatly expanded economy and...[a] more international outlook [that would] would impel [the U.S.] to seek trade and investment beyond our borders.”<sup>61</sup> Service therefore doubted that the U.S. would retreat back into isolationism, or lose interest in its stakes in China. Service was correct that the U.S. would not slink back into isolationism, but it most certainly compromised its own self interest by cornering itself into believing it had to commit itself wholeheartedly to Chiang Kai-shek. This was one of the foundational problematics of the Cold War, and has a clear genealogical lineage that spread through much of Asia, first in Korea, and then to Vietnam and much of Southeast Asia.

After expressing his concerns to Service regarding the U.S. potential to return to isolationism, Mao mined the heart of the matter and pointedly asked Service the degree to which the U.S. was actually committed to democracy in a postwar world system. “Is the American Government really interested in democracy—in its world future?” asked Mao.<sup>62</sup> This was a clever segue for Mao to be able to push Service on a larger point, that is, what it meant for American overtures towards democracy that it was pursuing a policy of steadfast support for the KMT regime, which the U.S. clearly knew—from foot soldiers on the ground in China on up to the President himself—was deeply anti-democratic if not fascist? If China contained one quarter of the world’s population, and the U.S. was committed to a policy of spreading democracy, was

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<sup>61</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 “Interview with Mao Tse-tung,” August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 790.

<sup>62</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 “Interview with Mao Tse-tung,” August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 790.



[the U.S.] concerned that the present government of China, which it recognizes, has no legal status by any law and is in *no way representative of the people* of China? Chiang Kai-shek was elected president by only 90 members of a single political party, the Kuomintang, who themselves cannot validly claim to represent even the limited membership of that party. Even Hitler has a better claim to democratic power. He was elected by the people. And he has a Reichstag.<sup>63</sup>

It's safe to say that the historical record bears out the overwhelming fact that U.S. officials in tune with the China scene had ample evidence to back up the belief that the KMT was anything but democratic. The question Mao was putting to Service was how the U.S. planned on squaring this fact with their commitment to the Atlantic Charter and Four Freedoms, and the paeans to democratic governance and political freedom embodied therein. It was a fair question to be sure. The U.S. had wholeheartedly committed itself to the primary goal of winning the war against Japan as quickly and efficiently as possible. Indeed, the ultimate expression of their ruthless efficiency was the nuclear devastation unleashed on Hiroshima and Nagasaki which brought the war to a moderately swifter conclusion than it might otherwise have been.

Mao gestured at the possibility of getting U.S. support for the KMT to convene a provisional national congress to reform the government. He suggested that the KMT should hold half the membership, and the other political parties in the country should occupy the other half. These members should be elected democratically. This provisional congress should be deputized with the right to draft a new constitution, and when that was completed, national elections would be held and the provisional congress would "turn over its powers and pass out of existence."<sup>64</sup> Mao was hopeful that the U.S. might use its influence to compel Chiang Kai-shek to follow such a course of action. Even U.S.

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<sup>63</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 "Interview with Mao Tse-tung," August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 790.

<sup>64</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 "Interview with Mao Tse-tung," August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 791.

support of such a congress could not guarantee KMT cooperation, however, and Mao suggested to Service that if the KMT failed to reform itself, the Americans should have a second policy in place; a policy that would tackle the “question of American policy towards the Communists.”<sup>65</sup> Mao was in fact seeking some kind of acknowledgment from Service that the U.S. might entertain the idea of recognizing a communist government in China as the *de facto* government. Mao pointedly told Service that the CCP “can risk no conflict with the United States.”<sup>66</sup> Service had at this point absolutely no reason to doubt the sincerity of Mao’s overtures towards the U.S., or of the CCP’s desire to have sound diplomatic relations with the United States. Indeed, enmity with the U.S. would only serve as a roadblock towards whatever version of communism the Chinese had in mind in late 1944, whether that was a kind of ‘agrarian reformism’ as many Americans thought, or even a more radicalized rural soviet model. Either way, the CCP was a savvy party that had survived three decades of persecution and had only grown stronger. They acted in the interests of the survival of their party, and to alienate the U.S. at this stage just did not fit into any equation that would yield the most political longevity for them.

Mao compared the U.S. backing of the KMT regime to America’s recognition of the failed government of Yuan Shikai after the fall of the Qing Dynasty. The populist government in 1911 was not based in Peking, but in Canton under the leadership of Sun Yat-sen, but the U.S. and other imperialist powers continued, for reasons of economic self interest and political expediency, to recognize the parody of constitutionalism unfolding in China’s capital city. Would the U.S. continue to back Chiang’s regime if it

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<sup>65</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 “Interview with Mao Tse-tung,” August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 792.

<sup>66</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 “Interview with Mao Tse-tung,” August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 792.

continued sliding even further into corruption and political ineffectivity? Would it repeat the same mistakes it made in 1911? Service replied to Mao with some canned platitudes about how the U.S. had historically shied away from intervening in the domestic affairs of sovereign nations. To this Mao could only have suppressed a laugh, student of imperialism that he was. He told Service:

America has intervened in every country where her troops and supplies have gone. This intervention may not have been intended and may not have been direct. But it has been nonetheless real—merely by the presence of that American influence. For America to insist that arms be given to all forces who fight Japan, which will include the Communists, is not interference. For American to give arms only to the Kuomintang will, in its effect, be interference because it will enable the Kuomintang to continue to oppose the will of the people of China.<sup>67</sup>

Service replied with a typical packaged American response of the time that Chiang did not take well to being dictated to, as would become evident only a few months later when he orchestrated the recall of Stilwell in October of 1944. Mao told Service what he was already beginning to suspect and would report with great clarity in October<sup>68</sup>, which was that

Chiang [is] in a position where he *must* listen to the United States...Chiang is in a corner...Chiang is stubborn. But fundamentally he is a gangster. That fact must be understood in order to deal with him...The only way to handle him is to be hardboiled. You must not give way to his threats and bullying. Do not let him think you are afraid: then he will press his advantage. The United States has handled Chiang very badly. They have let him get away with blackmail—for instance, talk of being unable to keep up resistance, of having to make peace, his tactics in getting the 500 million dollar loan, and now [H.H.] Kung's [Chiang's brother in law, and the then Minister of Finance] mission to the U.S. and the plea for cloth. Cloth! Are we or are we not fighting the Japanese! Is cloth more important than bullets? We had no cotton here in the Border Region and

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<sup>67</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 "Interview with Mao Tse-tung," August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 793.

<sup>68</sup> See Service's Report, "The Need for Greater Realism in Our Relations with Chiang Kai-shek," October 10, 1944, *Lost Chance*, 161-66.

the KMT blockade kept us from getting any from the parts of China that did have it. But we got busy and soon we are going to be self sufficient. It would 100 times easier for the KMT, and if they were a government that had an economic policy they would have done it themselves.<sup>69</sup>

The U.S. was clearly in a position of bargaining power with relation to the KMT, but for reasons many, they were unable to unify a policy and act according to this fact. Instead, Roosevelt catered to Chiang, in large part due to domestic pressures exerted on his government by Americans with a sentimental attachment to China who believed the puffery being printed in the Luce and Hearst presses about Chiang the consummate democrat. At the Cairo Conference, Chiang had told Admiral Mountbatten that “the President [Roosevelt] will refuse me nothing. . . Anything I ask, he will do.”<sup>70</sup> Mao told Service, “the position of the United States now is entirely different from what it was just after Pearl Harbor. There is no longer any need or any reason to cultivate, baby or placate Chiang. The United States *can* tell Chiang what he should do—in the interest of the war. American help to Chiang should be made conditional on his meeting American desires.”<sup>71</sup> That being said, Mao was clearly putting the ball into Service’s court to recommend increased U.S. support of the CCP. There were roughly two dominant ways of thinking about the Chinese Communists at the time, that they were so-called ‘agrarian reformers’ akin to American heartland populists of the late nineteenth century, or that they were already subservient to Moscow. Neither was really the case. They never claimed to be anything other than communists, but they had not had cordial relations with the Soviets since the 1930s. Also, the CCP knew that the Soviets were going to be in a bad way after the war, and they had no desire to be a satellite to Soviet Communism. The

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<sup>69</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 “Interview with Mao Tse-tung,” August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 793.

<sup>70</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 404.

<sup>71</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 “Interview with Mao Tse-tung,” August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 794. Emphasis in original.

Chinese were committed to an autochthonous expression of communism that was tailored to Chinese conditions, and there was, in 1944, no reason why that couldn't or shouldn't entail U.S. support. Mao made it plain to Service that since China was in the most nascent stage of communism one might imagine, that capitalist enterprise was necessary in order to even bring the country up to speed to establish a genuine communist state. He urged Americans to preach democracy while in China. Americans in China needed "to talk American ideals...Every American soldier in China should be a walking and talking advertisement for democracy."<sup>72</sup> Mao said that the CCP welcomed Americans to visit any area under their control, and hoped they would go and spread democracy as they went. This was in marked contrast to the KMT, who actively sought to exclude outside observers for fear that their resistance to democracy would become publicized. This was the case that Oliver Caldwell observed with relation to the KMT interpreters school, and Mao highlighted it again here for Service. American presence in China had a "restraining effect on the Kuomintang."<sup>73</sup> Despite claims that the KMT was interested primarily in defeating Japan, the truth appeared to be that they were primarily interested in receiving and stockpiling as much U.S. aid as possible without the U.S. actually checking up on their limited use of those supplies in the fight against Japan. Indeed, according to Mao, "the KMT is worried about the effect of a lot of Americans in China. *They fear an American landing only second to their fear of Russian participation.*"<sup>74</sup> They feared a U.S. landing because the influx of Americans might discover how U.S. aid was being appropriated to prepare for civil war rather than to defeat Japan; they feared Russian

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<sup>72</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 "Interview with Mao Tse-tung," August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 794.

<sup>73</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 "Interview with Mao Tse-tung," August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 794.

<sup>74</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 "Interview with Mao Tse-tung," August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 794.

participation in the war because it might facilitate an easy postwar transition of power into the hands of the CCP.

Mao suspected that the main purpose of the Dixie Mission was to exert a subtle pressure on the KMT. Mao hoped that this latent concern over KMT abuses might lead towards an actual U.S. landing in China. This, Mao thought, might forestall a civil war. Service wondered whether or not civil war was at that point inevitable. Mao said it was “inevitable, but not quite certain.”<sup>75</sup> The only way to avoid it with certainty, was through direct U.S. intervention of some sort. Mao assured Service that a victory for the Allies in China was not going to mean a CCP-Soviet bloc in the area that was inimical to U.S. interests. Rather, he claimed, “Russia only wants a friendly and democratic China,” and he further assured Service that “the policies of the Chinese Communist Party are merely liberal,” and that he was aware of the fact that “China must industrialize” which he understood could only be done through the influx of foreign capital.<sup>76</sup> American capital was fine with the CCP, and this would be to the mutual benefit of each nation’s postwar plans. Mao closed his interview telling Service that “America does not need to fear that we will not be cooperative. We must cooperate and we must have American help. This is why it is so important to us Communists to know what you Americans are thinking and planning. We cannot risk crossing you—cannot risk any conflict with you.”<sup>77</sup> Mao clearly had an agenda with Service, and made certain that he was able to communicate those issues he thought it most important for the Americans to hear: the long history of KMT treachery and double-crossing; Chiang’s weak bargaining position with regard to U.S. Lend-Lease; the CCP’s superior will to fight the Japanese; and the Chinese Communist’s

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<sup>75</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 “Interview with Mao Tse-tung,” August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 795.

<sup>76</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 “Interview with Mao Tse-tung,” August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 796.

<sup>77</sup> John S. Service, Report No. 15 “Interview with Mao Tse-tung,” August 27, 1944, *Amerasia Papers*, 797.

desire for U.S. help in achieving their social revolution. Without delving into the tired debates regarding whether or not Service was hoodwinked by the communist leader, it is clear that at this early stage in U.S.-CCP relations the room for possibility was substantial. Indeed, John Davies called this historic conversation “of greater significance than all of Roosevelt’s and Wallace’s conversations with Chiang.”<sup>78</sup> Material aid would have fostered increased goodwill between the CCP and the U.S., and this would have been beneficial to the U.S. ideas of what a peaceful postwar Pacific should have looked like. Instead, for a number of complex reasons, the U.S. failed to render any substantial support to the CCP, rebuffed their overtures, and in fact acted in ways that were directly inimical to the survival of their party and their revolution, all this while possessing intelligence and political reporting that stated in no uncertain terms that the future of China belonged to the Communists, and not the moribund KMT regime which American sentiment hoped beyond hope’s bounty might provide a lasting democratic peace in China.

### **Patrick J. Hurley and the Stilwell Recall**

General Patrick J. Hurley was sent by President Roosevelt to China in the summer of 1944 to try to heal the growing rift between General Joseph Stilwell and Chiang Kai-shek. He was one more in a long line of personal emissaries dispatched by Roosevelt to do his bidding above and beyond the normative channels of diplomacy. It was a particular habit of Roosevelt’s to do such things. Two years earlier, he had sent Lauchlin Currie to China as his point man to the Chiangs. One of the things that Currie

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<sup>78</sup> Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 320.

had recommended while in China was that Stilwell be recalled because of the fundamental incompatibility of his 'vinegary' personality with the self-important and conservative Chiang. In a strained conversation between Currie and the Chiangs on July 29, 1942, regarding Chiang Kai-shek's distaste for having his Chief of Staff [Stilwell] simultaneously be in charge of the distribution of American Lend-Lease, Currie concurred with the Generalissimo that it might be best, since "his temperament is such that he cannot get along...to change him."<sup>79</sup> In the two years since Currie had made that recommendation to FDR, the relationship between Stilwell and Chiang had only gotten worse, commensurate with the war situation in China.

While Stilwell was in Burma throughout 1943, "China's situation had degenerated alarmingly from the effects of civic and economic paralysis, renewed Japanese penetration, and rising disunity and discontent."<sup>80</sup> Inflation was skyrocketing at near unbelievable rates, and production had practically ceased. According to Tuchman, "seven out of every eight mines in Kwangsi had closed down as had 14 out of 18 iron foundries in Chungking."<sup>81</sup> China appeared to be on the verge of political and economic collapse. This internal deterioration was not quite as clearly manifest to Americans at home who were consistently reminded by Henry Luce that Chiang Kai-shek was one of the great democratic leaders of the free world. Indeed, just several months earlier at the Cairo Conference in late 1943 Roosevelt had worked hard to have Chiang anointed one of the Big Four, along with Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt himself. One of the major reasons for the meeting at Cairo was itself to determine the role China was to play in the

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<sup>79</sup> Lauchlin Currie, July 29, 1944, Box. 4: Fol. "Second Trip to China Interviews with Chiang Kai-shek," Currie Papers.

<sup>80</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 455.

<sup>81</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 456.



war effort and the subsequent postwar order. FDR wanted nothing more than a strong and independent China that would not disturb an Allied vision of postwar prosperity and stability. The inflation of Chiang's international stature as a result of the Cairo Conference was just one in a long line of concessions Roosevelt made to the Chinese leader in an effort to placate him and keep him in the war on the side of the Allies. Roosevelt's Europe-first strategy relied heavily on Chinese troops tying up Japanese forces in Asia, and he told Stalin as much in Tehran, calling it "our one great objective."<sup>82</sup> What Roosevelt failed to see was that Chiang had no choice but to remain on the side of the Allies, who were by this point assured a victory, it was only a question of time. Any chance that Chiang could hope to retain or regain former Chinese possessions then held by the Japanese (especially Formosa and Manchuria) would be determined by his refusing a separate peace with Tokyo, which he often threatened to do. Instead, Chiang exploited Roosevelt's knowledge that he was in some sense compromising America's stated support of China by relegating it to second class status as a theater of operations. Politically China may have now become one of the Big Four, but militarily it still remained very much a lower priority than Europe. This always troubled Roosevelt, and constituted much of the impetus for his consistent acquiescence to Chiang's demands for more Lend-Lease aid. His was a bit of a guilty conscience.

When Stilwell returned to Chongqing in 1944 he was shocked and dismayed by the degree of desuetude in the KMT fighting forces. As I have shown earlier in the dissertation, the condition of the conscripts was horrible, and corruption within the military ran rampant. This was when Stilwell figured that the KMT army could be reduced into the more manageable and better trained and equipped X-Y-Z forces to

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<sup>82</sup> Tuchman, *Stilwell*, 401.

reopen Burma and mount an effective push against the Japanese gains in the CBI Theater. To accomplish this, however, Stilwell thought he needed total control over Chinese troops. This would have been a tremendous loss of face to Chiang, to have his supreme military authority usurped by his nominal Chief of staff. Chiang, no great military tactician, preferred to place his faith in the fantastical claims of General Claire Chennault, who believed that a vigorous campaign from the air using only “105 fighters, 35 medium bombers, and 12 heavy bombers [could] ‘accomplish the downfall of Japan.’”<sup>83</sup> What likely pleased Chiang most about the Chennault plan was that it involved leaving much more air supply space for U.S. aid that could be hoarded for the civil war than would have been available should Stilwell’s ground plan have been put into action. It didn’t hurt that Chennault was a steadfast supporter of the KMT regime either. At the Trident Conference in Washington in May of 1943, Chiang pushed Roosevelt to support Chennault’s plan, while the War Department thought it foolhardy, and that it would only provoke an intensified Japanese air attack on Chennault’s air bases which the U.S. could not adequately respond to. The President, once again, acquiesced to Chiang, and history proved that the War Department was correct in its predictions. The Japanese responded to Chennault’s attacks with its ICHIGO offensive, which played a significant factor in further crippling China’s internal political and military stability.<sup>84</sup> Chennault’s air attacks were not complete failures, however: on the contrary, he managed to destroy “enough [Japanese] ore carriers from mid-1943 to mid-1944 to cut Japan’s ore imports in half.”<sup>85</sup> But with his base of operations now crippled, an alternative to Chennault’s plan to deal

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<sup>83</sup> Russel D. Buhite, *Patrick J. Hurley and American Foreign Policy*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), 143.

<sup>84</sup> For more on ICHIGO see Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 282-295.

<sup>85</sup> Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 290.

the final blow to Japan had to be rethought. These were just some of the conditions Stilwell had to weigh as he considered his next move in the summer of 1944.

One item of critical importance that was also discussed at Cairo, and that would have a tremendous effect upon the overall strategic picture of China's importance, and thus on Stilwell's career, was the island-hopping campaign that would be led by General MacArthur. This campaign, and its ultimate success, rendered near obsolete any desire on the part of the U.S. to launch an offensive on Japan from the Chinese mainland, and consequently reduced the importance of the China theater even further. This made Stilwell's command exponentially less important than it had been at the start of the war. Stilwell's diminished role in the overall war effort probably made recalling him less detrimental to U.S. interests than placating Chiang—or so Roosevelt thought.

Stilwell's plans involved a surge in the potency of the Chinese fighting forces, and in order for this to be realized he needed Chinese communist troop support. Predictably, Chiang was not a fan of this idea. But by this time, Roosevelt had become more keen to the fact that Chiang was no longer in danger of negotiating a separate peace with Japan, as it would have just been setting himself up for defeat, and so Roosevelt dealt with Chiang on a more *quid pro quo* basis. Roosevelt had already threatened to cut off all Lend-Lease supplies to Chinese forces in Burma if Chiang did not actively commit them to aid Stilwell in his attempt to retake Burma. Reluctantly, Chiang agreed. He was less sanguine about acquiescing to Stilwell's request that communist troops be brought under his command. Chiang continued to hem and haw, and by the time the crisis reached a head in the summer of 1944, he had still not committed any communist troops to Stilwell. This only made Stilwell's contempt for the Generalissimo grow. By June, when

Vice President Wallace visited and received Chiang's permission to dispatch the Dixie Mission, Chiang also asked him to communicate to Roosevelt that it was his wish that Stilwell be recalled. While it is true, as the historian Tang Tsou has pointed out, that "Stilwell's policy and tactics might have had a better chance to succeed if they had been accompanied by tact, courtesy, and politeness,"<sup>86</sup> it is likewise true that Chiang rarely agreed to something that was not deeply calculated to be in the long term interest of maintaining his power. It is probably no coincidence that the same series of conversations between Chiang and Wallace that decided the Dixie Mission's fate also essentially decided Stilwell's. If Roosevelt was going to play hard ball with Chiang, he now knew he had the leverage to see to it that Stilwell be relieved of his command. Chiang asked Wallace to tell Roosevelt that he wanted a personal emissary sent to China to try to heal the rift between him and Stilwell. In hindsight, this was probably part of a larger orchestration that Chiang knew he could maneuver into the eventual ouster of the U.S. commander of CBI. Wallace reported to Roosevelt that he felt that Chiang was

most anxious for aid, and even guidance, and ready, I believe, to make relatively drastic changes if wisely approached... In short, affairs are in a more fluid state, and therefore are more subject to judicious negotiation and effective leadership, than ever in the East. With the right man to do the job, it should be possible to induce the Generalissimo to reform his regime, and to establish at least the semblance of a united front, which are necessary to the restoration of Chinese morale; and to proceed thereafter to organizing the new offensive effort for which restored morale will provide the foundation.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Tang Tsou, *America's Failure in China, 1941-1950*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 94.

<sup>87</sup> Wallace to Roosevelt, June 28, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 236.

Wallace was convinced that the situation in China was critical, the eastern China could fall at any moment, and in order to induce Chiang to shape up Stilwell would need to be replaced.

Sensing an opportunity to press his advantage with the underinformed Wallace, Chiang wrote him that he also hoped, “President Roosevelt will send to Chungking a personal representative who enjoys his full confidence and is empowered to work as well as to plan with me in the handling of important military, political and economic affairs in order to effect the dynamic thoroughgoing collaboration referred to above.”<sup>88</sup> The man Roosevelt sent was Hurley. Hurley was an interesting choice for Roosevelt. He was a moderate Republican who had relatively little experience with Asian matters, and certainly knew next to nothing about the political or any other situation in China. He did have prestige, however, which would sit well with Chiang and his desire for face; Hurley had served in President Hoover’s cabinet as the Secretary of War. Henry Stimson, Roosevelt’s Secretary of War, had been Hoover’s Secretary of State, and had worked with Hurley previously. He and George Marshall were instrumental in getting Hurley appointed Roosevelt’s emissary in China. While the appointment was still under negotiation, Hurley had expressed his interest to Edward Stettinius, the Under Secretary of State, stating that he hoped the mission might result in his being appointed Ambassador to China.<sup>89</sup> Despite being told by Stettinius that there was little chance at the time that Gauss would need to be replaced, Hurley importuned him to press the issue with Hull. This is interesting if for no other reason than that Gauss ultimately resigned because

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<sup>88</sup> Chiang Kai-shek to Wallace, July 8, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 239.

<sup>89</sup> Edward Stettinius to Cordell Hull, August 3, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 247.

of Hurley's botching of his mission in China, and Hurley did replace him. The President's orders to Hurley outlined his mission as follows:

You are designated as my personal representative with Chiang Kai-shek. You will report directly to me. Your mission will be to promote harmonious relations between General Chiang and General Stilwell and to facilitate the latter's exercise of command over the Chinese armies placed under his direction... In carrying out your mission you are to maintain intimate contact with Ambassador Gauss at Chungking and to keep him advised of your activities.<sup>90</sup>

Although it was not specifically spelled out in his directive, Hurley, probably in conjunction with the President, also took it upon himself to help broker an agreement that would unify the warring KMT and CCP. For this reason, Hurley stopped in Moscow en route to Chongqing to try to gauge the feelings of the Soviet leadership towards the situation in China.

Hurley met with Soviet Foreign Minister V.M. Molotov on August 31, 1944, to discuss the U.S. desire to see a truly unified KMT-CCP alliance that could help crush the Japanese sooner rather than later. Molotov "appeared most amenable to the ideas" proposed to him, and indicated that the Soviets had no desire to interfere in domestic Chinese politics or to give aid to the CCP, who Stalin had once called "margarine communists" and who Molotov now said "had no relation whatever to communism."<sup>91</sup> Molotov's disinterest in the CCP gave Hurley the assurance he needed to begin his negotiations with the KMT and CCP without having to be worried about the postwar effects of the CCP falling into a Soviet communist embrace. This would form the basis for his early negotiations between the two parties.

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<sup>90</sup> Cordell Hull to Clarence Gauss, August 19, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 251.

<sup>91</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, 151-2.

When Hurley arrived in China he found a Generalissimo who was predisposed to distaste for Hurley's primary task, that of patching up the crumbling relationship between him and Stilwell. Earlier in the summer, Roosevelt had sent Chiang a terse memorandum recommending that he "charge [Stilwell] with the full responsibility and authority...to stem the tide of enemy advances...I feel that the case in China is so desperate that if radical and promptly applied remedies are not immediately effected, our common cause will suffer a disastrous setback."<sup>92</sup> Roosevelt had also promoted Stilwell to the rank of full general.<sup>93</sup> This recommendation was particularly embarrassing for Chiang for a number of reasons. First, it would place his nominal subordinate, Stilwell, in charge of Chiang's troops, which might advertise to the world and the Chinese people that China's most important ally, the U.S., was losing faith in Chiang's military and political leadership. This would likely be a tremendous blow to his prestige and his power. Second, placing Stilwell in command of the Chinese armies would mean placing a man who had long advocated the use of Chinese communist guerilla troops in the fight against Japan at the helm of the Chinese military. And finally, the incident was made even more embarrassing by the fact that when Roosevelt's urgent cable arrived at army headquarters in Chongqing, Jack Service, who was the only person on hand with the appropriate language skills to give an accurate translation of the memo to Chiang, was tasked with the unfortunate job of delivering the news to the Generalissimo. Generally, one of Chiang's American-educated subordinates like T.V. Soong, H.H. Kung, or Madame Chiang herself would render translations for Chiang, but they tended to soften the language so as to not arouse his sensitive temperament. This message was too important,

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<sup>92</sup> Joiner, *Honorable Survivor*, 61.

<sup>93</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, 152.

and the Americans needed to be assured that Roosevelt's distress was faithfully reproduced for the Generalissimo to hear. He would not forget the extent to which Service, a lowly Foreign Service Officer, had made him lose face. Chiang responded to the President, posturing as though he understood the urgency and reasons for his request, but that circumstances required that no measures be put in place with anything like reasonable speed. Chiang believed that Stilwell would need a preparatory period before he could take command of Chinese troops. Unswayed by the Generalissimo's predictable waffling, Roosevelt wrote him again saying that the critical situation in China required "some calculated political risks" and he pushed Chiang "to take all steps to pave the way for General Stilwell's assumption of command at the earliest possible moment."<sup>94</sup>

Pressure from Washington continued to grow, and Chiang continued to agree in theory to Roosevelt's wishes, but design excuses for them not to be implemented. In truth, Chiang could not relinquish his authority over the Chinese armies to Stilwell because he himself did not have control over them. And, "those he did effectively command he would not relinquish to anyone. For the jealous manipulation of them, by which he nimbly stayed atop the heaving political heap, would then no longer be his, and he would be toppled."<sup>95</sup>

Chiang sought to keep Stilwell from using communist troops should he be given command of Chinese armies, and he sought to have Lend-Lease placed under his control. Roosevelt acquiesced to some of these conditions. He agreed to name Stilwell commander of the Armed Forces in China, a position that would be subordinate to the Generalissimo in rank. He also moved Lend-Lease out of the control of Stilwell, claiming that it would be an unnecessary responsibility for Stilwell now that he had a fuller plate to

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<sup>94</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, 153.

<sup>95</sup> Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 326.



deal with in his new role. Roosevelt made all of these concessions in an effort “to avert a military catastrophe tragic both to China and to our allied plans for the early overthrow of Japan.”<sup>96</sup> Into this mix, Hurley arrived in Chongqing on September 6, 1944.

At this point in his mission Hurley was favorably disposed towards Stilwell, as the two “had established a salty rapport.”<sup>97</sup> Effulgent with belief in his ability to get his job done, Hurley dove into negotiations between himself, Chiang, Stilwell, and T.V. Soong the day after he arrived in Chongqing. His first round of talks left his optimism little dissipated. He reported to Roosevelt that Chiang had given him his assurance that he was prepared to give Stilwell the command the President had proposed. He added that “we have not yet ironed out any of the details, some of which will undoubtedly be difficult to solve.”<sup>98</sup> Of particular concern to Chiang was of course the question of “the so-called Communist troops in China.”<sup>99</sup> Hurley proceeded to attempt to assuage Chiang’s concern by relaying what Molotov had just recently told him in Moscow regarding the communists in Yenan. This would constitute one of the fundamental inconsistencies during Hurley’s tenure in China. He tried to reconcile two impossibilities, his belief that the Chinese Communists were not really communists, and his evolving paranoia that they were merely tools of Moscow, or would “obediently accept the prompting, example, or dictation of the Soviet leaders.”<sup>100</sup> This fundamental inconsistency in his thinking, combined with his excessive pride and what appeared to be a case of deteriorating senility, would prove disastrous for U.S.-China relations and be

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<sup>96</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, 154.

<sup>97</sup> Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 327.

<sup>98</sup> Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 327.

<sup>99</sup> Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 327.

<sup>100</sup> John S. Service, *The Amerasia Papers: Some Problems in the History of U.S.-China Relations*. (Berkeley: Center for Chinese Studies, 1971), 87. This source should not be confused with the U.S. government publication *The Amerasia Papers: A Clue to the Catastrophe of China*. Service’s book is a rejoinder to the distinctly biased introduction to that volume edited by Anthony Kubeck.

instrumental in the emergence of an anti-Chinese communist Cold War ideology. After his initial conversations with Chiang, and clearly unaware of Chiang's uncanny ability to deliver promises with little action, Hurley optimistically concluded his message to Roosevelt by saying, "there is a good prospect for unification of command in China and the Generalissimo shows a definite tendency to comply with your wishes."<sup>101</sup> Upon hearing about Hurley's unalloyed good cheer with regard to his negotiations, Ambassador Gauss pointedly told the Secretary of State that "I do not share General Hurley's optimism," and quoted a Chinese friend, "it is not so difficult to arrive at understandings but exceedingly difficult to implement them."<sup>102</sup>

By the second week of September, "emboldened by [his] ignorance of China," Hurley presented Chiang with a ten-point agenda outlining what he hoped to accomplish in his capacity as Roosevelt's personal envoy.<sup>103</sup> Only four of the ten points bordered upon his actual stated purpose, to heal the Chiang-Stilwell rift. The first six dealt with a complete rearticulation of the Chinese political scene. They included:

The paramount objective of Chinese-American collaboration is to bring about the unification of all military forces in China for the immediate defeat of Japan and the liberation of China.

Cooperating with China in bringing about closer relations and harmony with Russia and Britain for the support of the Chinese objectives.

The unification of all military forces under the command of the Generalissimo.

The marshaling of all resources in China for war purposes.

The support of efforts of Generalissimo for political unification of China on a democratic basis.

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<sup>101</sup>Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 327-8.

<sup>102</sup>Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 328.

<sup>103</sup>Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 328.

Submission of present and postwar economic plans for China.<sup>104</sup>

Hurley's was an impossibly tall order to fill, as it required a tighter grasp on the reins of government than the KMT could lay claim to. T.V. Soong, who attended the meeting where Hurley presented Chiang with his agenda, quickly moved to have the term "on a democratic basis" stricken from the plan, which it was. Chiang, more forceful in his rejection of what he knew to be beyond his power, merely dismissed Hurley's agenda as containing "objectives" rather than a set of concrete goals. On September 16, Roosevelt sent Chiang a terse message which was, according to Stilwell, "hot as a firecracker."<sup>105</sup> The message requested that Chiang take immediate action and place Stilwell in command of all forces in China in order to effect a more efficient leadership of the Chinese armies lest disaster befall the Allied war effort and eastern China and the Kunming air bases fall to Japan. Roosevelt told Chiang that unless he sent in reinforcements to north Burma to help recapture the Burma road, "we will lose all chance of opening land communications with China and immediately jeopardize the air route over the hump."<sup>106</sup> For this you must yourself be prepared to accept the consequences and assume the personal responsibility."<sup>107</sup> Roosevelt further admonished Chiang, "I have urged time and again in recent months that you take drastic action to resist the disaster which has been moving closer to China and to you. Now, when you have not yet placed General Stilwell in command of all forces in China, we are faced with the loss of a critical area in east China

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<sup>104</sup> Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 328.

<sup>105</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, 155.

<sup>106</sup> This was hitting Chiang in the Achille's Heel, for he depended on hump tonnage to receive U.S. Lend-Lease materiel which he kept in reserve for the imminent civil war with the Communists.

<sup>107</sup> Franklin Roosevelt to Chiang Kai-shek, September 16, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 157.

with possible catastrophic consequences.”<sup>108</sup> The President closed his message by replaying his trump card, the allocation of U.S. aid to Chiang. “The action I am asking you to take will fortify us in our decision and in the continued effort the United States proposes to take to maintain and increase our aid to you...In this message I have expressed my thought with complete frankness because it appears plainly evident to all of us here that all your and our efforts to save China are to be lost by further delays.”<sup>109</sup>

When Roosevelt’s message arrived in China, it did so at the office of the Military Mission in China, so Stilwell had immediate access to it. Needless to say, he was thrilled by its content and tone. He was also excited by the task of having to deliver the message to the Generalissimo himself, he saw it as a “vindication of his position and a heavy blow to Chiang.”<sup>110</sup> Without losing any time, Stilwell got in a car and headed to the Generalissimo’s residence. Hurley was at Chiang’s when Stilwell arrived, and he showed the message to him first. Hurley thought he was making headway in his negotiations with Chiang, and correctly saw that Roosevelt’s message would only worsen the situation. Hurley “recognized that the note would be humiliating, for it constituted a kind of ultimatum seldom given to an ally.”<sup>111</sup> Not to be deterred by Hurley’s request that he soften the blow, Stilwell went ahead and delivered the message to the Generalissimo. Chiang read the translation “with no visible reaction,” and terminated the meeting.<sup>112</sup>

This final act of what he saw as insubordination probably constituted the final nail in Stilwell’s coffin. Hurley believed that his negotiations with Chiang were on the verge of appointing Stilwell head of all Chinese forces, and he urged up until the last minute to

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<sup>108</sup> Franklin Roosevelt to Chiang Kai-shek, September 16, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 157.

<sup>109</sup> Franklin Roosevelt to Chiang Kai-shek, September 16, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 157.

<sup>110</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, 155.

<sup>111</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, 156.

<sup>112</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, 156.

act more diplomatically. While no amount of diplomacy would have probably ever resulted in Stilwell's appointment, the historical fact is that with almost total certainty the aforementioned incident accelerated Chiang's request that Stilwell be replaced as soon as possible. Chiang's bargain was that he would allow an American to be placed in command of all Chinese armies, but it had to be someone other than Stilwell. On October 13, Hurley cabled Roosevelt that he felt Chiang reacted favorably to logic and leadership, not coercion or ultimatums, which is how he saw Stilwell's relationship to him. He cautioned the President that if he should back Stilwell in this affair he would lose the backing of Chiang, and possibly China with him. This was doubtful, however, since Chiang really had nowhere else to turn. In the end, Chiang won out, and Stilwell was replaced by Albert Wedemeyer, one of the Generalissimo's top choices for the position. Shortly after the Stilwell recall, and not without relation to it as a harbinger of U.S. attitudes towards China more generally, Ambassador Gauss resigned his position on November 1, 1944. He was not in the greatest health, but he had endured over three years his position as Ambassador to China, while Roosevelt sent numerous personal emissaries, some with little knowledge of China (Wallace and Wendell Wilkie), to parlay with Chinese government officials. Gauss obediently abided these insults to his position, and knew that Roosevelt had little trust in the State Department more generally, but it is important to note that not until the arrival of Hurley, and his capitulations to Chiang's desire for Stilwell's ouster, did Gauss reach the end of his tether and resign his post. On November 17, Roosevelt appointed Hurley the new Ambassador.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Some historians claim that the ambassadorship was promised to Wedemeyer first, to the point that he had a new set of civilian clothes tailored for the position. I have not seen any records to clarify this point.

## Hurley, Yen-an, and the Origins of the Cold War

In pursuit of one of the unstated objectives of his mission in China, Patrick Hurley travelled to Yen-an to discuss the possibility of a satisfactory settlement between the KMT and the CCP with communist leaders there. He arrived on November 7, 1944. David Barrett recalled that day with clarity some decades later, after his plane landed and the doors opened, “there appeared at the top of the steps a tall, gray haired, soldierly, extremely handsome man, wearing one of the most beautifully tailored uniforms I have ever seen, and with enough ribbons on his chest to represent every war, so it seemed to me, in which the United States had ever engaged except possibly Shay’s Rebellion.”<sup>114</sup> No one had thought to inform anyone in Yen-an of Hurley’s impending visit, although it had been organized “with the consent, approval and active assistance of the Generalissimo and Wedemeyer.”<sup>115</sup> When he arrived it was to the shock of many, especially Zhou Enlai who was there when he deplaned. He asked Barrett who the man was and Barrett told him; Barrett had met Hurley some years earlier when he had been Secretary of War. Zhou, taken aback by Hurley’s ‘surprise’ visit, asked Barrett to hold him there until he could return with Mao. Some minutes later Mao and Zhou returned to the landing strip, where Mao greeted Hurley “with due ceremony.”<sup>116</sup> What happened next was typical of Hurley’s rather flamboyant personality. Hurley “drew himself to his full impressive height, swelled up like a poisoned pup, and let out an Indian warwhoop,” apparently of the Choctaw variety, like the indigenous tribes of his native Oklahoma.<sup>117</sup> When Hurley arrived in Yen-an he was still favorably inclined towards the Communists,

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<sup>114</sup> Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 56.

<sup>115</sup> Patrick Hurley to Franklin Roosevelt, November 7, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 667.

<sup>116</sup> Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 56.

<sup>117</sup> Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 56-7.

and believed that a true working relationship could be hammered out between them and the KMT. He had been paid lip service to this effect by Chiang, and was as yet unaware of the subtle distinctions between “what Chiang said he would do in principle and what he was actually prepared to carry out, in view of his desire to retain power and prestige.”<sup>118</sup> Hurley was also plagued by a fundamental error in his thinking that he carried with him throughout his negotiations, which was that the KMT and CCP shared similar aims, and so the objective of unity would not be too hard to achieve. He reported to Hull, several months into the KMT-CCP negotiations, that “two fundamental facts are emerging: (1) the Communists are not in fact Communists [on this he was still following Molotov’s line], they are striving for democratic principles; and part (2) the one party, one man personal government of the Kuomintang is not in fact Fascist, it is striving for democratic principles.”<sup>119</sup> Hurley clung steadfastly to this belief and it hampered his negotiations, and had disastrous long-term consequences for U.S.-China relations.

It seems apparent that Hurley wanted the glory of having brought the KMT and CCP into a working relationship, and potentially even a coalition government. In an undated telegram sent from Chiang to Roosevelt, likely sometime in the fall of 1944, Chiang requested that Hurley remain in China in his capacity as “personal representative regarding military affairs” to Roosevelt. Chiang requested a revision of Hurley’s directive to include the power to negotiate between the KMT and the CCP. Chiang claimed:

it is my purpose to increase the Communist troops in the regular forces of the National Army, and this now constitutes one of the most vital requisites in our war against Japan. General Hurley has my complete confidence. Because of his rare knowledge of human nature, and his approach to the problem, he seems to get on well with the Communist

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<sup>118</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, 161.

<sup>119</sup> Patrick Hurley to Cordell Hull, February 7, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Vol. 7*, 211.

leaders. As your personal representative, possessing my full confidence, his contribution in solving this hitherto insoluble problem would be of the greatest value to our war effort.<sup>120</sup>

Of particular interest in this note is the fact that it reiterates some points that were part of the standard Hurley arsenal, particularly the belief that introducing communist troops into the Chinese army would be vital to the war effort. Indeed, Chiang had only recently told Wallace to “adopt an attitude of ‘coolness’ towards the Communists,” instructing the vice president that the U.S. “did not realize the threat which the Communists constituted to the Chinese government and [that it] overestimated the utility of the Communists against the Japanese.”<sup>121</sup> Chiang ended that particular conversation with Wallace by importuning him not to press the issue of communist troops in the Nationalist Army, “please understand that the Communists are not good for the war effort against Japan.”<sup>122</sup> Hurley had yet to visit Yen-an, and Chiang would have no reason to know whether Hurley had a good rapport with them or not. It seems likely that Hurley himself played a hand in the drafting of this letter to Roosevelt, which, if true, would suggest that he had a significant personal investment in being the one to complete a successful negotiation between the two warring Chinese parties. This, combined with Hurley’s inflated pride, constituted a poisonous admixture that, as the negotiations fell apart throughout 1945, resulted in a backlash that would reverberate with tragic consequences throughout the next several decades.

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<sup>120</sup> Chiang Kai-shek to Franklin Roosevelt, no date, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 170. The footnote regarding this note in *FRUS* notes that this message was delivered to Harry Hopkins by T.V. Soong, with an attached note which read, “Generalissimo asked me to request you transmit the following personal message to the President.”

<sup>121</sup> Lyman Van Slyke, ed., *The China White Paper, August 1949, 2 Vols.* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), Vol. 2, 554. Originally published as *United States Relations with China with Special Reference to the Period 1944-1949*. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1949).

<sup>122</sup>“Summary notes of Conversations between Vice President Henry A. Wallace and Chiang Kai-shek, June 21-24, 1944,” *China White*, 554.



For the year following his appointment as the ambassador, working towards a settlement between the KMT and the CCP became Hurley's "all-absorbing" concern.<sup>123</sup> The historical record fails to provide the historian with a document that specifically states that Hurley's role as ambassador included negotiating a coalition government between the KMT and CCP. He made numerous references to his expanded instructions from the president, but shied away from using terms as strong as 'directive.' Instead, he preferred terms like "instructions," "mission," and "understanding of policy."<sup>124</sup> Something that Hurley had adopted as part of his strategy for dealing with Chiang Kai-shek by the time he had arrived in Yenan was to place as little pressure as possible on the Generalissimo. He had undoubtedly witnessed first-hand while trying to cool relations between Chiang and Stilwell after Roosevelt's October demands how temperamental the Generalissimo was, and how delivering ultimatums to him only upset him and made Hurley's goals more difficult to achieve. Chiang was treated like a spoilt child by those around him, and he behaved accordingly. The Stilwell recall was just one of almost countless instances where he forced the U.S. into placating his whims by throwing what were essentially tantrums. Hurley's decision to try and refrain from placing any pressure on the Generalissimo does not seem to have come from Roosevelt, however. The conversations between Roosevelt and Chiang following the Stilwell recall do not appear to have involved Roosevelt softening his attitude towards Chiang. While the American president generally acquiesced to the Generalissimo's wishes, he rarely treated him like a child in the way that the sycophantic yes-men with which he surrounded himself did. Hurley's

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<sup>123</sup> Service, *Amerasia Papers*, 77. Further evidence of Hurley's vanity includes the fact that the day he was appointed ambassador to China, even before it was officially confirmed, his first order of business was to have a Cadillac airlifted in to Chongqing. Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 379.

<sup>124</sup> Service, *Amerasia Papers*, 77, n. 7.

decision to handle the Generalissimo with kid gloves was likely his own, and probably learned from experience.

A second subtle shift in Hurley's approach to China was the gradual slide from 'supporting China' to 'sustaining Chiang Kai-shek.' By January of 1945, Hurley had come to the "understanding"—how he did this is not clear, since it wasn't in a directive from the President—"that the policy of the United States in China is: (1) to prevent the collapse of the National Government; (2) *to sustain Chiang Kai-shek as President of the Republic and Generalissimo of the Armies.*"<sup>125</sup> The former was certainly a part of his directive from Roosevelt, because it was an essential component of the U.S. war effort; if China collapsed, the victory against Japan would likely come at greater cost to the U.S. Roosevelt sent Hurley to China to heal the rift between Chiang and Stilwell because Wallace (and others like Service and Davies) had warned him that political and military collapse were imminent. Hurley was supposed to ease the way for a healing of the rift between Stilwell and Chiang, instead, Chiang was able to press the situation to his advantage and get rid of one of the highest ranking Americans in China, and the only one who could make the kinds of military decisions that could undermine his dictatorship. In fact, Davies recalled a conversation that he had had with Hurley after the Stilwell recall in which Hurley confided to him that "one of the conditions which he [Hurley] and the Generalissimo agreed to in connection with the removal of General Stilwell... was that the Generalissimo would undertake to reach an agreement with the Communists."<sup>126</sup> In any case, the idea that forestalling the collapse of the Chinese government was coeval with "sustaining Chiang" appears to have been one wholly constructed by Hurley, and

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<sup>125</sup> Hurley quoted in Herbert Feis, *The China Tangle: The American Effort in China from Pearl Harbor to the Marshall Mission*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 213. Emphasis mine.

<sup>126</sup> John P. Davies to John Carter Vincent, November 14, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 693.

one he ultimately clung to with a vice-like grip. But in early November, when Hurley first arrived in Yen-an, he was genuinely hopeful that he could broker a peace between the Chinese Communists and the KMT. His assurance from Molotov that the CCP were not in fact genuine communists, and verbal promises from Chiang gave him relatively good cause to believe so. With the defeat of Japan no longer in doubt, this aspect of Hurley's self-imposed mission became even more important, for a stable undivided China was critical to the postwar Pacific and United Nation's world order as imagined by Roosevelt.

Hurley arrived in Yen-an carrying with him a document that he had drawn up that he hoped would form the basis for an agreement between the CCP and the KMT. It had been approved with some changes by KMT negotiators, and as such Hurley had reason to believe his negotiations in Yen-an would go fairly smoothly. John Davies happened to be in Yen-an when Hurley arrived, and he cautioned the negotiator that "he should not expect the Communists to yield to terms acceptable to the Generalissimo."<sup>127</sup> Hurley did not take kindly to Davies' advice, and suggested he take the next day's flight back to Chongqing, which he did. The draft originally sketched by Hurley contained the following five points:

The Government of China and the Chinese Communist Party will work together for the unification of all military forces in China for the immediate defeat of Japan and the liberation of China.

Both the Chinese Government and the Chinese Communist Party acknowledge Chiang Kai-shek as President of the Chinese Republic and Generalissimo of all the military forces of China.

The Chinese Government and the Chinese Communist Party will support the principles of Sun Yat-Sen [*sic*] for the establishment in China of a government of the people, for the people and by the people. Both parties

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<sup>127</sup> Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 366.

will pursue policies designed to promote the progress and development of democratic processes in government.

The Government of China recognizes and will legalize the Chinese Communist Party as a political party. All political parties in China will be given equal, free and legal status.

There will be but one national government and one army in China. All officers and all soldiers in the army whether they be Communist or Nationalist shall receive the pay and allowances equal to their respective ranks and all components will receive equal treatment in the allocation of munitions and supplies.<sup>128</sup>

The KMT negotiators made some changes to Hurley's document, some small, and others rather significant. On the first point, the KMT changed "liberation" to "reconstruction."

The second point was changed to read, "The Chinese Communist forces will observe and carry out the orders of the Central Government and its National Military Council." The third point remained unchanged. The fourth and fifth point appear to have been reversed in the KMT approved version.<sup>129</sup>

When Hurley presented his basis for a lasting detente to the Chinese Communists in Yen-an things went relatively smoothly. Hurley reported to Roosevelt that, "we argued, agreed, disagreed, denied, and admitted in the most strenuous and most friendly fashion and pulled and hauled my five points until they were finally revised."<sup>130</sup> After the Chinese Communists had recommended some changes of their own to the document, Hurley looked them over and said something to the effect of, "the proposals seem to me entirely fair. I think, however, that they do not go far enough. If Chairman Mao has no objections I would like to study them carefully and make some suggestions which I shall

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<sup>128</sup> Draft by Major General Patrick Hurley, "Basis for Agreement," October 28, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 659.

<sup>129</sup> Revised Draft by Chinese Government Representatives, "Basis for Agreement," undated, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 666.

<sup>130</sup> Feis, *China Tangle*, 214. For a more detailed account of these conversations by a participant, see David Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 56-65.

present tomorrow morning.”<sup>131</sup> The following day, Hurley presented the Chinese with the following five-point proposal. It is worth quoting in its entirety:

The Government of China, the Kuomintang of China, and the Communist Party of China, will work together for the unification of all military forces in China for the immediate defeat of Japan and the reconstruction of China.

The present National Government is to be reorganized into a coalition National Government embracing representatives of all anti-Japanese parties and non-partisan political bodies. A new democratic policy providing for reforms in military, political, economic, and cultural affairs shall be promulgated and made effective. At the same time, the National Military Council is to be reorganized into the United National Military Council, consisting of representatives of all anti-Japanese armies.

The Coalition National Government will support the principles of Sun Yat-sen for the establishment in China of a government of the people, for the people, and by the people. The Coalition National Government will pursue policies designed to promote progress and democracy and to establish justice, freedom of conscience, freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and association, the right to petition to the government for the redress of grievances, the right of writ of *habeas corpus*, and the right of residence. The Coalition National Government will also pursue policies intended to make effective those two rights defined as freedom from fear and freedom from want.

All anti-Japanese forces will observe and carry out the orders of the Coalition National Government and its United National Military Council, and will be recognized by the Government and the Military Council. The supplies acquired from foreign powers will be equitably distributed.<sup>132</sup>

The Coalition National Government of China recognizes the legality of the Kuomintang of China, the Chinese Communist Party, and all anti-Japanese parties.

Although a copy of the proposals as originally offered to Hurley by the Communists does not exist for the documentary record, it is clearly evident that Hurley had a strong hand in

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<sup>131</sup> Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 62.

<sup>132</sup> “Revised Draft by the Chinese Communist Party Representative: Agreement between the National Government of China, the Kuomintang of China and the Communist Party of China,” undated (presumably shown to the Chinese Communists in this form on November 10, 1944), *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 687-8.

the revised version cited above. The excerpts lifted directly from the Bill of Rights and the Four Freedoms had no bearing whatsoever on the Chinese political scene, and their inclusion by Hurley, though perhaps motivated by good intentions (if not a little U.S.-centrism), underscored how little he truly understood the situation in China. The Chinese Communists, however, were overjoyed by Hurley's changes. Knowing that Hurley had been in close and consistent contact with the Generalissimo disposed the CCP leadership towards optimism regarding this document that might otherwise seem a little over the top. According to Barrett, the rest of the meeting was "mostly a love feast, with everyone in a most happy mood."<sup>133</sup> The celebratory air of the historic meeting continued unabated through the lunch hour, and soon the plane on which Hurley was to depart to bring this new basis for agreement to Chiang was ready. Barrett recalled:

as we stood outside the hall in the bright sunshine of a beautiful day, [Hurley] said to Mao Tse-tung: 'Chairman, I think it would be appropriate for you and me to indicate, by signing these terms, that we consider them fair and just.' And this they did, placing copies of the terms on a flat stone of convenient height.<sup>134</sup>

Two copies of the tentative agreement were thus signed, Mao kept one, and Hurley left with the other for Chongqing. As they were about to sign the agreement Hurley did say to Mao, "Chairman Mao, you of course understand that although I consider these fair terms, I cannot guarantee the Generalissimo will accept them," at which point Zhou, ever the careful diplomat, cautioned Hurley to place the agreement directly into the hands of Chiang, and to not let T.V. Soong or any other high ranking KMT official see it first. Later that same day, brimming with enthusiasm, Mao wrote a letter to President

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<sup>133</sup> Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 63.

<sup>134</sup> Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 64.

Roosevelt “expressing [his] high appreciation for the excellent talent of your Personal Representative and his deep sympathy towards the Chinese people.”<sup>135</sup>

To the great misfortune of the history of U.S.-China relations, it was shown first to T.V. Soong, who immediately told Hurley that he had been, “sold a bill of goods by the Communists... The National Government will never grant what the Communists have requested.”<sup>136</sup> Hurley was incensed, his “chronically swollen and tender vanity... bruised,” and believed that Soong and other high-ranking KMT officials were sabotaging the Generalissimo, who he believed genuinely wanted to form a coalition government.<sup>137</sup> This went patently against the assurances Hurley had been given by Chiang when he negotiated the Stilwell recall. It was seen as a violation of the *quid pro quo* on which the two parties had tacitly agreed. In Chongqing, Hurley discussed his negotiations between the KMT and CCP with John Davies. Davies was less sanguine about the possibility that any kind of *modus vivendi* between the two warring parties could be reached, and was not afraid to tell Hurley that he thought so. Although Hurley was the senior State Department man in China after he was appointed ambassador, he distrusted State Department personnel, like Service, Davies, and Raymond Ludden, and preferred to liaise directly with Roosevelt. Hurley’s embassy in Chongqing “was a very threatening atmosphere.”<sup>138</sup> Service recalled:

Hurley had his own little separate embassy really in a sense. He was communicating not with the State Department but with the White House, ignoring the State Department, using the “Mary” Miles navy group [SACO] communications, not even the embassy or State Department

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<sup>135</sup> Mao Zedong to Franklin Roosevelt, November 10, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 689.

<sup>136</sup> Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 368.

<sup>137</sup> Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 377.

<sup>138</sup> Service Oral History, 303.

radios. Also he was threatening the staff and preventing their reporting anything that was unfavorable.<sup>139</sup>

Hurley was convinced of his own ability to broker a peace between the fractious Chinese, and information to the contrary from his advisors was just something he was unwilling to brook. If he succeeded in his mission to bring peace to the Chinese, he stood to perhaps win a Nobel Peace Prize.<sup>140</sup> Davies had told Hurley that the KMT was so politically weak that the terms that he and Mao had just signed were not going to be agreed to by Chiang because to do so would have meant political suicide. Davies wrote, “the Generalissimo realizes that if he accedes to the Communist terms for a coalition government, they will sooner or later dispossess him and his Kuomintang of power. He will therefore not, unless driven to an extremity, form a genuine coalition government.”<sup>141</sup> Informed opinions like these from his subordinates irritated the newly appointed ambassador, and he took copious notes of what he deemed indiscretions, and many would later pay for their honesty.<sup>142</sup>

On November 21, 1944, the KMT counterdraft to the Hurley-CCP agreement was delivered to Hurley. It had gone through three revisions, and ultimately became a three-point proposal. It retained some of the flowery language of an ersatz Bill of Rights that Hurley had inserted, but now carried with it the very modified proviso that the

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<sup>139</sup> Service Oral History, 303.

<sup>140</sup> Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 66.

<sup>141</sup> Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 381-2.

<sup>142</sup> Hurley made note in his diary of a similar conversation he'd had with Theodore White, the *Time* correspondent in China, the day after he arrived in Yen-an. “Theodore White, correspondent for *Time* and *Life*, told me that he had just talked to Chairman Mao and Mao told him that here was not any possible chance of an agreement between him and Chiang Kai-shek. White told me many reasons why Mao should not agree with the National Government. White's whole conversation was definitely against the mission with which I am charged.” Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 366. Hurley often took these statements of opinion as personal attacks, and he later lashed out at those he deemed responsible for the failure of his impossible mission of establishing the terms for a coalition government. David Barrett believed that Hurley became decidedly more supportive of the KMT position after he was appointed ambassador on November 17, 1944. Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 68.



Communists must “give over control of all their troops to the National Government.”<sup>143</sup> This provision must have been designed to derail the negotiations, for no one in their right mind would believe that the CCP would acquiesce to such a ludicrous demand, especially given the fact that they were the ascendant party on the China scene. Zhou had flown back to Chongqing with Hurley, riding high on the waves of the Hurley-Mao document, but was now ready to leave the Nationalist capital in disgust. Hurley convened a meeting between himself, Zhou, Wedemeyer, and McClure, in an attempt to convince Zhou to agree to the KMT counter-proposal. Hurley argued that the single communist official the KMT would allow to participate in the National Military Council ought to offer the Communists solace that their interests would be looked after. Zhou returned to Yen-an with Barrett, who had been asked by Hurley to talk with Mao and Zhou about accepting the KMT proposal, unmoved. Barrett and Zhou attempted to return to Yen-an several times over the course of the next week, but each time too much ice accumulated on the plane and they would be forced to turn back. Finally, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December, after some flying off course, which Zhou set right by inspecting the incorrect terrain outside the airplane window, and instructing the pilot to, “make a 180 degree turn and fly till he comes to a river, which will be the Wei, and then turn north,” crew and passengers arrived safely in Yen-an.<sup>144</sup> The following day Barrett met with Mao and Zhou to try to persuade them to accept the KMT proposals, and the heated discussion was “an experience I shall never forget,” recalled Barrett decades later.<sup>145</sup>

Immediately after leaving Mao’s residence following their lengthy meeting, Barrett wrote up from memory the events that had transpired and sent them off to

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<sup>143</sup> Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, 380.

<sup>144</sup> Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 69.

<sup>145</sup> Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 70.

Wedemeyer, to whom he reported. Predictably, Mao was incensed and confused by what must have seemed a serious about face on the part of Hurley, who now beseeched the Communists to accept an offer from the KMT that would essentially strip the Communists of their military autonomy. Mao found

the attitude of the United States somewhat puzzling. General Hurley came to Yen-an and asked on what terms we would cooperate with the Kuomintang. We offered a five-point proposal, of which the basis was the establishment of a coalition government. General Hurley agreed that the terms were eminently fair, and in fact a large part of the proposal was suggested by him. The Generalissimo has refused these terms. Now the United States comes and earnestly asks us to accept counter-proposals which require us to sacrifice our liberty. This is difficult for us to understand.<sup>146</sup>

Hurley urged Barrett to try to have the Communists consider their single representative on the National Military Council as a ‘foot in the door’ to legitimate state power, but Mao now asked what good a foot in the door was “if the hands are tied behind the back?”<sup>147</sup> Mao sensed that U.S. policy had recently begun to shift more in the direction of backing Chiang as coterminous with upholding Chinese sovereignty, and told Barrett that the Communists had no fundamental problem with this policy as it then stood, but that they were “not willing to give up our right of self-preservation for one seat on the National Military Council.”<sup>148</sup> Mao issued a stern warning with regard to the dangerous path down which the U.S. was headed.

If on his record, the United States wishes to continue to prop up the rotten shell that is Chiang Kai-shek, that is her privilege. We believe, however, that in spite of all the United States can do, Chiang is doomed to failure. Does General Wedemeyer think that Chiang Kai-shek will give wholehearted cooperation in carrying out his recommendations? Of course

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<sup>146</sup> David Barrett to Albert Wedemeyer, December 10, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 728-9.

<sup>147</sup> David Barrett to Albert Wedemeyer, December 10, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 729.

<sup>148</sup> David Barrett to Albert Wedemeyer, December 10, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 729.

he will not. General Stilwell found out how much Chiang Kai-shek could be depended upon in military operations. Let the United States continue to support Chiang Kai-shek until he has lost Kunming, Kweiyang, Chungking, Sian, and Chengtu. Then perhaps she will realize how useless it is to support him.<sup>149</sup>

Mao reminded Barrett of the CCP's ascendant power, "we are not like Chiang Kai-shek. No nation needs to prop us up. We can stand erect and walk on our own two feet like free men."<sup>150</sup> This was as good as an admission that the CCP would not accede to the U.S. desire that they approve the KMT counterproposal. Mao told Barrett,

If the United States abandons us, we shall be very, very sorry, but it will make no difference in our good feeling toward you. We will accept your help with gratitude any time, now or in the future. We would serve with all our hearts under an American General, with no strings or conditions attached. That is how we feel toward you. If you land on the shores of China, we will be there to meet you, and to place ourselves under your command.

We have welcomed the United States Army Observer Section, and we have done our best to cooperate with it. If the section stays we shall be glad; if it goes, we shall be sorry. If it goes and later returns, we will welcome it back again. If the United States does not give us one rifle or one round of ammunition, we shall continue to fight the Japanese, and we shall still be friends of the United States.<sup>151</sup>

This was an important overture by Mao and the Communists. They had just been burned badly by Hurley, whose well intentioned but deeply misguided belief that he could bring the CCP and KMT together was something Mao must surely have thought well nigh impossible. However, here the CCP Chairman was, in his cave in the mountains of northern China, offering Barrett the CCP's friendship whenever the U.S. may want or need it. Mao knew it was only a matter of time before the KMT imploded in on itself. There was no way it could sustain itself without outside help, and Mao could

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<sup>149</sup> David Barrett to Albert Wedemeyer, December 10, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 729.

<sup>150</sup> David Barrett to Albert Wedemeyer, December 10, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 729.

<sup>151</sup> David Barrett to Albert Wedemeyer, December 10, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 730.

not have believed at this point that the U.S. would go to the lengths it ultimately did to retain the legitimacy of the Chiang government. There was enough knowledge and evidence from among State Department officials on up to Roosevelt himself that would seem to have suggested otherwise. And yet, less than a year later the U.S. would by its actions essentially be backing the KMT in a civil war against the Communists. Self preservation, as Mao had been telling Barrett, was of paramount importance to the CCP. There was no such thing as diplomacy if there was no party, no movement, no revolution. Hurley's fanatical devotion to his task, and his desire for the accolades that would come with the success of his mission, made it impossible for him to tergiversate in any way from his desire to broker a peace between the two parties. Hurley was critical of the KMT for what he saw as internal disunity and a political culture of double cross and sabotage, but he grew increasingly irritated with the CCP, and especially with the personnel within the State Department who he believed had sullied his mission by continuously reporting on the weakness, ineffectivity, and overwhelming corruption within the KMT regime.

Mao informed Barrett that the CCP had been pushed to the end of its tether, as Chiang Kai-shek has refused to agree to a coalition government and we are determined to not give in, we have decided on a decisive step. We are proposing to the People's Political Councils of the various regions under our control that a 'United Committee' be formed representing all these areas. We shall seek the recognition of this body from the National Government, but we do not expect to get it. The formation of the Committee will be a preliminary step towards the formation of a separate government.<sup>152</sup>

What Mao was proposing would almost surely inaugurate civil war, for the KMT would not stand for a divided China. It was possible that the U.S. might, however; some in the State Department had advocated it. But as of the meeting, Barrett was witnessing

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<sup>152</sup> David Barrett to Albert Wedemeyer, December 10, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 731.

something momentous. All was not lost, however, as Barrett implored the Communists not to “close the door” on the negotiations. Mao quipped in reply:

we have closed the door, but we leave the window wide open. The ‘five-points’ are the window. We will come in on a coalition government today, tomorrow, or even day after tomorrow. But the day after the day after tomorrow, after Chungking, Kunming, Kweiyang, Chengtu, and Sian are all lost, we will not come in on the terms we have previously proposed.<sup>153</sup>

Mao then played his ace. He reminded Barrett that just a month earlier, the now U.S. ambassador to China had been in Yen-an, and had helped draft a document that outlined a five-point proposal that he himself believed to be an eminently fair basis for settlement, and that the Chairman and he had signed it together in front of many witnesses. “Much as we would dislike to do this, there may come a time when we feel we should show this document, with the signatures, to the Chinese and foreign press.”<sup>154</sup> This would have let the cat out of the bag, and made Hurley look like a dupe. Barrett did not make a note of Mao’s veiled threat in his report to Wedemeyer, but he did mention it verbally to both Wedemeyer and Hurley when he made his oral report of the meeting after returning to Chongqing from Yen-an. When Hurley heard the news, Barrett “feared he might burst a blood vessel,” as he uttered a profanity seldom heard at the time, “the motherfucker!...He tricked meh!”<sup>155</sup> This was now a personal attack against Hurley, or so he saw it. The Communists were now *personas non grata* to him, and anyone in China who had the temerity to think, report, or publish anything that celebrated the populism of the CCP over the corruption of the KMT went onto Hurley’s list of people who had pulled the rug out from under him. They, not the impossibility of the mission he had tasked himself

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<sup>153</sup> David Barrett to Albert Wedemeyer, December 10, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 731.

<sup>154</sup> Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 75.

<sup>155</sup> Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 75.

with, must be responsible for the disintegration of the negotiations he stubbornly believed were progressing in a tangible way.

On December 12, 1944, four days after the Barret-Mao imbroglio in Yen-an, Hurley sent a letter to Roosevelt outlining his new views on the situation. He reported to the President that the communist position was

That so long as democratic processes are not operating in China the Generalissimo's offers of limited representation in the Government does not give them a real voice in administration. They maintained that their rights can be safeguarded only if they are accepted on a basis of equality and a genuine coalition government formed.<sup>156</sup>

This was a fair representation of the situation, and Roosevelt himself knew that 'democratic processes' were not the KMT's strongest suit. Hurley stated plainly that "the offer of the Communist Party [which Hurley did not mention he had a final hand in touching up and signing] was not treated with due consideration by the Kuomintang or the National Government."<sup>157</sup> However, Hurley, for whatever reasons—likely a desire to continue to believe he could achieve the impossible—continued to insist that Chiang was being sabotaged by those for whom a coalition government might mean an erosion of personal power. T.V. Soong was someone who Hurley deeply mistrusted in such a manner. Hurley confided to the President that he thought the Generalissimo was sincere in his statements that he

earnest[ly] desire[d] to arrive at a settlement with the Communist Party...He pleaded that he had been so busy on the military situation that he had not been able to give enough attention to the proposed settlement..He asked me to use my good offices and to again open negotiations with the Communists...He assured me again and wished me

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<sup>156</sup> Patrick Hurley to Franklin Roosevelt, December 12, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 734.

<sup>157</sup> Patrick Hurley to Franklin Roosevelt, December 12, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 734.

to assure you that it was now his purpose to make a settlement with the Communist Party his first order of business.<sup>158</sup>

Hurley's willingness to remain convinced of the genuineness of Chiang's commitment to solving the political impasse between his KMT and the CCP almost defies belief in the face of all the evidence to the contrary. It is a clear illustration of Hurley's almost fanatical devotion to carrying out his task, lest his ego be bruised or he bring disgrace upon himself. Vanity was clearly his vice, and to have failed so clearly when his advisers consistently told him so would have been an almost unbearable disgrace.

With negotiations at an effective standstill, Davies drafted a proposal for American policy in China. He noted that Hurley's negotiations had "failed," although Hurley continued to believe they could be salvaged, and Davies moved further up his list of personal enemies. Davies advised that as long as negotiations dragged on in a deadlock, the U.S. could be fairly sure that Chiang would not give permission to use communist troops to fight the Japanese. This was an unacceptable position to Davies, "we can ill afford to continue denying ourselves positive assistance and strategically valuable positions."<sup>159</sup> He further suggested that, "it is time that we unequivocally told Chiang Kai-shek that we will work with and, within our discretion, supply whatever Chinese forces we believe can contribute most to the war against Japan."<sup>160</sup> Davies sensed correctly that Chiang was trying to lead the U.S. down the path of intervening on the KMT's side in the internal political affairs of China, and he warned against falling for it. "It is time that we make it clear to Chiang Kai-shek that we expect the Chinese to

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<sup>158</sup> Patrick Hurley to Franklin Roosevelt, December 12, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 734.

<sup>159</sup> John Paton Davies, "Proposed Statement of American Policy," December 12, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 735.

<sup>160</sup> John Paton Davies, "Proposed Statement of American Policy," December 12, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 735.

settle their own political differences; that we refuse to become further involved in and party to Chinese domestic political disputes.”<sup>161</sup> This policy recommendation was a far cry from the later charges that would be leveled against Davies that he practically delivered China to the Chinese Communists. It is clear that his intention was to hasten the defeat of Japan, by whatever means were at the U.S.’ disposal, and in the context, the Communists were a more willing and agreeable party for accomplishing that goal. As this dissertation has shown—and the historical record is replete with examples of—instances abound where Chiang would give repeated verbal guarantees of his cooperation with U.S. objectives, but continually find an excuse to carry on and preserve the status quo. The U.S. had perpetually fallen for the same ruse; Lauchlin Currie, Owen Lattimore, Henry Wallace, Franklin Roosevelt, and now Patrick Hurley.

Even more conservative thinkers within the State Department found it hard to dispute the allegations against the KMT being made by Davies and Service. One such officer wrote:

it is believed that a re-examination of the American Government’s position toward the Kuomintang regime would be justified and very likely imperative, from the standpoint of the war effort, in the event that the still existing hopes for improvement of China’s internal political and economic situation through remedial action by the Chungking regime should not be realized.<sup>162</sup>

In mid-December even Hurley himself, who was fully dedicated to the task of bringing the KMT and CCP to a workable agreement, could not in good conscience tell the new

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<sup>161</sup> John Paton Davies, “Proposed Statement of American Policy,” December 12, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 735.

<sup>162</sup> Memorandum by Augustus S. Chase, Division of Chinese Affairs, December 13, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 736.



Secretary of State, Edward Stettinius (Hull had retired at the end of November due to poor health), that there was

any reason to doubt Communist contention that North China people feel they have been deserted by Central Government and will not accept an unregenerate Kuomintang. The Communists do not anticipate civil war but have complete confidence in their ability to defend themselves against the Kuomintang if attacked. Their war planning is concentrated on offensive action against the Japanese when circumstances and equipment permit. They consider such action the best means of presenting the Communist case before China and world opinion. Top leaders are capable, tough and intelligent and undoubtedly will play an important role in future of China.<sup>163</sup>

Barrett wrote of Hurley's belief that he had been purposefully deceived by the 'motherfucker' Mao, "if ever a man seemed to me to be doing something with his eyes open and fully aware of the significance of his act, it was General Hurley that morning in Yen-an when he suggested he and the Chairman sign the Communists' proposed terms."<sup>164</sup> On December 16, Zhou cabled Hurley with a message regarding the jointly-signed five-point proposal:

The upholding of the Five Points is our minimum effort in mobilizing and unifying all the anti-Japanese forces in China. It was out of our expectation that the Kuomintang should flatly reject them, thereby causing a deadlock in the negotiations and rendering my return to Chungking useless. This, however, cannot be construed as discontentment with the United States. You advised against the publication of the Five Points. We agreed. But when the appropriate time comes when it becomes necessary to have the people informed so that they can ask the Government to change its attitude, they should be made public. In that event, you will be consulted in advance.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Patrick Hurley to Edward Stettinius, December 13, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 736.

<sup>164</sup> Barrett, *Dixie Mission*, 76.

<sup>165</sup> Zhou Enlai to Patrick Hurley, December 16, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 739.

By this time, even the Secretary of State himself could see some writing on the walls, Stettinius wrote to Roosevelt on January 4, 1945, that

Chiang is in a dilemma. Coalition would mean an end of conservative Kuomintang domination and open the way for the more virile and popular Communists to extend their influence to the point perhaps of controlling the government.<sup>166</sup>

Hurley's increasing paranoia that he was being sabotaged by all parties involved in 'his' negotiations: the State Department, the Chinese Communists, the KMT, nagged at him for the remainder of his tenure as the ambassador to China. Just a few days after Hurley sent the above letter to Stettinius, Barrett boarded a plane to Yen'an with McClure and Bird on the mission to potentially supply arms to the Communists recounted earlier in the chapter. Hurley never forgave Davies for not telling him of this clandestine mission that he felt ultimately made the Communists less open to negotiation, since they believed they had the upper hand both militarily, and in terms of increased U.S. recognition of their power. By the time he resigned in anger in 1945, all those in the State Department who had crossed him would be caught in the whirlwind of his accusations that they had undermined his mission, and acted in ways that bordered on treason.

The important question arises as to why Roosevelt didn't just order Hurley to cease trying to broker what many in Washington believed to be impossible? While the answer would be far too complex to suggest something thorough here, it is helpful to examine at least some aspects of why there seemed to be such a critical disconnect between the ambassador's goals and what the American government in Washington believed to be both feasible and appropriate. This returns us to some of the earlier issues discussed above, like the lack of an overall objective in China that went beyond the

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<sup>166</sup> Feis, *China Tangle*, 219.

abstractions of Japan's defeat, and maintaining Chinese unity. The likelihood of Hurley actually successfully negotiating a coalition government were slim to none from the viewpoint of some of his most knowledgeable advisers, and with the benefit of historical hindsight their beliefs have been vindicated. His mission was doomed from the start. As Zhou had warned Hurley, overtures to democracy would not be realized by a regime whose teetering power rested on the shaky foundations of anti-democratic principles and one-party government.<sup>167</sup> What does matter, however, is the effect of the competing claims from within the U.S. presence in China on Hurley's perception of what caused him to fail.

### **Patrick Hurley, Unlikely Cold Warrior**

If we take as a given Hurley's own character as one overburdened by vanity and an inflated sense of self importance, then it becomes more clear why he would have acted in the way he did after he failed to bring the Chinese Communists and the KMT together.<sup>168</sup> Hurley was not a man accustomed to failure. He was a self-made man in the American tradition. The son of rural immigrant Oklahomans, his father was "a pugnacious, fiery-tempered and nearly destitute Irishman."<sup>169</sup> Hurley had gone to work in the coal mines at the age of eleven to help support his impoverished family. His mother, with whom he was very close, died when he was thirteen, after the birth of her ninth

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<sup>167</sup> Zhou Enlai to Patrick Hurley, December 16, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. 6*, 740. Indeed, as Service has pointed out, Hurley failed to see the fundamental incompatibility of the two Chinese parties, and the deep historical rift between them. Hurley believed that the Chinese would be little different than the Mexicans and the Oil Companies he had successfully mediated a political settlement for years earlier. Service, *Amerasia Papers*, 85.

<sup>168</sup> Hurley's subordinates often referred to him in unflattering terms that described his vanity and vacuousness, sobriquets like "paper tiger," "small whisker," and "major blimp." For example, see John S. Service to John Paton Davies, February 19, 1945, Box. 2: Fol. 51, Service Papers.

<sup>169</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, 3.

child. The young Patrick suffered greatly in his youth, through both bitter toil in the Oklahoma coal mines, and through the tragic deaths of the majority of his siblings. His youngest one died shortly after his mother. His older brother left home, changed his name and became a prospector and “disappeared,” not to be seen by Patrick for forty five years.<sup>170</sup> His older sister entered a convent, and his younger sister, Monica, accidentally shot herself pulling a loaded shotgun off a bed in the Hurley family home. Perhaps most tragically, Hurley’s favorite younger brother, Johnie, met his death under the wheels of a freight train. He had fled home after a beating at the hands of their father, and found Patrick in Muskogee, from where he convinced Johnie to return home. Following his elder brother’s advice, Johnie attempted to hop a train and was thrown under the moving locomotive and died. Hurley “never got...over it.”<sup>171</sup>

It was 1898, American empire was on the ascendant, and Patrick Hurley wanted out of Oklahoma, and so he sought to join Roosevelt’s Rough Riders in an attempt to remake himself, and hopefully gain some financial security and notoriety while he was at it. Hurley headed towards Houston to enlist. Only fifteen years old, and too young to serve, Hurley was caught trying to falsify his age and was sent back to Oklahoma. He earned his keep in various jobs, but ultimately found steady work feeding cattle on a farm along the Arkansas River. Later, Hurley would recall his work from these days with an added layer of panache, telling people he had been a cowboy. While working on the farm, Hurley befriended a mixed-race Choctaw by the name of Thomas Madden. He grew close with Madden’s family, and was often over at their house for dinner. Thomas attended a local school known then simply as Indian University. It was not a full university by any

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<sup>170</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, 9.

<sup>171</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, 9.

stretch of the imagination, more of a “crude equivalent to a secondary education,” as government sponsored education for Native Americans was focused mainly on aiding assimilation rather than edifying intellectualism. However, with Madden’s help he was able to procure a place in the school. Hurley’s own “prior education consisted of the lessons he learned at his mother’s knee and the earthy philosophy and language he picked up from miners and cowboys.”<sup>172</sup> Recognizing an opportunity to escape the drudgery of ranching and coal mining, Hurley threw himself into his studies and graduated at the top of his class, finishing high school studies in one year. He continued on at Indian University and earned a B.A. in 1905. Hurley was clearly quite intelligent, and with the education he received at Indian University he was able to establish an intellectual foundation on which he could build himself a successful career, first in law, and then in politics. His schooling had

implanted in him faith in hard work, shrewdness and acumen, although [it was] largely devoid of deeper philosophical questioning, exposure to other values, other ways of thought, or the rise and fall of societies. It was well attuned to success in Tulsa but scarcely contributed to facing the obstinacy with which political groupings would fight for survival in Chungking.<sup>173</sup>

Having been inured to hard toil in his youth, Hurley worked hard for the remainder of his life to ensure it was a life he never had to return to. It was something he achieved with extraordinary success, becoming a successful lawyer, millionaire, presidential cabinet member, and finally U.S. ambassador to China. Hurley is a hard figure to pin down politically, philosophically, or emotionally. He was a Republican, but not of the “old guard.” He expressed elements of both Progressive and Populist thinking, but never joined either movement. Roosevelt ended up appointing him a special emissary for those

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<sup>172</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, 10.

<sup>173</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, 12.

reasons: he could satisfy Republicans, but he was an independent thinker who did not merely toe the party line. “He cannot be dismissed as a snake-oil salesman, though he possessed some of the traits. A pragmatist and poorly educated in a formal sense...he never evolved any really organized political theory. His thoughts about United States foreign policy were...essentially ad hoc.”<sup>174</sup> Ultimately, Hurley was

a kind of careerist, an opportunist, and an accommodator of people in high position, especially of presidents. While he served his country ably in various capacities, some of them requiring considerable sacrifice on his part, his life and work may best be understood in terms of the promotion, for some explicable and some inexplicable reasons, of Hurley—his wealth, influence, and prestige.<sup>175</sup>

His unique background, and his capacity for self-reinvention made Hurley a very particular kind of man to be brought into China to attempt to negotiate a peace between the KMT and CCP. Although one can’t say that he didn’t try and earnestly give his best efforts to a task he, at least in part, assigned to himself; his humble origins, and his obsessive need for affirmation and celebration made the shock of his failure in China a particularly bitter one.

After the CCP refused the KMT counterproposals in late 1944, things continued to go downhill in China. Animosity and suspicion between the two parties deepened, and U.S. actions at Yalta did not help the situation in China.<sup>176</sup> The Big Three—Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin—met at the Baltic resort of Yalta in February of 1945 mainly to discuss the postwar direction they would take with regard to Europe. Roosevelt’s main concern was with Soviet participation in the Pacific War. By the end of the conference the

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<sup>174</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, xi.

<sup>175</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, xi.

<sup>176</sup> For a recent rethinking of Yalta outside of a U.S.-centered framework see Fraser Harbutt, *Yalta 1945: Europe and America at the Crossroads*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), and for his reassessment of U.S. intentions at the conference see esp., 225-279.

Americans had managed to concede a significant amount to Stalin in return for his pledge to enter the war against Japan within ninety days of the defeat of Germany. In return, Roosevelt, without consulting the Chinese, pledged Stalin rights to Manchurian railway lines and to Port Arthur, a former Russian imperial port city coveted for its warm waters. By the time of the conference in the Crimea, MacArthur's island hopping campaign was underway with some success, and the U.S. was establishing a significant presence on Okinawa that would render the Hump transport route obsolete. Winning the war in the Pacific was no longer focused around the possibility that China might be a strategic location from which to launch an offensive attack against the Japanese. The questions that confronted the Big Three were related to what shape the postwar balance of power in Asia might assume, rather than how China could be utilized to assure victory. Roosevelt still operated on the assumption that Stalin was a reasonable man, and that if Roosevelt dealt with him fairly, he would receive fairness in return, a kind of noblesse oblige. Granting Soviet interests in China, Roosevelt believed, would placate Stalin and foreclose the possibility of a strong Sino-Soviet Alliance that would hinder the formation of a postwar United Nations system envisioned by the American president.<sup>177</sup>

For apparent reasons, the diminished importance of China to the larger strategic picture of the war in the Pacific would plague Hurley's ability to come to an agreeable

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<sup>177</sup> Service recalled that the CCP didn't know about the Yalta agreement until late in the summer of 1945, and indeed, Service recalled that most of the China specialists in the State Department didn't even know about it until July. John Carter Vincent, head of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs in the State Department, did not learn about the accords reached at Yalta until he was on his way to the Potsdam Conference. He had been asked to draft a position paper regarding U.S. policy in the Far East for the conference, which he duly did, but when Secretary of State James Byrnes read it en route to Potsdam, he "came down to Vincent's cabin and...threw the papers on the bed and said, 'Sorry, but these are all no use,' and then proceeded to tell Vincent about the Yalta agreements." Needless to say, had FE known about the agreement, their entire conception of China policy would have been different. Instead, the late acknowledgment "threw all of our thinking into a cocked hat. Up to that time we'd all been operating blind, all the assumption about American neutrality in China were meaningless." Hurley knew about Yalta as early as May, but clearly felt no need to alert anyone to the facts. For Service's recollection of the Yalta agreement see Service Oral History, 325; for more on Hurley and Yalta see Buhite, *Hurley*, 203-9.

solution for his negotiations. Since so much of the KMT status quo was premised upon American belief that propping up Chiang was the antidote to defeat in China, the clarity and force with which that lie was given truth by early 1945 boded ill for the KMT, or so some close observers of the China scene thought. This is of course not to say that U.S. interests in China were in any way reduced. The long history of U.S. attachment to China, for trade, and for souls, continued to pull deeply at American heartstrings and ultimately their purse strings as well. Domestic pressures to continue to aid the Methodist Chinese first family contributed greatly to Roosevelt's and Truman's equivocating responses to China.<sup>178</sup> In the end, as we know, those advocating for continued aid to an identifiably corrupt regime won out. But the story of how that victory came to pass is integral to an understanding of the origins of the Cold War in the U.S.

In early February, when the fate of China was in part sealed by the promise from Stalin that he would intervene in the war against Japan in exchange for spoils, the discussion between the KMT and CCP had reached a critical impasse. Chiang Kai-shek would settle for nothing less than a "political consultative committee" (PCC) which the communists found "empty and disappointing" because it would hold no power to actually orchestrate changes in the government.<sup>179</sup> All the PCC guaranteed in actuality was conversation, it would not have the authority to enforce resolutions. It was a way for Chiang to appear open to furthering the negotiations, without having to actually commit to anything. For Hurley, this was enough for him to continue believing in his good-faith effort. Hurley, as well as Chennault and other supporters of the Generalissimo, believed

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<sup>178</sup> For more on Congressional pressure on the Executive branch and its effects on U.S. China policy see Ross Y. Koen, *The China Lobby in American Politics*. (New York: Macmillan, 1960).

<sup>179</sup> John S. Service to Albert Wedemeyer, February 14, 1945, "Failure of Kuomintang-Communist Negotiations," *Amerasia Papers*, Vol. 2, 1337.



he could be persuaded “to the advantages of progressive liberalism.”<sup>180</sup> The problem with that position was that it had proven fruitless for the duration of the war. The U.S. had “mobilized all the voices of exhortation from the President on down, without budging Chiang one iota.”<sup>181</sup>

At around the same time, another Foreign Service Officer, Raymond Ludden, who had been attached to the Dixie Mission, but had shortly after his arrival left on a 1200 mile tour into Communist territory, returned to Yen-an and wrote up a detailed report of his trip.<sup>182</sup> Ludden’s report advocated U.S. aid to the Chinese Communists, especially military aid to the guerillas, and a more flexible American military policy towards the communists in China. When Ludden arrived in Chongqing to brief the embassy staff about his journey into CCP territory, he was “hassled” by Hurley with “questions about my ‘directive’ for being at Yen-an and points east.”<sup>183</sup> Ludden, as well as Service and Davies, were technically employees of the State Department, but were attached to the army as political reporters, and thus reported to the theater commander—at this point Wedemeyer—and so Hurley’s demand for ‘directives’ really was beyond his realm of concern as ambassador. Ludden replied to the effect “that I was under Army orders and when Dave Barrett told me to get my ass in the saddle and proceed to Foup’ing [*sic*] I did exactly that.”<sup>184</sup> This kind of salty response no doubt bristled with the ambassador, ever the stickler for formalities and the observance of rank and hierarchy. It was just another item in the growing list of actions that he found objectionable and insubordinate from the

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<sup>180</sup> Service, *Amerasia Papers*, 185.

<sup>181</sup> Service, *Amerasia Papers*, 186.

<sup>182</sup> Ludden’s report, “Popular Support of Communists as evidenced by People’s Militia organization in Shansi-Chahar-Hopei Communist Base,” February 12, 1945, can be found in *Amerasia Papers*, 1330-6.

<sup>183</sup> Raymond Ludden to Wilbur Peterkin, September 12, 1978, Box. 2: Fol. “Ludden,” Peterkin Papers.

<sup>184</sup> Raymond Ludden to Wilbur Peterkin, September 12, 1978, Box. 2: Fol. “Ludden,” Peterkin Papers.

staff of the embassy, especially those attached to army and not under his direct command. Ludden's next visit in Chongqing was with his actual boss Wedemeyer, with whom he'd not yet met since his attachment to Dixie, since he'd embarked on his journey while Stilwell was still commanding CBI. Service was also at this meeting. According to Ludden, Wedemeyer was "interested in where I'd been, what I'd seen, and my impressions."<sup>185</sup> It was a long meeting, particularly for several junior political reporters to have with someone of such high a rank as Wedemeyer. The theater commander even asked the two officers for a memorandum suggesting possible actions the U.S. might take with respect to the arming of the Chinese guerillas. Ludden was even further energized when, after the meeting, he ran into Robert McClure who was at the time "champing at the bit waiting to get into Communist country with American units."<sup>186</sup> Ludden and Service were encouraged by Wedemeyer's apparent interest and immediately set to drafting a memorandum that would later gain notoriety for proposing a so-called "Tito Policy" like the one Churchill had recently taken towards the Yugoslavian Communist leader. It is worth quoting the memorandum at length, since it has become a document of some historical significance:

At present there exists in China a situation closely paralleling that which existed in Yugoslavia prior to Prime Minister Churchill's declaration of support for Marshal Tito. That statement was as follows: "The sanest and safest course for us to follow is to judge all parties and factions dispassionately by the test of their readiness to fight the Germans and thus lighten the burden of Allied troops. This is not a time for ideological preferences for one side or the other." A similar public statement issued by the Commander in Chief with regard to China would not mean the withdrawal of recognition or the cessation of military aid to the Central Government; that would be both unnecessary and unwise. It would serve notice, however, of our preparation to make full use of all available means

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<sup>185</sup> Raymond Ludden to Wilbur Peterkin, September 12, 1978, Box. 2: Fol. "Ludden," Peterkin Papers.

<sup>186</sup> Raymond Ludden to Wilbur Peterkin, September 12, 1978, Box. 2: Fol. "Ludden," Peterkin Papers.

to achieve our primary objective. It would supply for all Chinese a firm rallying point which has thus far been lacking. The internal effect in China would be so profound that the Generalissimo would be forced to make concessions of power and permit united front coalition. The present opposition groups, no longer under the prime necessity of safeguarding themselves, would be won wholeheartedly to our side and we would have China, for the first time, a united ally.<sup>187</sup>

As early as November of 1944 Ludden was already convinced of the capabilities of the Communist guerillas if armed and equipped by the U.S. Davies had asked him about it, but he had felt that it was premature to give him anything definitive, but he confided in his diary that “I can give the answers now, but I’m afraid that on such short notice no one would believe it. I still think the U.S. won’t believe all this until it’s too damned late anyhow.”<sup>188</sup>

Reports like the one penned by Service and Ludden deeply angered ambassador Hurley. He saw them as direct contraventions of what he believed to be the established China policy in Washington, which was to ‘sustain Chiang Kai-shek.’ This policy was nowhere written in stone, however; there was still adequate breathing room within U.S. policy for greater flexibility with regard to the CCP. But aid to the Chinese Communists, Hurley feared, would only encourage them to act more independently of the National Government, and to further resist Hurley’s importuning that they reach an accommodation. He was probably correct on this, but he failed to see the other side of the equation, which was that the KMT only offered empty promises and empty gestures, and knew full well that they could not survive a genuine coalition government.

In this climate of deadlock, with the U.S. ambassador falling on the side of the KMT because he believed the opposing side to be sabotaging his directive from the

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<sup>187</sup> Quoted from Service, *Amerasia Papers*, 187. Interestingly, Service notes that *FRUS* eliminated some of the more “harsh statements about Chiang Kai-shek” in the published version of the memorandum.

<sup>188</sup> Raymond Ludden to Wilbur Peterkin, June 6, 1977, Box. 2: Fol. “Ludden,” Peterkin Papers.

President, something needed to budge. On February 28, 1945, with Hurley out of Chongqing and George Atcheson in charge of the Embassy there, a collaboratively-penned report was sent to the Secretary of State, and signed by the entire Embassy staff. Hurley often squashed Embassy reports to the Secretary of State that he felt would be detrimental to his negotiations. There seemed to be some unanimity of opinion among Hurley's staff in Chongqing that the ambassador's single-minded devotion to a policy that wasn't a policy was only going to work against U.S. interests in China in what was soon to be a postwar climate. The report was an effort to sell a policy to the Secretary of State that would force Chiang into a compromise that would pave the way for democratic reforms in China. The report recognized that encouraging Chinese unity was the *sine qua non* of a smart American policy in China, one that would best ensure postwar stability and close participation with the emergent United Nations. Conditions in China, including the beating back of Japan, as well the belief being promulgated by Hurley that the U.S. was, "intent upon the definite support and strengthening of the Central Government alone and as the only possible channel for aid to other groups" was creating a sense of security around Chiang that promoted a "lack of willingness to make any compromise."<sup>189</sup> The U.S. should instead act decisively in ways calculated to induce him towards reform. In fact, as the Embassy report highlighted, U.S. actions were currently leading the CCP "to the conclusion that we are definitely committed to the support of Chiang alone, and that we will not force Chiang's hand in order to be able to aid or cooperate with them."<sup>190</sup> Inaction on the part of the U.S. to remedy the Communist's perception of their intentions would inevitably lead them closer to a Sino-Soviet alliance that could cripple the postwar

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<sup>189</sup> George Atcheson to Edward Stettinius, February 28, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Vol. 7*, 242.

<sup>190</sup> George Atcheson to Edward Stettinius, February 28, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Vol. 7*, 243.

order as the U.S. envisioned it. It would also accelerate the likelihood of civil war in China. The report recommended that

If the high military authorities of our Government agree that some cooperation with the Communists and other groups who have proved themselves willing and are in position to fight the Japanese is or will be necessary or desirable, we believe that immediate and paramount consideration of military necessity should be made the basis for a further step in American policy. The presence of General Wedemeyer in Washington as well as General Hurley should be a favorable opportunity for discussion of this matter.<sup>191</sup>

If the Generalissimo was then informed that the U.S. policy had shifted unequivocally towards one that considered arming the CCP a critical part of the U.S. war effort as an outcome more important than the stalled negotiations, Chiang could be forced into a reformation of the government that included meaningful representation of all political parties, including the Communists. It was recommended that U.S. policy be described to Chiang in a way that left no room for misinterpretation that U.S. aid to forces not directly under Chiang's control would not be contingent upon reform within the Central Government. The Embassy staff seemed to agree that this course of action could form a solid basis for a "*modus operandi*" that might "bridge the present deadlock in China and serve as a preliminary move toward full solution of the problem of ultimate complete unity."<sup>192</sup> The report advocated that these suggestions first be made to Chiang in private, so that he might save face, but if he refused to accept American considerations, the U.S. should not hesitate from making a public policy statement similar to the one Churchill had given with regard to aid for Tito. The publicity given to a stated American position of aid to the Communists would

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<sup>191</sup> George Atcheson to Edward Stettinius, February 28, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Vol. 7, 244.*

<sup>192</sup> George Atcheson to Edward Stettinius, February 28, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Vol. 7, 245.*

have profound and desirable political effects in China. There is tremendous internal pressure in China for unity based on a reasonable compromise with the Communists and a chance for the presently repressed liberal groups to express themselves...[The liberals] are disillusioned and discouraged by what they feel is American commitment to the present reactionary leadership of the Kuomintang. By the steps we propose we would prove that we are not so committed, we would greatly raise the morale and prestige of these liberal groups, and we would exert the strongest possible influence through these internal forces to impel Chiang to put his own house in order and make the concessions necessary to unity.<sup>193</sup>

The Embassy staff was in little doubt that such a bold statement of positive and proactive U.S. policy in China would be met with joy by any but the “very small reactionary minority in control of the Kuomintang.”<sup>194</sup> It would also elevate American prestige in the eyes of most Chinese, who believed that “the settlement of China’s internal problem is not so much a matter of mutual concessions as reform of the Kuomintang itself.”<sup>195</sup> Furthermore, according to the report, U.S. pronouncements that they followed a policy of non-intervention in the domestic political affairs was a sham in the eyes of a majority of Chinese, because they saw U.S. support of Chiang as implicitly interventionist, but on the side of reaction.

Needless to say, Hurley was outraged by what he saw as a carefully orchestrated act of deliberate insubordination. It was as good as open support for the Communist Party. However, to the Embassy staff, it was a move calculated to free up the U.S. to follow as many possible options as possible. This was as close as the State Department personnel in China came to defining what they meant by a ‘flexible’ policy in China. This was not meant to be an abandonment of the KMT, but an inducement to change. The Embassy sought for the U.S. a position whereby they could “adjust to and move with,

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<sup>193</sup> George Atcheson to Edward Stettinius, February 28, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Vol. 7*, 245-6.

<sup>194</sup> George Atcheson to Edward Stettinius, February 28, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Vol. 7*, 246.

<sup>195</sup> George Atcheson to Edward Stettinius, February 28, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Vol. 7*, 246.

rather than be standing against, the tidal development of events in China.”<sup>196</sup> No one was yet certain how events would shape up for Mao and the CCP, but to foreclose the possibility of a diplomatic relationship with a rising power—which everyone knew the CCP to be—would have been truly foolhardy. This report represented a serious turning point in U.S.-China relations. For those interested in counterfactuals, an examination of this moment would surely provide rich investigative terrain. A coalition government in which the CCP could have administered Japanese troop surrenders in areas under its control would have dramatically reshaped the immediate postwar landscape, and would most likely not have engaged the United States in the Chinese civil war immediately following the nuclear annihilation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This would no doubt have altered the perception the CCP had of the U.S., which was, in the months following the defeat of Japan, already beginning to decline. Instead, Hurley had the members of his Embassy staff replaced. Shortly afterwards, Davies went to Moscow, and Service was recalled to Washington from Yenan. Hurley was “enraged” to find out Service was in Yenan after the report was sent, and he

stormed over to the State Department [he was in Washington at the time], demanded I be recalled. The State Department said, “He’s not working for us. He’s working for the army.” Then he went to Stimson [Secretary of War]. The orders were issued and signed “Marshall,” given highest priority. I was ordered home on army orders, and then released... This was the beginning of controversy and disagreement in Washington, as you might say.<sup>197</sup>

Service and Acheson would later end up in Tokyo after the surrender, working for MacArthur. As I argued in the last chapter, one of the core problematics that would evolve into a centerpiece of the Cold War was the U.S. support of the KMT in the

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<sup>196</sup> Service, *Amerasia Papers*, 189.

<sup>197</sup> Service Oral History, 310.

Chinese civil war. This was a position they found themselves in less by conscious design, than by the culmination of a series of unfortunate circumstances in which the U.S. failed to develop a policy in China that intelligently weighed considerations beyond the immediacy of victory, and the appeasement of Chiang's wild temperament. The consequences of this concatenation of failures was, as we know, tragic.

Hurley returned to Washington in September of 1945, about one month after the defeat of Japan with U.S. atomic weaponry. While Hurley was in the capital, conditions worsened in China. Soviet maneuvers in north China, and increasing U.S. intervention in a civil conflict worried the ambassador. As immediate postwar U.S. policy settled into a pattern of continuing aid to Chiang, further alienating the CCP, new Secretary of State James Byrnes wished for Hurley to return to China to implement it. Hurley had continued to pin his vision of Chinese postwar stability on a non-aggressive Soviet Union and a reformed China. The scene in late 1945 represented neither. Enervated by his failure to broker a peace, and perhaps soured by the vanishing likelihood of earning a Nobel Peace Prize, Hurley grew increasingly disenchanted with his position as ambassador to China. For a moment, in mid-October, things looked up as the KMT and CCP negotiations moved forward slightly around the KMT's offer of convening a People's Consultative Council which would be attended by all parties, with the goal of drafting a constitution. In the midst of this optimism U.S. officials thought it might be best for the ambassador to return to Chongqing. Some major newspapers also hailed Hurley's diplomacy in China around this time, looking forward to a resumption of his duties.<sup>198</sup> Hurley had other ideas.

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<sup>198</sup> See *Baltimore Sun*, October 13, 1945; *New York Times*, October 7 and 12, 1945; and *Washington Post*, October 13 and 21, 1945.



As early as August he had drafted a letter of resignation to Byrnes, but never sent it.<sup>199</sup> He had broached the subject with both Byrnes, and then Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson, in late September and early October, claiming ill health, and that a younger ambassador could finish the job he'd started of getting the two sides in China into conversation. For posterity, Hurley may also have wanted to quit while he was ahead, "like a pitcher with a five run lead in the seventh inning, [he] had nothing to lose and everything to gain if he were relieved."<sup>200</sup>

There were other reasons too why Hurley did not wish to continue on as ambassador. He had read several recent articles in the press speculating about his imminent resignation, which he believed to have been informed by "official leaks" in the State Department. Around this time he also learned that Service and Acheson, some of his greatest "adversaries" in China were now in Tokyo, advising MacArthur on postwar Asian policy. Hurley was worried that perhaps if he did not resign on his own, he might be asked to do so.<sup>201</sup> He contacted Chiang and instructed him to lodge a complaint with Truman regarding Service's and Acheson's appointment in the Far Eastern Commission, and even drafted a copy of the letter which Chiang used to voice his protest. Their appointment was, he thought, not in the best interests of China—which was presumably coterminous with Chiang's interests. The letter was an ominous indicator of the kinds of charges that would be hurled about later by the ambassador. He argued that if the Commission were to have jurisdiction over the postwar policy in Japan and China, it was not a good idea to have two Foreign Service Officers advising it that had supported Communists and advocated the overthrow of the Chinese government. Byrnes refused

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<sup>199</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, 260.

<sup>200</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, 260.

<sup>201</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, 261.

Hurley's hints at resignation, assured him he had full State Department support, and asked that he take awhile to rest and recuperate from his supposed "ill health," and then head back to Chongqing. Not to be persuaded by the Secretary of State, Hurley met with Truman on October 13. The President also refused his resignation, and suggested he get a full physical check-up at Walter Reed Hospital, rest up in the sun of his home state of New Mexico, and then return to Washington, at which time he should "have a completely different perspective on the whole matter."<sup>202</sup> Perhaps emboldened with pride at the President's expression of confidence, Hurley must have reconsidered his options, because that same day Byrnes publicly announced that Hurley would indeed be returning to Chongqing.

While recuperating in New Mexico, Hurley confided in a letter to a friend that he was not in fact "ill," but had "accumulated fatigue" and did not look forward to returning to China, a place that might, "bring an end to my usefulness quickly."<sup>203</sup> Instead, Hurley wished to continue to be of service to his country in public life, which seemed a thinly veiled euphemism for elected office of some sort. By late October, news coming in from China was not making Hurley's desire to stay away from China any less potent. Reports of bloody confrontation and "fratricidal warfare" between the KMT and CCP no doubt deepened Hurley's belief that his work there was done, and that his return would only mean a very public confirmation of his failure. By early November, clashes between the Chinese caused the postponement of the PCC that was the only glimmer of hope for a coalition between Chiang and the Communists. Soviet belligerence in Manchuria and northern China, contravening promises made by Stalin, gave Hurley further pause,

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<sup>202</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, 262.

<sup>203</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, 262.

especially since his negotiations had been based upon the predicted good behavior of the Soviet Communists. Contributing to Hurley's increasing foreboding about a return to China were a series of articles published in the mainstream press now criticizing his diplomacy in China. Always sensitive to criticism, the high Hurley had felt recently via plaudits in the press threatened to now send him into a tailspin. These must have caused him considerable distress, for he kept the clipped articles in a scrapbook.<sup>204</sup>

By late November Hurley had made up his mind once again to resign. On the morning of the 26<sup>th</sup>, he went to the Secretary of State's office and submitted his letter of resignation. Byrnes refused it, and refused to pass it along to Truman. He once again assured Hurley that he had the full backing of the State Department and that U.S. policy had not changed since he was running negotiations before the Japanese surrender, as Hurley believed it had. Byrnes gave Hurley copies of the China policy then being worked over in the State Department, and he agreed that it did indeed appear, on paper at least, as though American policy remained unchanged. The following day, to Hurley's great distress, there appeared in national newspapers news of a speech made by Democratic Congressman Hugh De Lacy of Washington.<sup>205</sup> De Lacy accused Hurley of spearheading a policy of unequivocal support for the corrupt Chiang Kai-shek, which was tantamount to the suppression of democratic possibility in China. Furthermore, he claimed, American intervention on Chiang's behalf was responsible for the country's devolution into civil war. Hurley had strong armed the resignation of Clarence Gauss, his predecessor as ambassador, and been responsible for the purge of the State Department China specialists who had disagreed with what Hurley believed to be the U.S.' stated policy prescription in

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<sup>204</sup> Buhite, *Hurley*, 265-6, n. 25.

<sup>205</sup> For the text of De Lacy's speech see *Congressional Record*, 79<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, November. 26, 1945. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1945), 10993-10995.

China. Given the atmosphere around Washington at that moment surrounding intelligence leaks—the Amerasia Spy Case in which Service had been arrested was still big news—Hurley believed that De Lacy’s accusations must have been informed by purposefully leaked documents by those in the State Department out to discredit him and his position. It is unlikely that De Lacy received any confidential or classified sources, since his speech only touched on material available in the public domain. Regardless, Hurley remained convinced that a conspiracy against him was in the works.

Hurley acted based on this belief. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of November, Hurley alerted various news agencies and released a statement that he had prepared before his last meeting with Byrnes. The release began with a short letter of resignation addressed to Truman, and then the barrage of accusations began. Hurley stated that he agreed, in principle, with Truman’s outline of American foreign policy as recently iterated in his Navy Day address, but that “the astonishing feature of our foreign policy is the wide discrepancy between our announced policies and our conduct of international relations.”<sup>206</sup> This discrepancy, according to Hurley, produced results inconsistent with America’s professed devotion to the principles embodied in the Atlantic Charter, and the Four Freedoms, the very things the U.S. was putatively fighting for. The tergiversation in the implementation of American policy should be, Hurley thought, placed squarely upon the shoulders of, “all the career men in the State Department. The professional foreign service man sided with the Chinese Communist armed party and the imperialist bloc of nations whose policy it was to keep China divided against herself.”<sup>207</sup> Hurley accused the Foreign Service Officers of continually advising the CCP that his efforts to prevent the

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<sup>206</sup> Patrick Hurley to Harry Truman, November 26, 1945, *China White*, 581.

<sup>207</sup> Patrick Hurley to Harry Truman, November 26, 1945, *China White*, 582.

collapse of the National Government did not represent the foreign policy of the U.S. He further claimed that these same officers “openly advised the Communist armed party to decline unification of the Chinese Communist Army with the National Army unless the Chinese Communists were given control.”<sup>208</sup> In a moment of obvious self-celebration, Hurley clarified for the President that despite the Foreign Service’s best efforts to undermine his mission, he still managed to “make progress toward unification of the armed forces of China. We did prevent civil war between rival factions, at least until after I had left China.”<sup>209</sup>

Hurley continued to berate the Foreign Service in his angry message to the President. “Throughout this period the chief opposition to the accomplishment of our mission came from the career diplomats in the Embassy at Chungking and in the Chinese Far Eastern Divisions of the State Department.”<sup>210</sup> Hurley recalled that he had had these Embassy staff members dismissed, but found they were now working “as my supervisors.”<sup>211</sup> He was surely referring to John Carter Vincent, head of Far Eastern Affairs in the State Department, and Atcheson and Service who were now advising MacArthur in Japan. Hurley continued in a similar, though slightly more nonsensical vein, carrying on about how “the weakness of American foreign policy has backed us into two world wars.”<sup>212</sup> The U.S. now found itself on the side of colonial imperialism (which was true), but Hurley preferred “democracy and free enterprise.”<sup>213</sup> Although the U.S. professed its adherence to the principles of freedom and democracy internationally,

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<sup>208</sup> Patrick Hurley to Harry Truman, November 26, 1945, *China White*, 582. I have found no evidence to back up this accusation, and have not come across it in the secondary literature either.

<sup>209</sup> Patrick Hurley to Harry Truman, November 26, 1945, *China White*, 582.

<sup>210</sup> Patrick Hurley to Harry Truman, November 26, 1945, *China White*, 582.

<sup>211</sup> Patrick Hurley to Harry Truman, November 26, 1945, *China White*, 582.

<sup>212</sup> Patrick Hurley to Harry Truman, November 26, 1945, *China White*, 582.

<sup>213</sup> Patrick Hurley to Harry Truman, November 26, 1945, *China White*, 582.

its failure in practice “is chargeable to the weakness of our Foreign Service.”<sup>214</sup> He continued:

If our Foreign Service had been capable of understanding and sympathetic effectuation of our announced war aims it would not have failed so completely to couple our logistical strength with our foreign policy to obtain commitments to the principles for which we claimed to be fighting from the nations to which we gave the strength of our productivity and manpower.<sup>215</sup>

The true nature of American policy in China was misunderstood by the public because too little information about its actual conduct had been made available to the public, in part out of necessity as a war measure, but Hurley was convinced that “at this particular juncture in our history an informed public opinion would do much to give intelligent direction and implementation to our international objectives.” He would be proven incorrect soon enough as Joseph McCarthy would pick up on Hurley’s charges and launch one of the largest campaigns of misinformation in U.S. history. In the meantime, however, Hurley continued to inform the President that “our true position in China is misunderstood abroad because of this confusion of policy within our own Government.”<sup>216</sup> A corrective was in order, and Hurley was convinced that it needed to come in the form of “a complete reorganization of our policy-making machinery beginning at the lower official levels,” that is, at the level of the Foreign Service Officers like John Service, John Davies, and Raymond Ludden, who frequently observed and reported information that went against Hurley’s wisdom regarding Chinese politics. Hurley sternly warned Truman:

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<sup>214</sup> Patrick Hurley to Harry Truman, November 26, 1945, *China White*, 582.

<sup>215</sup> Patrick Hurley to Harry Truman, November 26, 1945, *China White*, 582.

<sup>216</sup> Patrick Hurley to Harry Truman, November 26, 1945, *China White*, 583.

Because of the confusion in our own international policy, make no mistake, Mr. President, America has been excluded economically from every part of the world controlled by colonial imperialism and Communist imperialism. America's economic strength has been used all over the world to defeat American policies and interests. This is chargeable to the weak American Foreign Service.<sup>217</sup>

Hurley's accusations were tantamount to charges of treason against his subordinate officers who did nothing but report what they saw, which as it happened differed from what he believed or would have liked to believe was true of the political, military, and economic situation in China. Hurley's resignation unleashed a firestorm in Washington that ultimately resulted in a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing at which Hurley was gladly the first witness to testify. This was an ominous foreshadowing of the kinds of hearings that would become a fixture of American life during the McCarthy years. This chapter has sought to outline a history of the later war years in China, and the ways in which what Hurley argued about a critical disconnect in American policy was certainly true, but less because of the misapplication of a well-honed policy than because of the inconsistent application of a vague policy that could be loosely interpreted by Hurley, or the Foreign Service, in ways that each thought to be in the best interests of the United States, however at odds those two American positions might be. Overlapping efforts on the part of the American military and intelligence apparatus in China often resulted in moving the political situation backwards in China, as both parties appeared to gain ground through aid or negotiations, only to have that ground lost later when another party stepped in to negate those gains. This happened to OSS in Yen-an, and would happen with Hurley himself backpedalling on his own proposal for a coalition government 'of the people, by the people, and for the people.' In the end it is less

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<sup>217</sup> Patrick Hurley to Harry Truman, November 26, 1945, *China White*, 583.

interesting or productive to engage in the debates over who ‘lost’ China, or how, or when they did so, but rather to reflect on the importance of the U.S.-China relationship to the making of the global Cold War itself. China was not lost, because it couldn’t be, but it certainly was integral to the constitution of the Cold War. Placing the history of U.S.-China relations within a larger historical framework, one of the *longue duree*, and mapping its swells and calms, helps us to interpret how the Cold War came to define the history of the second half of the twentieth century in ways that are more expansive than conventional histories of the era might have us believe. While it is perhaps conventional wisdom to believe now that the Cold War dynamic evolved out of the globalism of the war years, it is less orthodox to argue, as I do, that a broad vision of U.S.-China relations from the late-nineteenth century through the middle of the twentieth provides a critical and unbroken genealogy for the Cold War.

Placing China squarely in the middle of the making of a new international capitalist order in the wake of World War II sheds light on the long and unbroken history of American empire as it evolved throughout the course of the twentieth century. Elucidating the continuities of America’s ‘mission,’—religious, economic, military—in China, its rise and fall against the backdrop of liberal internationalism, allows us to view the U.S.’ history of intervention in the region as a dynamic and evolutionary entity. American intentions with regard to China varied over the course of nearly one hundred years, but thinking of its evolution as a historical coherence allows us to investigate more closely the machinations of American empire, its critical impetus across important historical epochs—moments of prosperity and moments of crisis—and illuminates how we might think about the global Cold War a part of a larger project of U.S. imperialism in



new ways. We are able to see the origins of the Cold War in particular as a central piece in the puzzle of how the U.S. came to dominate so completely the landscape of the postwar world, and especially how it moved so inconspicuously from being based on rhetorics of freedom and internationalism to one so clearly founded on doctrines of U.S. military and economic hegemony. The vital importance of the transformation of American foreign policy in the early postwar Cold War years from one based on an idealism regarding a peaceful postwar international system, as imagined by Roosevelt, to the more hard-line realist approach of containment and a burgeoning national security state (adjusting for inflation, the heights reached by military spending in the U.S. during the Korean War were only equaled during the 2000s as the U.S. fought two unending wars against an enemy that has no definable limits in the Middle East), cannot be underestimated. This critical shift in the relationship of the U.S. state to militarism and a concomitant commitment to a preponderance of power that could be, and was, arrayed internationally, often by proxy during the height of the global Cold War, overlaps historically with the collapse of liberal internationalism in the U.S.-China relationship. The correlation between two of the most important historical transformations in twentieth-century U.S. history should not go unnoticed. That the retreat from liberal internationalism, as expressed in China, had such profound consequences on the dissolution of the China branch of the State Department, the rise of McCarthyism, and the expansion of the Cold War, makes it a central historical problematic in any understanding of the global Cold War. This dissertation has sought to link these two phenomena, and to map their trajectories side by side, in an attempt to craft a continuous narrative that clarifies the intimate connections between what might once have been thought of as

disparate historical periods and geographic regions which, when brought together, reveal illuminating connections between Chinese, U.S., and world history in the twentieth century.

## Chapter 8

### **Conclusion**

#### **From Liberal Internationalism to Neoliberalism**

On August 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 1945, the United States engaged in the only wartime use of nuclear weapons in history when they dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. While the tidal wave of violence and destruction unleashed by the two atomic blasts may have accelerated, however slightly, the speed of the Japanese surrender, there is little doubting that the nuclear detonations have come to signal the end of WWII, at least from the dominant U.S. perspective. The possession of weapons of such extraordinary destructive potential also forever altered the landscape of international relations. Shifting our gaze on the final days of the war, and attempting to recalibrate our perspective to one more rooted in the Pacific, renders a very different picture of the immediate ‘postwar’ period. Instead of ticker-tape victory parades, confetti-strewn streets, and the emergence of a boom economy, much of late August and the ensuing months in areas of the Pacific ravaged by war consisted of survivors attempting to piece together the tattered shreds of lives torn apart by the conflict. In China, as I’ve shown, the transition from world war to civil war was nearly seamless, with the U.S. immediately intervening on the side of the KMT. Many events in Asia that would later come to help

define much of the U.S.' postwar history gestated in the period immediately surrounding the surrender of Japan. Arif Dirlik has pointed out that

15 August 1945...has the decisiveness of an end-marker for Japan alone...For others, wars were beginning before the war had ended. Already on August 9, stating that the Anti-Japanese Resistance War was over for all practical purposes, Mao Zedong in China called for preparation for the civil war to come. In Vietnam, where the Japanese defeat inspired hopes for liberation from colonialism, the Viet Minh Central Committee on 16 August 1945 called for a general insurrection in the cause of national liberation. Korea was liberated from a half century of colonialism, only to be divided, when, in Washington on the night of 10-11 August, policymakers drew a line across the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel to separate the zone of U.S. occupation from that of the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup>

I'd like to use this conclusion to examine some of the historical formations that continued to evolve out of the genealogies of the Cold War that I have argued began in the nexus of the U.S.-China relationship long before the end of WWII. By doing so, I hope not only to raise some suggestive examples of the longer range applicability of my argument at work, but also to show the ways in which what I see as the fall of liberal internationalism represents not only the systemic collapse of a U.S. world view (redolent of the abstract idealism of Wilson, which remained an ideal, and never an actuated practice), but the beginning of the emergence of a new form of U.S. empire as well.

This imperial formation is the one we know well in our current historical moment. It is an outgrowth of the U.S.' perpetual need for 'security' in the postwar system, a security that has justified the ceaseless expansion of a deeply militarized state and underwritten by a defense industry and budget that operates at scales and in dollar

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<sup>1</sup>Arif Dirlik, "'Trapped in History' on the Way to Utopia: East Asia's 'Great War' Fifty Years Later," in T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, and Lisa Yoneyama, eds., *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 301.

amounts that are nearly beyond comprehension. This is a security that has been territorially defined, it is our ‘national security.’<sup>2</sup> It is nearly always articulated in popular discourse as a safeguard for that perennially capacious and contingent Americanism, ‘freedom.’<sup>3</sup> In the postwar period of the global Cold War, American freedom was centrally concerned not with the liberty of individuals—though the rhetoric surrounding the threat of monolithic communism was an attempt to suggest otherwise—but with the freedom of U.S.-based or led capital and markets. The ur-texts authorizing the rise of the U.S. national security state as a corollary to the protection of America’s economic interests in East Asia are NSC-48 and NSC-68.

NSC-48, from 1949, outlined a U.S. policy in East Asia which concluded that a Japanese ascendancy, with Japan anchored as the economic fulcrum in East Asia, under the aegis of the U.S., was critical to guaranteeing American national security, which overlapped entirely with the expansion of American economic interests in the region. A preponderance of American power had to be maintained, however, and a too-independent Japan, or a Japan stabilized through its own regional Asian alliances (especially with the

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<sup>2</sup> The ascendancy of the idea of national security as the *sine qua non* of the U.S. state is itself a distinct outgrowth of the postwar Cold War. President Harry Truman convened the first National Security Council in 1947 as part of the larger National Security Act (which also gave birth to the CIA) in part because of the sound thrashing the State Department was receiving with regard to its ineffective China policy. Rather than examine whatever fundamental problems underwrote the inefficacy of U.S. foreign policy when dealing with the CCP and the Soviet Union, Truman created a joint military council that has ever since been the primary generator of U.S. foreign policy prescription. There is much correlation between this retreat from diplomacy, the rise of militarily-backed capitalist expansion, and the collapse of liberal internationalism.

<sup>3</sup> For more on the historical contingency of the idea of American freedom see Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), idem., “American Freedom in a Global Age,” *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 1, (Feb., 2001), 1-16. In the global transformations afoot in the 1940s, American freedom was, as Karl Polanyi argued just before war’s end, being reconstructed very purposefully in opposition to state planning and control: “Planning and control are being attacked as a denial of freedom. Free enterprise and private ownership are declared to be essentials of freedom. No society built on other foundations is said to deserve to be called free. The freedom that regulation creates is denounced as unfreedom; the justice, liberty, and welfare it offers are decried as a camouflage of slavery.” Quoted in David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 37.

U.S.S.R.) would not be countenanced by U.S. security advisors. NSC-48 stated in no uncertain terms that it was imperative that the U.S. prevent “power relationships in Asia which would enable any other nation or alliance to threaten the security of the United States.”<sup>4</sup> It would be best if the “advance of [U.S.] national interests” could be “initiate[d] in such a manner as will appeal to the Asiatic nations as being compatible with their national interests.”<sup>5</sup> This would seem to support Michael Hunt’s contention that American foreign policy has always been in part about suppressing revolutions that the U.S. does not recognize as reflections of their own.<sup>6</sup>

NSC-68, from 1950, furthered the rationale laid out in NSC-48 regarding the paramountcy of the protection of American national security, this time by authorizing the massive build-up of a U.S. defense apparatus that remains to this day, by leaps and bounds, the most advanced and well-funded in the world. The American belief that Japanese economic growth and U.S. national security were inseparable during the global Cold War was occasioned by the U.S.’ alienation of the CCP after 1945. However, the U.S.’ adamance about keeping an economically revitalized Japan outside of a Chinese or Soviet (or worst, Sino-Soviet) orbit had less to do with national security in its literal sense, and more to do with national interests in an economic sense. NSC-48 is in part an attempt to articulate a strategy to rollback Soviet encroachments upon China, and to foment Titoism in Asia. America’s firm stance with regard to maintaining economic hegemony in the region overrode any legitimacy that could be mustered behind the rhetoric of support of socialist states divorced from Moscow, alienating Beijing further.

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<sup>4</sup> NSC 48/2, “The Position of the United States with Respect to Asia,” *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII*, 1216.

<sup>5</sup> NSC 48/2, “The Position of the United States with Respect to Asia,” *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII*, 1216.

<sup>6</sup> Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*.

The massive build-up of U.S. military bases in the Pacific during the Cold War, Bruce Cumings's 'archipelago of empire,' both ensured and assured Japan that the U.S. way was the only way to literally do business in the region.<sup>7</sup> The enthusiasm and vigor with which the U.S. dove into redirecting the future of global capitalism in Asia (and in Western Europe as well) in manners palatable to the democratic aspirations of the region's inhabitants illustrates clearly the intimate relationship between American imperialist expansion in the postwar Cold War era and the expansion of its capitalist interests. The dominant model of the Cold War, in which proxy wars and clandestine financial and military support of anti-communist dictatorships—like Chiang Kai-shek's on Taiwan—became the means through which the U.S. guaranteed safe havens for the expansion of the interests of American capital, were born in this period. And as with earlier antecedents to the global Cold War that I've explored in this study, the trajectory of liberal internationalism in the U.S.-China relationship can once again be mined as a critical origin for the transformation in U.S. policy in the immediate postwar years from one founded on the promise of a peaceful international system to a globe-girdling hegemonic U.S. internationalism.

Two of the greatest transformations in world history in the second-half of the twentieth century were the rise of the global Cold War, and the ascendancy of neoliberalism—a fundamentally economic world view—as the hegemonic orthodoxy of international relations. The latter is an outgrowth of the former. Indeed, the trajectory of U.S. interventionism in the postwar period can be seen as laying the groundwork for the shift to the neoliberal global model that has transformed global capitalism since the

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<sup>7</sup> Cumings, *Dominion from Sea to Sea*, 388-423.

1970s. I would like to use the remainder of this conclusion to highlight the centrality of the U.S.-China relationship to both of those historical moments, and to suggest ways in which my analytical framework has contemporary relevance for understanding the rising place of China in the world.

In February of 1946, George Kennan, a Soviet specialist and member of the U.S. embassy staff in Moscow, whose closest advisor on Asian affairs had been John Paton Davies, was asked by the U.S. Department of the Treasury to prepare a document outlining the reasons why the Soviets were not in support of the new U.S.-led postwar realignments of global capitalism outlined at Bretton Woods, especially the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Kennan's lengthy reply plunged him into the unexpected role of accidental prophet of the global Cold War, as the 'Long Telegram,'—the sobriquet by which his response came to be known—laid solid foundations for much of the anti-Soviet, and by extension anti-communist, ideology of the Cold War. Kennan, whose intention was surely not to issue a directive for U.S. foreign policy for the next four decades, nevertheless had some prescient things to say about the future of global capitalism in the face of a growing communist movement, and provided for the State Department and White House, “the most plausible explanation of Soviet behavior, past and future.”<sup>8</sup> Whatever his intentions, his “ideas [were] of such force and persuasiveness that they immediately change[d] [the] nation's foreign policy.”<sup>9</sup>

There is little need to recount here the ultimate impact that Kennan's Long Telegram, and his July 1947 piece for *Foreign Affairs*, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,”

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<sup>8</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War*, revised and expanded ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 20.

<sup>9</sup>Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 18.



published under the pseudonym “Mr. X,” had on the ideology of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War. It is safe to say, however, that it provided a new guiding logic in the face of the collapse of liberal internationalism as a model for U.S. relations with the rest of the world. It wasn’t that Kennan, and other policy makers, were advocating a new policy to replace an older one— liberal internationalism had never itself been articulated as a formal policy model—it was that global conditions had emerged that necessitated certain geopolitical realignments that required a more robust and proactive American stance, especially towards the Soviets who were the putative heads on an international monolithic communist movement to which the U.S. imagined China was aligned as a junior partner. Kennan’s expertise in Soviet history and politics helped place that issue front and center, but he was well aware about the deep interconnections between the USSR, China, and the United States, and the mutually beneficial outcome of handling that triangulation with care.<sup>10</sup> This necessarily had a significant impact on other emerging communist states as well, and nowhere with more clarity perhaps than China. It is my belief that despite the coalescence of a distinctive guiding ideology of ‘containment’ which came to represent U.S. foreign policy after 1947—derived from Kennan’s writing on Soviet power in the postwar era, but applied in equal measure to Asia—there

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<sup>10</sup> For more on the triangular post-war relationship between the U.S., China, and the USSR see Gordon Chang, *Friends and Enemies: The United States, China, and the Soviet Union, 1948-1972*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991). For Kennan, handling that situation with care did not mean an aggressive interventionist U.S. policy in the peripheries of the integrating world economy. Kennan was an educated liberal realist, but also to an extent an idealistic anti-imperialist. For example, while Acheson pushed for the sacrifice of Taiwan as an inducement to ease China out of what the U.S. saw as a Soviet embrace, Kennan advocated the unrealistic policy of returning Taiwan to its original inhabitants. He was certainly appalled by the extent to which his idea of containment was stretched to justify an extraordinary number of illiberal actions by the U.S. throughout the global Cold War. Kennan recognized early on the potential pitfalls of a loosely articulated idea of national security intimately tied to economic expansion when he asked: “to what end ‘security’? For the continuance of our economic expansion? But our economic expansion...cannot proceed much further without...creating new problems of national security much more rapidly than we can ever hope to solve them.” Quoted in Benjamin Schwarz, “Why American Thinks It Has to Run the World,” *The Atlantic Monthly* 277, no. 6, (Jun., 1996), 102.

remained less a dramatic ideological break with past policy than a rearticulation of the fundamental logic of American foreign policy—to secure the expansion of American capital—under a newly imagined supreme threat, that of a rapidly expanding global communist movement. While it's true that this threat, and the necessity of its attendant containment, were largely focused on the Soviet Union after 1947 (it was, after all, believed to be monolithic), China was critical to the making of the Cold War landscape both in America and the world.

Indeed, the United States did not see military action in Europe or the Soviet Union during the Cold War, even though that was ostensibly where the conflict was centered. Where American troops did see decisive action during the Cold War was in Asia, Korea and Vietnam in particular. Each of these hot conflicts had clear origins in the failure of the U.S. to come to terms with Chinese communist power both during WWII, and in the years following China's pyrrhic victory in 1945. As I've shown, the Chinese found themselves seamlessly transitioned from a war against Japanese imperialism, to a civil war over the political future of the nation. The U.S. went from backing a nominally united China fighting a longstanding nationalist war against an aggressive Japanese fascist government, to backing a reactionary KMT against the overwhelmingly more popular and populist communist insurgency led by Mao Zedong. This was a transition of world historical significance, and foundational to the emergence of the dynamic of the global Cold War. The U.S.' immediate moves following the Japanese surrender to facilitate the transition of power only into KMT hands, rather than allowing both KMT and CCP forces to disarm the Japanese in areas under their respective control, marked a decided shift in American policy in China from one anchored in a liberal internationalist

framework to one more explicitly focused on maintaining a balance of power in the region that could assure the rapid postwar expansion of American capitalist interests. This is not to argue that U.S. foreign policy during the height of liberal internationalism was not also driven by the primacy of American business interests, but it is to argue that prior to 1945 that interest was not incompatible with a China under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, which American experts believed could still be persuaded to operate independent of Moscow, as did Tito in Yugoslavia. This was clearly expressed by Foreign Service officers in the China field in the late-war years. It is not a coincidence that the construction of a monolithic communist bogey in Moscow emerged just as America abandoned its commitment to liberal internationalist solutions to the civil war in China.

As this study has shown, the frenetic search for the semblance of a coherent strategy with regard to the divisive political scene in China during the war years had by 1945 left the U.S. with very few options other than to embrace an uneasy alliance with a KMT they knew to be politically reactionary but fervently anti-communist. In the winter of 1945, President Truman sent George C. Marshall on a mission to China in an attempt to accomplish what Patrick Hurley had failed to do, finesse a coalition government between the two warring Chinese factions. Although a more careful diplomat and much better listener than Hurley, Marshall returned to the U.S. in early 1947 having had no success in his negotiations. The situation in China continued to deteriorate in his absence, and the civil war metastasized in scope and violence. Once back in the United States Truman appointed Marshall Secretary of State, and Marshall in turn appointed Kennan head of a new national security outfit called the Policy Planning Staff (PPS) which was

tasked with articulating a more coherent and unified U.S. foreign policy. Kennan was instrumental in creating a European capitalist recovery plan that would secure the healthy efflorescence of capitalism in a war-ravaged Europe. Marshall became the spokesman of the program. The Marshall Plan's importance in the rebuilding of Western Europe along liberal capitalist lines in the postwar and Cold War years cannot be underestimated. The strength and vitality with which the U.S. foreign policy establishment embraced the project of regenerating capitalism under its guiding aegis, indeed equating that regeneration with its own national security, shifted the tenor of diplomacy after 1945. The predictable result in Asia was a series of costly and poorly handled military engagements that proved the point that imposing anti-nationalist (if not outright imperialist) capitalism with a strong hand from above inevitably resulted in costly—in lives and money—wars that the forces of anticolonial nationalism would almost invariably overcome. Clarifying examples of this are of course Korea and Vietnam. China too, however, was a critical site, and in many ways a distinct origin out of which those other Asian conflicts spread.

One might ask why I accord such primacy to the China scene in an examination of the origins of the global Cold War. I have suggested throughout this dissertation that stress should be placed on a rigorous historical examination of U.S.-China relations in the first-half of the twentieth century, and that that investigation might yield some interesting new ways of thinking about one distinctive thread that makes up the historical tapestry of the Cold War. My interest lies less in determining a single origin for the global Cold War, than in exploring in greater detail one of its multiple genealogies. The Cold War was an incredibly complicated international historical formation that cannot be easily categorized

or reduced into singular national histories, or even ones that rely heavily on the transnational as a mode of analysis, at least not a transnational practice which continues to reproduce the importance of state actors. Instead, a focus on the intersecting human processes across multiplicitous fields of experience generates a more dynamic historical picture, and thence understanding, of the period. As I've attempted to illustrate throughout this dissertation, reading the cultural, intellectual, and social terrains of historical transformation alongside the political, military, and diplomatic ones can paint a broad picture of what drives historical change in a vast but deeply interwoven global framework.

As Akira Iriye has suggested, a “reconceptualized international” is necessary if historians are to be serious about crafting “human or global history.”<sup>11</sup> This ‘reconceptualized international’ “get[s] away not only from a unational framework but also from the conventional international relations perspective and instead tr[ies] to imagine a world community consisting of individuals, groups, their ideas, activities, and products interacting with one another in myriad ways.”<sup>12</sup> This is not meant to diminish the importance of studies that do focus on state actors. It is, however, an attempt to assert the importance of a study of the complex interrelation of historical phenomena that traverse, and rarely neatly, terrains that are traditionally considered discrete and separate phenomena; that is to say, the political, the social, the economic, and so on. This study has sought to do this in a number of ways: by illustrating the critical historical continuities between the transformation of the Chinese state from an imperial dynastic

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<sup>11</sup>Akira Iriye, “Internationalizing International History,” in Thomas Bender, ed., *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 51.

<sup>12</sup>Iriye, “Internationalizing International History,” 51.

one to one molded in the Western liberal tradition; by linking that political and ideological transformation to the Western missionary apparatus in China, and highlighting the connections between the missionary influence and the rise of radical and communist intellectual and political movements; by exploring the ways in which the unique character of indigenous Chinese anti-communism foreclosed the success of later U.S. attempts at brokering an alliance between the CCP and KMT, and ultimately forced the U.S. into the uncomfortable position of having their backing of the putative forces of nationalism morph into their support of a reactionary military dictatorship; and by exploring the varying ways in which Chinese, Chinese American, and U.S. aims during WWII overlapped and contradicted each other, all the while illuminating the complicated machineries of racial formation and the consolidation of a Cold War ideological framework in a global context. Each of these separate but interwoven episodes is a critical part of the history of U.S.-China relations, despite the overwhelming tendency to want to see some of them as distinct national formations. They are all part of the stew of global interactions that helped reorient world power in the second-half of the twentieth century, leaving the U.S. as the undisputed hegemonic superpower by the end of the century. China, and America's imagination of China, was central to that process.

There are many interesting lines of inquiry to pursue in the period following the close of this study in 1945 that continue to highlight the importance of U.S.-China relations to the emergence of new historical formations that have been global in both their scope and impact. Several have ultimately been of more radical world historical importance than U.S.-Soviet relations panned out to be. No one would argue that China's future role in the world will not be one of the most salient factors in global relations. The

global economic downturn of the last several years, which has already sunk several national economies, and has underscored the U.S.' tenuous position as the global economic hegemon, is being felt as but a minor fillip on the Chinese economy. Plans to revalue Chinese currency cause global outcries over unfair competition. Subtle China-bashing pervades the news media in a manner eerily reminiscent of the Japan-bashing of the mid-1980s, at its worst it echoes the racist and anti-immigrant nativist journalism of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century.

To most Americans China remains a puzzle, a hermetic communist nation with a politburo whose political workings are cloaked in mystery. A nation industrializing so fast that it often produces consumer products that are dangerous to American consumers, but that is also capable of spending extraordinary amounts of capital producing an Olympic games the likes of which have never been seen before, simultaneously outrages and inspires awe in many Americans. The Chinese continue to purchase extraordinary amounts of U.S. Treasury Bonds, and have some of the largest cash reserves in the world. Production lags felt in China on factory floors now are not an effect of its own economic malaise, but a failure of export markets like the U.S. to be able to generate the kind of demand for cheap consumer goods in ways that were commonplace in years of plenitude—even if that plenitude was an illusion founded on unstable credit markets. Many consumers in the U.S. place the blame on the Chinese, and often do so unwittingly drawing on long histories of anti-Chinese racism regarding the menace of a Yellow Peril. The intimate connections between China's ascendancy and U.S. decline are rarely looked for in the failures of American foreign policy during the global Cold War, but that is in good measure where they lie. The simultaneity of deindustrialization and the rise of

neoliberalism in the U.S. produced an era of corporate malfeasance coupled with unaccountability of a scope unparalleled in U.S. history. This was a failure of American capitalism to be beholden to a sense of social responsibility. David Harvey has argued that this is about a critical disconnect between neoliberalism's pretensions towards an abstract liberal utopianism (neoliberalism here carries on the mantle of what liberal internationalism promised before the global Cold War) and the impossibility of social justice during its watch. "At the heart of the problem lies a burgeoning disparity between the declared public aims of neoliberalism—the well-being of all—and its actual consequences—the restoration of class power."<sup>13</sup> The explosion of the wealth gap in the U.S. since the 1970s has been nothing short of extraordinary as the super-wealthy remain a small class whose wealth keeps expanding, and the working and unemployed poor continue to grow in number.

China is now an undisputed superpower, and its unique combination of strong state control and free market economics—socialism with Chinese characteristics—is proving to be more robust than the free market mayhem of Chicago School neoliberalism of the Friedmanesque variety that have dominated American economic policy for the last four decades. The ballyhoo in U.S. media in the last two years over a return to Keynesianism in domestic economics as a putative marker of an end of days to the flagrantly irresponsible economic policies of neoliberalism have masked minor reform in the garb of radicalism. Neither a renewed faith in the soundness of Keynesian economics, nor the self-immolation of the neoliberal model, suggests that America seeks new ways of regenerating itself outside of the framework of controlling, as much as possible, the

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<sup>13</sup> Harvey, *Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 79.



direction of global capitalist markets. The future of the rich cachet of mineral resources recently discovered in Afghanistan will be a good barometer of empire, American or otherwise, in the next several decades.

Though the Chinese model, at this moment, appears more impervious to the vicissitudes and fluctuations of the global marketplace than does the American one, its sustainability is not a given. I am not suggesting that the U.S. should follow a policy similar to the Chinese developmental model, nor am I suggesting that the Chinese model is not itself riddled with complications that compound human misery in ways that should be shameful to the government and the world. Instead, I merely want to illustrate the ways in which one possible view of the trajectory of the global Cold War, with China as a central motif, can help us understand the history of the entire twentieth century as unfolding in large part around the ways in which the U.S. and China related to and interacted with one another. The preceding chapters have highlighted how this relationship was critical to the foundations of the global Cold War. Tracing the same relationship into the postwar years of the global Cold war, with an eye towards its origins as critically linked to the Chinese civil war, and that reached its heights during the Vietnam War, and which began to end with the U.S.-China rapprochement in 1971, offers us a better grasp on the history of the global after 1945. It tells a story not of state actions and reactions, but of complex relations between peoples, movements, and ideas that have deep historical ties to bygone eras that it is easier to think of as cut off from the histories of the global Cold War. It is sometimes hard to see the linkages between historical formations like treaty port imperialism, the collapse of the Qing Dynasty, or the

Christian missionary apparatus, and the expansion of American empire after 1945, but they are there.

The global radicalization that attended the decade of the 1960s, founded in part on the perception that U.S. interventions in the global south, most particularly in Vietnam, were part of a growing picture of American global capitalist imperialism, fundamentally reshaped the history of the U.S., Europe, Africa, and Asia. It tested the limits of the complacency of Americans to blindly support the pursuit of American imperialist ambitions as long as they were cloaked in the discourses of fighting communism. A significant component of U.S. global Cold War policy was the non-recognition and economic isolation of the government of the PRC. This was in part due to the powerful lobbying efforts of the so-called “China Lobby,” those well financed supporters of Chiang Kai-shek, like Alfred Kohlberg, Walter Judd, and Henry Luce. By the early 1970s, however, the sustainability, and wiseness, of the decision to continue to isolate China became more and more of an issue. Whether or not it was ever a smart plan to begin with, by the late 1960s the U.S.’ anachronistic policy of non-recognition of China (nearly every other nation had long since opened embassies in and begun trading with the PRC much earlier) began looking even more outdated and ineffective than it had ever been. The famous Nixon-Mao rapprochement of 1971 augured a new phase in the history of the international, and once again China was at the center of world historic transformations. Throughout the Cold War the U.S. had never failed to take its eyes off the ultimate prize, securing the necessary global resources to ensure its continued role as the leader of the capitalist world. The long and costly loss in Vietnam had been an attempt at securing resource-rich Southeast Asia as a site for supplying industrial

production in Japan, the U.S.' junior partner in Asia and regional economic hegemon. By 1971, the Manichean ideology of the Cold War was losing currency as the U.S. hemorrhaged money funding a military-industrial-complex that saw no end in sight. Dreams of prosperity were becoming increasingly difficult to build on a foundation of fear and eternal suspicion.

I want to conclude this dissertation by suggesting that the rapprochement between the U.S. and China in 1971 represented yet another decisive moment in the reproduction of capitalist imperialism, and that it can be clearly viewed as a part of an ongoing relationship between the two nations that set the trajectory of capitalism and imperialism for much of the twentieth century. The decision to ease tensions between the two countries was an expression of a global shift that continues to dominate the international scene today. Once again, it is a genealogy that has a clear origin in the U.S.-China relationship. I want to suggest that the rapprochement between the U.S. and China in 1971 marks the beginning of the transformation of the logic of global capitalism from one rooted in the simplistic Manicheanism of the Cold War, to one rooted in the hyperfinancialization characteristic of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is but the latest guise of empire, and has produced some of the worst horrors of capitalism to date, especially in the peripheral zones of the global south. The explosion of the wealth gap between those who embrace neoliberal principles, and those who either do not or cannot is staggering.<sup>14</sup>

In the last decade, the emergence of China as a serious global superpower only buttresses my contention that China has been an important player in the neoliberal

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<sup>14</sup> For useful overview of neoliberalism see David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). Harvey argues that 1978 is the critical year that marks the triumph of the neoliberal model; I am suggesting that pushing it back to 1971 might be generative of a more nuanced genealogy.

revolution, and that 1971 was a critical historical marker. The rapprochement signaled the beginnings of the obsolescence of the Manichean argument that had structured the logic of the global Cold War for nearly three decades. Nixon and Mao were in effect declaring that political ideologies were no longer to have pride of place in the new and emergent conception of globalism. It mattered less if one subscribed to Marxist-Leninist-Maoist doctrine, and the other to some form of liberal capitalist republicanism, than it did that they could jointly pursue the much more capacious global economic ideology of neoliberalism. Clearly, as the China example has borne out over the last few decades, neoliberalism is not averse to communism, or vice versa.

This transformation to a more ecumenical and less ideologically overburdened approach to global empire should be far from heartening. While it is true that the deep ideological divides that once separated much of the world have now become economic ones, the fact of empire itself has not ceased to be problematic. And the advance of empire has continued to be pursued behind rhetorics of progress. The neoliberal model posits that it is possible for everyone to be wealthy, that there can be a system in which wealth reproduces itself and gets redistributed in ways that can relieve some of the cruelest forms of poverty in the world. While one cannot argue that the embrace of the neoliberal model has not catapulted certain sluggish economies into economic powerhouses, China being the most extreme example, the focus on the financialization of everything can, in the long run, leave nothing but human misery in its wake. The current global financial crisis has given the lie to some of the mythologies of neoliberalism, but the steps being taken to ease the losses do not appear to concern a reevaluation of the principles of neoliberalism itself. In a way, this critical impasse in the trajectory of global

capitalism brings the argument set forth in this dissertation full circle. The American businessmen and Chinese reformers and revolutionaries who attempted to foment the collapse of the Qing Dynasty in the Red Dragon Caper live on in the impulses of the elite transnational capitalists who conclude business deals between corporations that are neither Chinese nor American, but supranational. The desire that drives so many Chinese today to pursue wealth and social mobility is not far divorced from what most Chinese regard as their humiliation at the hands of Western capitalist imperialists that began with the compulsory signing of unequal treaties in the mid-nineteenth century. It was a hard fall for the Chinese from the elevated heights of the civilizationist supremacy that permeated the Chinese world view for much of the Western time of clock and calendar, to being considered the 'sick man of Asia' in the late-nineteenth century, to the phenomenal deprivations and excesses of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution in the second-half of the twentieth century. As the world becomes increasingly impenetrable and complex under the influence of an explosion in communication technologies and the rewiring of the relations of capital, and as China's place in this world appears to become more important each day, an understanding of the history of the U.S.-China relationship through the vicissitudes of the convulsive world changes of the last century can help us place our contemporary moment in perspective. This study has attempted to illustrate the manifold historical continuities from the liberal interventionism of the missionary apparatus amidst the collapse of the dynastic system in China in the late-nineteenth century, to the emergence of a revived communist China at the helm of the twenty-first century global economy. It is a story that details the operations of capitalist evolution amidst political revolution, and has illustrated the

various ways in which the persistence of capital has managed to outlive that of political ideology. Perhaps it shows that politics has long been a vehicle for capitalism, and capitalism will always express itself as empire, because that is how it assures its own reproduction. Regardless of how history will tell this unfolding story, a critical focus on the U.S.-China relationship has proven itself to be a profound vantage point from which to observe the transformations of global history.

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