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Reorienting America: Race, Geopolitics, and the Repeal of Asian Exclusion, 1940-1952

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**Reorienting America:
Race, Geopolitics, and the Repeal of Asian Exclusion, 1940-1952**

Abstract

This dissertation examines the movement to repeal the Asian exclusion laws in the United States during World War II and the early Cold War years. It situates campaigns for repeal in the context of two interrelated developments: African American civil rights activism in the United States and shifting U.S. geopolitical interests in post-1940 Asia. As U.S. foreign policy priorities pivoted toward Asia beginning in World War II, Americans' view of the world changed in ways that, at times, allowed geopolitics to supersede restrictions based on race. Drawing from U.S., Indian, and Korean sources, the project charts how a transnational cast of American missionaries, U.S. and Asian state officials, and Asian and Asian American activists used the newly expedient language and logic of geopolitics to end the racial exclusion of Asians from immigration and naturalization eligibility.

The study highlights a paradox at the heart of the repeal campaigns: beginning in World War II, the perceived foreignness that underwrote the historical exclusion of Asians as “aliens ineligible to citizenship” legitimized them as spokespersons for repeal. During a time when few Americans had knowledge of Asia, Asian American activists parlayed their presumptive expertise as Asian “insiders” to secure a foothold as lobbyists on Capitol Hill. The strategy undermined Asian Americans' claims to inclusion in the long-term, however, by reinforcing their image as racial foreigners in America.

The dissertation builds on a growing body of literature interrogating the relationship between international developments and U.S. racial reform. Comparatively little scholarship about this period has looked beyond a white-black racial binary, in spite of Japanese internment, U.S. military occupations in postwar Japan and Korea, and unprecedented American intervention across Cold War Asia. My study demonstrates how developments particular to Asia – the Pacific front of World War II, Asian decolonization, and the Korean War – both facilitated and constrained the scope of legislative reform activists achieved.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CACA	Chinese American Citizens Association
CCBA	Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association
ILA	India League of America
INC	Indian National Congress
JACL	Japanese American Citizens League
KACW	Korean American Committee for Wallace
KINB	Korean Immigration and Naturalization Bill
KINC	Korean Immigration and Naturalization Committee
KNA	Korean National Association
KNRP	Korean National Revolutionary Party
SKPL	Sino-Korean People's League
UKC	United Korean Committee

Dedicated to my grandfather,
Il Sun Hong (1922-2007),
a witness to history

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INTRODUCTION

Creating the Problem of Asian¹ Exclusion

On December 17, 1943, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Magnuson bill into law, repealing the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act more than six decades after it was first enacted.² At a time when the Sino-American military alliance against Japan hung in the balance, Roosevelt expressed “particular pride and pleasure” that an “unfortunate barrier between allies had been removed.” Upon passage of the legislation, he declared that the “war effort in the Far East can now be carried on with a greater vigor and a larger understanding of our common purpose.”³

Roosevelt’s statement reflected a new wartime reality in which the United States, its allies, and its enemies viewed U.S. immigration policy as a problem of America’s international diplomacy. This understanding animated the mid-century movement for Asian exclusion repeal in the United States. Notably, the President defined repeal as a matter of U.S. security interests overseas. In an erasure that would characterize the

¹ The 1917 Immigration Act actually used the term “Asiatic” to encompass the peoples of Asia (those that fell within the geographically designated “Asiatic Barred Zone”), but for consistency, I use the term “Asian” throughout the study.

² The 1943 Magnuson Act also repealed the twelve subsequent laws that built upon the original 1882 Act’s provisions, including the 1903 legislation that extended the restrictions on Chinese immigration indefinitely.

³ Franklin D. Roosevelt, *Statement by the President on the Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Laws*, December 17, 1943, reprinted in Fred Riggs, *Pressures on Congress: A Study of the Repeal of Chinese Exclusion* (New York: King’s Crown Press, 1950), 211. Historians have noted the significance of the Magnuson Act as an important, if largely symbolic, milestone in U.S.-China relations. In addition to repealing the long-hated Chinese Exclusion laws, the measure gave China an annual immigration quota of 105 and made persons of Chinese descent eligible for U.S. citizenship for the first time in American history, including the approximately 37,000 foreign-born Chinese then living in the United States. The Chinese population in the mainland United States in 1940 was 77,500 total. Just over half (40,262) were U.S.-born Chinese American citizens. Michael Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); Meredith Oyen, “Allies, Enemies and Aliens: Migration and U.S. Chinese Relations, 1940-1965” (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2009).

official debate over repeal for decades, he made no mention of Asians already living in the United States. In similar fashion, proponents strategically framed their appeals for the reform of Asian exclusion in terms of foreign policy and immigration-related concerns. Like Roosevelt, many downplayed the domestic issue of naturalization, even though hundreds of thousands of Asian Americans, including some of those advocating for repeal, remained racially ineligible for U.S. citizenship.⁴

The 1943 effort for Chinese exclusion repeal exemplified this dynamic. The white American elites who spearheaded the public campaign actively discouraged meaningful Chinese American participation in order to maintain an emphasis on diplomatic concerns and immigration quotas over naturalization. Scholar L. Ling-chi Wang has highlighted the apparent contradiction in that the group that “stood to benefit most” from the proposed legal gains was “systematically excluded from the legislative process.”⁵ Historian Renqiu Yu has echoed this sentiment, noting the irony of the domestic push to pass the Magnuson bill’s almost complete exclusion of Chinese Americans.⁶

The passage of the Magnuson Act in late 1943, and the campaign that preceded it, generated political and social momentum on which Asian American advocates of repeal sought to build. Encouraged by the success of the Chinese measure, a small group of Indian, Korean, and Japanese American activists joined with their allies in the United

⁴ According to the 1940 U.S. Census, 254,918 persons of Asian descent (or 0.2 percent of the population) lived on the U.S. mainland. 1940 U.S. Census (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1940).

⁵ To support his point, Wang quoted one Chinese American contemporary of the campaign who described the community’s role in the effort as one of “outsider observers.” L. Ling-chi Wang, “Politics of the Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Laws,” *Remembering 1882: Fighting for Civil Rights in the Shadow of the Chinese Exclusion Act* (San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America, 1993), 2, 17-18.

⁶ Renqiu Yu, “Little Heard Voices: The Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance and the China Daily News’ Appeal for Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943,” in *Chinese America: History and Perspectives* (1990), 21.

States and in Asia to lobby for legislation that would extend immigration quotas and naturalization rights to other Asian peoples. In the absence of significant voting power in the United States, they embraced the language and logic of geopolitics to advance bills for repeal in Congress. During a time of unprecedented U.S. intervention and interest in Asia, their appeals drew upon the U.S. foreign policy goals and geopolitical developments of the moment to persuade Washington lawmakers of the need for repeal.

The mid-century movement for repeal nationalized the debate over Asian American citizenship and tested the terms of Asian Americans' inclusion in a period of growing racial unrest at home and U.S. military intervention across the Asian continent. America's move toward internationalism beginning in World War II inspired new political possibilities and strategies for reform. The heightened importance of geopolitics during World War II and the early Cold War made repeal politically viable for the first time. Within this new paradigm of internationalism, Asian Americans adopted the strategy of playing on their presumptive ties to Asia in order to amplify their political voice in Washington. But this use of foreignness as a strategy produced a paradox at the heart of the repeal movement: The same perceived foreignness that underwrote the historical exclusion of Asians as "aliens ineligible to citizenship" served to legitimize them as spokespersons for repeal. This dissertation examines Asian American lobbying at the national level in order to illuminate the relationship between race and U.S. internationalism against the backdrop of America's foreign policy pivot toward Asia.

In spotlighting Asian American activism in this period, this study joins a recent surge in scholarship exploring questions of race and Asian American citizenship during what one historian has described as the "important, but relatively unexplored,

interregnum between the Exclusion Era (from the late nineteenth century to World War II) and the post-1965 regime of the model minority.”⁷ While much of this work takes up the question of how the nation incorporated Asian Americans after the end of exclusion, we continue to know little about how legal exclusion actually ended. To be sure, geopolitics remained a primary indicator of an individual bill’s likely success.⁸ But geopolitics alone did not bring about legislative change. People did. The foremost concern of this dissertation, therefore, is not to explain *why* Asian exclusion ended, but rather, the politics of *how* it ended and the implications for Asian American communities and racial reform in the mid-twentieth century United States. Toward this end, it focuses on the network of actors who campaigned for the cause, the strategies they employed, and what these reveal about how, beginning in World War II, America’s changing engagement with Asia and the world transformed the nation.

⁷ Ellen Wu, “Introduction,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 31:4 (Summer 2012): 8. Select titles include Lon Kurashige, *Japanese American Celebration and Conflict: A History of Ethnic Identity and Festival in Los Angeles, 1934–1990* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002); Catherine Ceniza Choy, *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History* (Durham, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Shirley Jennifer Lim, *A Feeling of Belonging: Asian American Women’s Public Culture, 1930–1960* (New York: NYU Press, 2005); Arissa Oh, “A New Kind of Missionary Work: Christians, Christian Americanists, and the Adoption of Korean GI Babies, 1955–1961,” *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 33, nos. 3–4 (Fall–Winter 2005): 161–88; Ellen D. Wu, “America’s Chinese: Anti-Communism, Citizenship, and Cultural Diplomacy during the Cold War,” *Pacific Historical Review* 77, no. 3 (August 2008): 319–422; Charlotte Brooks, *Alien Neighbors, Foreign Friends* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Matthew Briones, *Jim and Jap Crow: A Cultural History of 1940s Interracial America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012); Greg Robinson, *After Camp: Portraits in Midcentury Japanese American Life and Politics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012); Cindy I-Fen Cheng, *Citizens of Asian America. Democracy and Race during the Cold War* (New York: NYU Press, 2013); and Ellen Wu’s forthcoming *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013). Vivek Bald, *Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013) is a notable addition to the dearth of scholarship on South Asian American communities during this period.

⁸ Scholars across disciplines – political science, history, and legal studies – have highlighted the international developments that made repeal measures politically viable beginning in World War II. See, for example, Fred Riggs, *Pressures on Congress: A Study of the Repeal of Chinese Exclusion* (New York: King’s Crown Press, 1950), Chapter 1; Meredith Oyen, “Allies, Enemies and Aliens: Migration and U.S. Chinese Relations, 1940-1965” (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2009), 65-95; David Reimers, *Still the Golden Door: The Third World Comes to America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), Chapter 1.

In recent years, a growing body of scholarship has illuminated the close relationship between international developments and the passage of civil rights reforms for African Americans.⁹ The literature builds on the interest-convergence principle of law professor Derrick Bell. In a landmark 1980 *Harvard Law Review* article, Bell argued that elite white Americans came to support civil rights reform for black Americans after World War II to fortify America's international image and its claims to practice racial equality against attack by Communist Moscow.¹⁰ Historians including Mary Dudziak and Brenda Gayle Plummer have demonstrated how America's Cold War imperative to rehabilitate its tarnished domestic record on race and counter international charges of American racial hypocrisy both facilitated and constrained legal gains for African Americans at home.¹¹

This study tracks a similar interplay between U.S. foreign policy goals and the gradual liberalization of immigration policies toward Asia after 1943.¹² Scholars of

⁹ Doug McAdam, "On the International Origins of Domestic Political Opportunities," in Anne Costain and Andrew McFarland, eds., *Social Movements and American Political Institutions* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), 251-267. McAdam argued that "World War II and the onset of the Cold War effectively terminated the 'isolationist' foreign policy that had long defined American's relationship to the rest of the world." Consequently, "unlike their predecessors" decades earlier, in the postwar period, "national political leaders found themselves exposed to international political pressures and considerations that their predecessors had been spared." He cited civil rights reforms of the World War II and Cold War years as prime examples.

¹⁰ Derrick Bell, "Brown v. Board of Education and the *Interest Convergence* Dilemma," 93 *Harvard Law Review* 518 (1980).

¹¹ Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

¹² Legal scholar John Hayakawa Torok has extended Bell's argument to the liberalization of U.S. immigration and naturalization policies toward Asian peoples over the same period. According to Torok, "in the Asian American context" the interest-convergence principle explained "both the gradual liberalization of the laws and the restrictions inscribed at each stage" of the "movement from immigration exclusion to restriction." John Hayakawa Torok, "'Interest Convergence' and the Liberalization of Discriminatory Immigration and Naturalization," *Chinese America: History & Perspectives* (January 1995): 1.

immigration have been quick to note parallels between the postwar movements for black civil rights and Asian immigration reform – in particular, their common use of Cold War rhetoric and argumentation to win official support. This study expands upon this connection, demonstrating how geopolitics provided advocates of repeal with a race-neutral and politically viable basis for legislative reform. It moves the start date earlier to World War II and, as such, is not simply a Cold War story.¹³

Beginning in World War II, U.S. immigration reform toward Asia tracked developments specific to American relations with Asian powers. Comparatively little work has been done to look beyond a white-black racial binary in a period marked by the Pacific front of World War II, Asian decolonization, and the U.S. Cold War in Asia.¹⁴ Filling this lacuna, this study demonstrates how developments particular to Asia both facilitated and constrained the scope of legislative reform.

Basic differences distinguished Asian Americans' use of geopolitics and internationalism as strategies for reform. Key among these was a singular history of racial alienage and legal exclusion in the United States. Asian Americans' racialization as

¹³ This earlier periodization builds on an article by Justin Hart, in which he challenged the Cold War Civil Rights historiography to argue that the World War II years, and not the Cold War, were the “decisive turning point when the history of domestic race relations could no longer be sanguinely ignored by U.S. policymakers.” Justin Hart, “Making Democracy Safe for the World: Race, Propaganda, and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy during World War II,” *Pacific Historical Review* 73:1 (2004): 49-84.

¹⁴ This discussion of postwar pressures impinging on U.S. domestic policy adopts historian Jason Parker's more expansive definition of the Cold War as a “protean conflict whose fluctuating ‘East-West’ dynamics slowed, stalled, and then sped the ‘North-South’ decolonization and race revolutions.” By exploring the interplay of these movements through the lens of U.S. immigration reform, this study secondarily seeks to advance understanding of the “precise, subtle, and intricate connections between the Cold War, the global postwar ‘race revolution,’ and the course of Third World decolonization.” Jason Parker, “‘Cold War II’: The Eisenhower Administration, the Bandung Conference, and the Reperiodization of the Postwar Era,” *Diplomatic History*, 30 (Nov. 2006), 868-9. Matthew Connolly's seminal work “Taking Off the Cold War Lens: Visions of North-South Conflict during the Algerian War for Independence,” promotes a broader framework for understanding these movements *American Historical Review* (June 2000): 739-769.

extensions of peoples in Asia served both to constrain and amplify their political voice in Washington.¹⁵ At the same time, their distinct history of discrimination in the United States shaped their goals for redress. While African Americans sought to realize the full privileges of their legal citizenship, racial bars on naturalization left Asian Americans unable even to claim the right to U.S. citizenship itself. This fostered an expansive understanding of civil rights among Asian Americans as including eligibility for U.S. citizenship as well as fair employment, housing, and other basic rights.

To the extent that Asian Americans had long been engaged in challenging their legal exclusion as well as lobbying Washington officials on behalf of their Asian homelands, they brought to the repeal movement distinct histories of engagement and familiarity with the U.S. state. Because of their historical ineligibility to U.S. citizenship, Asian American lobbyists could not singlehandedly drive reform but also relied on their indirect influence through white intermediaries and allies. This study suggests how this involvement shaped the longer movement and reflected the distinctive nature of Asian Americans' engagement with U.S. foreign affairs as Washington shifted toward Asia and away from its historical emphasis on Europe alone.

In departure from previous studies that focus narrowly on the politics leading up to the 1943 Magnuson Act, this dissertation takes the Chinese measure as the starting

¹⁵ Cultural theorist Lisa Lowe has used the term “foreigner-within” to describe this phenomenon. Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 4-6. Also see Cindy Cheng, *Citizens of Asian America: Democracy and Race During the Cold War* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), Introduction. MIT political scientist Myron Weiner made a related observation when he noted how “[r]ace, as an element in generating an ethnic identity, plays a role for Asian Americans that was not relevant to the experiences of the earlier European immigrants . . . Asians, by virtue of their race, are often regarded by other U.S. citizens as distinctive no matter how great their assimilation.” Myron Weiner, “Asian Immigrants & U.S. Foreign Policy,” in *Immigration and U.S. Foreign Policy*, eds. Robert W. Tucker, Charles B. Kelly, and Linda Wrigley (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 194.

point of a longer movement. The theme of exclusion has long dominated scholarly literature on Asian immigration to the United States. Scholars across fields – history, legal studies, and political science – have explored exclusion policies in terms of their origins, their implementation and enforcement, and their impact on Asian American experiences.¹⁶ Of the individual campaigns that made up the longer movement for repeal, the World War II effort to repeal the Chinese Exclusion laws has received the most scholarly attention.¹⁷ However, scholars have largely overlooked the process by which the U.S. Congress overturned these laws *in toto* after World War II. General works on U.S. immigration have explained the end of Asian exclusion as a natural corollary to the general liberalization of immigration policy after World War II amid greater political support for cultural pluralism.¹⁸ The broader story of repeal also conforms to political

¹⁶ U.S. labor historians were the first to trace the origins of Asian and specifically, Chinese exclusion. Alexander Saxton tracked the emergence of an anti-Chinese movement in the American West, and showed how fears of labor competition and the workings of partisan politics culminated in the passage of the 1882 Exclusion Act. Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971). More recently, scholars of immigration law have linked the demands of enforcing Chinese exclusion to the rise of a centralized state bureaucracy over the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882–1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Lucy Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers: Chinese Immigrants and the Shaping of Modern Immigration Law* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995). Erika Lee and Mae Ngai explored the ramifications that restrictive immigration policies had to shape Asians' experiences in America. Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

¹⁷ Historians and political scientists have examined Chinese exclusion repeal through the lens of pressure politics, presidential power, U.S.-China diplomacy, and Chinese American participation. Fred Riggs, explores the tactics and strategies of the Citizens Committee in his *Pressures on Congress: A Study of the Repeal of Chinese Exclusion* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1950). Karen Leong's article-length study examines the administration's role in the passage of Chinese exclusion repeal. Karen Leong, "Foreign Policy, National Identity, and Citizenship: The Roosevelt White House and the Expediency of Repeal," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 22:4 (2003), 3-30. On Chinese American involvement, see Renqiu Yu, "Little Heard Voices: The Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance and the China Daily News' Appeal for Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943," in *Chinese America: History and Perspectives* (1990): 21-35 and L. Ling-chi Wang, "Politics of the Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Laws," *The Repeal and Its Legacy, Proceedings of the Conference on the 50th Anniversary of the 1943 Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts, at San Francisco State University*, ed. Robert Fung (San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America, 1993).

scientist Daniel Tichenor’s observation that “global pressures” and “international crises” created domestic political opportunities for immigration reform by “reshaping the interests and relative power of state actors.”¹⁹ But these explanations fail to distinguish the particular way that racial formation influenced U.S. immigration policy reform toward Asia relative to Europe, and the ramifications of these differences for the politics and process of repeal itself.

This dissertation brings race to the center of the story of repeal as a key factor that distinguished the movement to reform U.S. immigration policy toward Asia from efforts by European groups to revise the national origins quota system. Critical race theorists have examined Asian exclusion repeal through the lens of racial formation, or the racialization of Asian American actors.²⁰ By granting rights to individual Asian groups by name (e.g. Chinese, Indian) in the piecemeal acts of the 1940s, Neil Gotanda argued that law racialized ethnicity for Asian groups in a way it never had for Europeans; he called this new category encompassing Asian groups “orientalized ethnics.”²¹ The study

¹⁸ Many of the standard immigration histories of this period fall into this group, including David Reimers, *Still the Golden Door: The Third World Comes to America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) and Robert Divine, *American Immigration Policy, 1924-1952* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957). A recent study by political scientist Daniel Tichenor framed postwar immigration control largely in terms of an “inter-branch struggle” between “restrictionist legislators and expansionist presidents” which “closely resembled the ‘liberal-presidential’ and ‘conservative-congressional’ fault lines” that divided civil rights politics in this period. Daniel Tichenor, *Dividing Lines: The Politics of Immigration Control* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 179.

¹⁹ Tichenor, 45.

²⁰ Sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant have described race as an “unstable and de-centered complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle,” and “racial formation” as an approach that “treat[s] race in the United States as a fundamental *organizing principle* of social relationships.” See Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 1986), 66-69, emphasis in original.

²¹ According to Gotanda, the racial basis of repeal legislation – specifically, its use of “descent” and “blood-lines” to determine quotas and citizenship eligibility – meant the abandonment of “national origin” in the Asian immigration quotas, a move that sharply distinguished U.S. immigration and naturalization policies toward Asians different from that of European groups. Neil Gotanda, “Towards Repeal of Asian

shifts the focus from legal constructions of race to practice, examining repeal as a social and transnational movement. In so doing, it brings the concerns of Asian American Studies into dialogue with those of policy history and transnational U.S. history, enriching all three fields.²² In its focus on the politics and process of exclusion repeal, the study performs the task of policy history to bridge elite policymaking in Washington with grassroots activism among state and non-state actors across the United States and Asia. At the same time, it takes seriously Asian American racial formation by assessing the influence of Asian Americans' racialization as extensions of Asia on the politics of repeal. The dissertation is primarily concerned with questions of process. Key among these: How did racial formation shape Asian Americans' lobbying strategies and reception? Not simply subjects being acted upon, this study treats Asian Americans as agents that engaged with and re-appropriated Asian American racial formation toward the goal of repeal.

By treating multiple Asian groups – Indian, Korean, and Japanese Americans – within a common frame of analysis, this study accounts for the multi-faceted and heterogeneous nature of Asian American activism for repeal and the dialogic character of the longer movement. In so doing, it makes two important contributions to the fields of Asian American Studies and history. First, it highlights the important role Japanese Americans played in the Cold War campaigns that culminated in the wholesale repeal of the Asian Exclusion laws by the early 1950s. A closer look at Japanese Americans'

Exclusion,” in Hyung-Chan Kim, ed., *Asian Americans and Congress: A Documentary History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 318, 325.

²² For a concise overview of policy history, see Julian E. Zelizer, “Introduction: New Directions in Policy History,” *Journal of Policy History* 17:1 (2005): 1-11. For more on Asian American racial formation, see Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics*, Chapter 1.

attempts to partner with other Asian ethnic and racial groups illuminates the possibilities and limitations of inter-ethnic and inter-racial coalition-building during this period.

Second, this dissertation recovers the importance of colonialism to the experiences and political activism of Asians in America. Scholarship on Asian immigration and communities largely neglects Indian and Korean Americans.²³ The two communities' long-standing involvement in diasporic movements for their homelands' independence shaped their activism for repeal distinctly relative to their Chinese and Japanese American counterparts. By recovering the prominent role of Indian and Korean anti-colonial actors in repeal, this dissertation illuminates cross-pollination between domestic campaigns for U.S. immigration reform and transnational activism on behalf of Asian independence.²⁴ In doing so, it reveals how, for many Asian colonial advocates in

²³ Recent studies on Asian colonial groups in America include Richard S. Kim, *Quest for Statehood: Korean Immigrant Nationalism and U.S. Sovereignty, 1905–45* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); David K. Yoo, *Contentious Spirits: Religion in Korean American History, 1903–1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010); and Vivek Bald, *Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013). For a comparative discussion of colonialism in European and Asian immigration, see Sucheng Chan, "European and Asian Immigration into the United States in Comparative Perspective, 1820s to 1920s," in Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, ed., *Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology, and Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990): 37-75.

²⁴ Diasporic connections constitute a largely unexplored dimension of America's relationship to decolonization in Asia after World War II. The absence of studies to date relating decolonization in Asia to reform movements in the United States arguably reflects: (1) the dominance of a black-white racial paradigm in U.S. civil rights historiography; and (2) the relatively small Asian American population before 1965. The literature on America's role in Asian decolonization comprises mostly individual case studies (e.g. on India, Korea, the Philippines). The more fraught and complicated nature of the decolonization process in Africa arguably explains the larger body of literature exploring America's role there. Mark T. Berger's *The Battle for Asia: From Decolonization to Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2004), presents one of the few general works to treat the American relationship to Asian decolonization but focuses on economy and the pre-history that made the "Asian economic miracle" of the 1970s and 1980s possible. The dearth of scholarship relating the U.S. to Asian decolonization is even more striking considering America's role in pioneering the process. For a provocative discussion of the ironies surrounding the U.S. decision to relinquish the Philippines, see Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), Chapter 6.

America, the effort to secure legal recognition from the U.S. government became embedded in and structured by a set of transnational discourses and political projects.

Even as it draws from explicitly transnational approaches, this study takes to heart historian Marilyn Young's caveat that in trying to de-center the U.S. in world history, scholars should not de-center the reality of American power, which was "preponderant" in the decades after World War II.²⁵ While recognizing a common global context, this study notably differentiates the United States by illuminating how postwar trends in Asian immigration were mutually implicated with the expansion of the American presence in Asia after 1940.²⁶ Following in the line of scholars like Walter LaFeber, this dissertation sees U.S. involvements in postwar Asia as part of a longer history of American empire.²⁷ It was precisely America's unparalleled military and economic

²⁵ Young borrowed this term from Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992); Marilyn B. Young, "The Age of Global Power," *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, ed. Thomas Bender (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 271, 295. Existing literature evidences the pitfalls of taking the effort to "de-exceptionalize" the United States too far, even as these works make important contributions to our understanding of the international context in which U.S. policies of Asian exclusion ended. Australian immigration historian Sean Brawley was the first to discuss Asian immigration liberalization in the U.S. alongside parallel developments in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. In all four cases, he concluded, "postwar internationalism" became "immigration exclusionists' greatest enemy"; as state officials came to recognize the need for good relations with newly independent nations in the Asia-Pacific region, they gradually acceded to demands for reform. According to Brawley, the shift to multiculturalism had completed – at least formally – by the 1970s. Sean Brawley, *The White Peril: Foreign Relations and Asian Immigration to Australasia and North America, 1919-78* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1995), 199. Brawley's work anticipated the work of Latrobe professor Marilyn Lake, who tracked the rise of Asian exclusion as a transnational phenomenon of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in a 2008 synthesis. Rather than make a case for any single nation's distinctiveness, Lake and Reynolds attempted to racially restrictive immigration policies as part of a global history of "white supremacy." Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Color Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

²⁶ This discussion builds on Matthew Jacobson's framing of "immigration and expansion" as "two sides of the same coin." Matthew Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2000), 4, 265.

²⁷ A student of William Appleman Williams, Walter LaFeber follows in a long line of scholars that saw the United States as expansionist and imperial from its beginning. Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963); also see

power that made U.S. intervention possible in ways that had far-ranging impact for Asia, and the world as a whole. Such policies combined formal and informal arrangements with economic and cultural influence; together they produced new waves of migration to the United States that multiplied the Asian presence in America and set into high relief the re-negotiation of national borders and security under the evolving legal (and illegal) immigration regime.

A Brief History of Asian Exclusion

The story of Asiatic exclusion in the United States starts with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the first law in American history explicitly to restrict a racial or ethnic group by name.²⁸ In practice, the law did not bar all Chinese from entering the United States but instead inhibited the migration of unskilled laborers while permitting the entry of higher-income, special groups – merchants, diplomats, and students, among others.²⁹ The original 1882 Act stipulated an enforcement period of ten years, but a 1903

William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: Macmillan, 1959), 201. Williams saw World War II as marking an even more fundamental shift, when the “convergence of a sense of economic necessity and a moral calling transformed the traditional concept of open door expansion into a vision of the American century.”

²⁸ Some scholars date the origins of Asiatic exclusion earlier to the 1875 Page Law and an 1862 precursor. See, for example, Moon-Ho Jung, *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 6. Other notable works on Chinese exclusion include Sucheng Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Charles J. McClain, *In Search of Equality: The Chinese Struggle Against Discrimination in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Lucy Salyer, *Laws as Harsh as Tigers: Chinese Immigrants and the Shaping of Modern Immigration Law* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Judy Yung, *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); 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 Trans-Pacific Community* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

law extended the restrictions on unskilled labor migration indefinitely and, according to historian Erika Lee, established gatekeeping as a permanent feature of U.S. immigration policy.³⁰ While scholars continue to debate the degree of various actors' culpability – organized labor and national politicians, among others – for helping pass the exclusion laws, they do not dispute the legislation's domestic origins in anxieties over labor competition, party politics, and long-standing societal conceptions of Chinese as a despised racial other.³¹ Initially, Chinese state officials expressed objections to the Chinese Exclusion laws as an insult to the Chinese people. But Washington generally ignored these objections, secure in China's weakness on the late nineteenth-century's international stage. Increasingly distracted by threats to their power at home, historian Michael Hunt writes, by 1895 the Chinese imperial government, in turn, had “fully acquiesced in the U.S. policy of exclusion.”³²

Japan had higher status internationally, and this delayed the stigma of official exclusion. In the early years of the twentieth century, anti-Japanese violence on the U.S. West Coast put Tokyo officials in an awkward position, as did the work of exclusionist

²⁹ In a recent article, historian Gordon Chang offered a valuable reminder that the “Chinese Exclusion Act” was not originally known as such. The term “Exclusion Act” only came into popular use much later. Gordon H. Chang, “China and the Pursuit of America's Destiny: Nineteenth-Century Imagining and Why Immigration Restriction Took So Long,” *Journal of Asian American Studies* 15:2 (2012): 145-169, at 145.

³⁰ Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

³¹ U.S. labor historians were the first to study the origins of Chinese exclusion in depth. Notable among these, Alexander Saxton tracked the emergence of an anti-Chinese movement in the American West and showed how fears of labor competition and the workings of partisan politics culminated in the passage of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. Andrew Gyory shifted the focus to national politicians and the demands of political party competition during the Gilded Age. Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971); Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

³² Hunt, *Making of a Special Relationship*, 108.

groups like the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League to agitate for a national law that barred Japanese as the 1882 law had done for the Chinese.³³ Eager to avoid the public stigma of exclusion, in 1907 Japan informally agreed to restrict the emigration of unskilled Japanese laborers to the U.S. in return for Washington's efforts to squelch discrimination against Japanese in California. The Gentleman's Agreement, as the arrangement came to be known, saved face for Japan, preserving the appearance of Japanese equality with European powers while meeting American restrictionists' demands to reduce immigration from Asia.³⁴ Koreans also came under the terms of the Agreement after Japan formally annexed the Korean peninsula in 1910. As a stopgap measure, however, the 1907 Gentleman's Agreement only addressed the problem of Japanese migration temporarily.

The World War I years brought the first legal articulation of comprehensive Asian exclusion. A series of laws passed during and immediately after the war expanded the racial bar on immigration to all Asian peoples. The first of three (1917, 1921, 1924), the Immigration Act of 1917 created the "Asiatic Barred Zone," a geographical designation that excluded Indian immigrants for the first time in American history. While the legislation did not mention Indians explicitly, its disproportionate impact prompted one scholar to dub the law the "Asian Indian Exclusion Act."³⁵ During the same period, legal cases challenging Asian naturalization claims both strengthened and complicated the

³³ Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962).

³⁴ Izumi Hirobe, *Japanese Pride, American Prejudice: Modifying the Exclusion Clause of the 1924 Immigration Act* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 4-5.

³⁵ Arthur Helweg, "The Immigration Act of 1917: The Asian Indian Exclusion Act," in Hyung-Chan Kim, ed., *Asian Americans and Congress: A Documentary History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 153-223.

racial bar preventing foreign-born Asians from seeking U.S. citizenship. In *Ozawa v. U.S.* (1922), the Supreme Court upheld Japanese ineligibility for American citizenship on the grounds that Japanese persons were not Caucasian and therefore did not qualify as racially white under the 1790 Naturalization Act.³⁶ One year later, in *Thind v. U.S.* (1923), the Court ruled that, even if technically “Caucasian,” Indians also did not qualify for citizenship because they were not racially “white” according to the commonsense understanding of the term.³⁷ As these cases illustrate, before World War II, Asian Americans largely argued for inclusion on the government’s terms. That is, they sought to prove that they deserved citizenship but stopped short of challenging the discriminatory nature of the laws themselves.

The 1924 Immigration Act finalized Asian exclusion as a legal and racial regime, and set the stage for the longer movement interrogated by this study. The law’s Japanese Exclusion clause closed the loophole that exempted Japan from immigration restriction, solidifying the ban on all of Asia.³⁸ It further conjoined immigration and naturalization law by making immigration contingent upon one’s ability to naturalize in the United States. As “aliens ineligible to citizenship,” Asians did not qualify. According to historian Mae Ngai, the effect of these provisions was to “complete Asiatic exclusion” and “constitut[e] ‘Asian’ as a peculiarly American racial category.”³⁹ These features set the stage for the 1940s and 1950s campaigns for repeal in two ways. First, the structure of the

³⁶ *Takao Ozawa v. United States*, 260 U.S. 178 (1922).

³⁷ *United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind*, 261 U.S. 204 (1923).

³⁸ As a U.S. territory, the Philippines were exempt from the restrictions.

³⁹ Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 37.

1924 law meant that legislation to repeal exclusion also had to address issues of both immigration and naturalization. This explains why the Magnuson bill, the piece of legislation that initiated the longer movement, included not only provisions repealing the Chinese exclusion acts, but also sections that created an annual immigration quota for Chinese and granted citizenship eligibility to persons of Chinese descent. Second, the racial category of “Asian” created by the 1924 Act allowed for slippage between ethnic and racial identities, ambiguity that Asian American lobbyists and their allies could and often did use to their advantage. In practice, the term encompassed many groups with no sense of unity outside the gaze of the law or white U.S. officials. But the expansiveness of Asian exclusion and the shared struggle to overcome it created the potential, not always realized, for groups as diverse as Chinese, Indians, and Japanese to unite in the cause of repeal.

A History of Anti-Exclusion in the United States

Efforts to overturn the Asian Exclusion laws had a long history in the United States. Both government and non-governmental actors had been protesting legal discriminations based on race, ethnicity, and national origins for decades by the time the Magnuson bill was introduced in 1943. Three groups led the charge: Asian and U.S. government officials, white Americans acting as private citizens, and Asians in the United States.

The sustained interest and involvement of both U.S. and Asian state officials in overturning the Asian exclusion laws reflected a mutual understanding that immigration

policy was also foreign policy.⁴⁰ Even before the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act first passed, Chinese officials and Chinese in America formally protested the insult of U.S. laws' explicit restrictions on Chinese people.⁴¹ The 1924 Immigration Act's formal exclusion of Japan evoked an even greater outcry in Tokyo. Arguments about whether this blow to Japanese pride had been a principal cause of the Pacific War featured prominently in Congressional debates over exclusion repeal throughout the 1940s and 1950s.⁴² Eager to remove obstacles hindering U.S. diplomacy with Asian powers, U.S. government entities charged with overseeing foreign policy – namely, the White House and State Department – were some of the earliest and most steadfast supporters of repeal. Nevertheless, the reluctance of officials on both sides of the ocean to risk overstepping their jurisdiction meant that the work of lobbying largely fell to non-state actors, who had a conspicuous role in the U.S.-based repeal movement.

White Americans acting as private citizens composed the second major contingent to contest exclusion before World War II.⁴³ The prominence of non-state actors in prewar activism for repeal was consistent with their prominence in U.S.-Asia diplomacy more

⁴⁰ Oyen, 416 and Introduction.

⁴¹ For more on resistance to Chinese exclusion, see Hunt, Chapter 7; K. Scott Wong, "Cultural Defenders and Brokers: Chinese Responses to the Anti-Chinese Movement," in Sucheng Chan, ed., *Claiming America: Constructing Chinese American Identities during the Exclusion Era* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998): 3-40; Xiaohua Ma, "The Sino-American Alliance during World War II and the Lifting of the Chinese Exclusion Acts," *American Studies International* 38:2 (June 2000): 39-61.

⁴² On efforts to overturn Japanese exclusion, see Izumi Hirobe, *Japanese Pride, American Prejudice: Modifying the Exclusion Clause of the 1924 Immigration Act* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), introduction; Sandra C. Taylor, *Advocate of Understanding: Sidney Gulick and the Search for Peace with Japan* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1985), Chapters 7-9, especially 7.

⁴³ Private actors on the ground in Asia also contested exclusion through public demonstrations and appeals addressed to U.S. government agencies. At times, as in the 1905 Chinese boycott, their efforts attracted widespread, even international, attention. In general, though, Asians outside of government had an indirect, more abstract than concrete or individualized influence on U.S. lawmakers.

generally. As one scholar of American foreign diplomacy has noted, the relative lack of priority that Washington historically ascribed non-European regions meant that the “influence of non-governmental groups rises correspondingly outside of Europe.” This was particularly true for the East Asian region, where the U.S. State Department had little staff or funding to support diplomatic infrastructure. The promise of a largely untapped Asia market had become a powerful draw for American companies and businessmen looking for profitable new trading ventures and new audiences for their goods and services.⁴⁴ Along with missionaries, business interests had particular influence on U.S.-Asia diplomacy in the absence of governmental actors.⁴⁵ A desire to court would-be Asian consumers and the belief that exclusionary laws impeded healthy trade relations between American sellers and Asian buyers motivated a strong business push for repeal. American religious leaders, including Protestant missionaries, supported the repeal of exclusionary laws on similar grounds, hoping that repeal would facilitate the spread of Christianity in Asia. A faith-based commitment to what one missionary activist described as “equality and Christian principles of love and self-sacrifice” also supported religious actors’ advocacy for repeal.⁴⁶ American businessmen’s investment in repeal fluctuated over time, but before 1940, Protestant missionaries remained some of the most consistent and vocal defenders of Asians’ right both to immigrate to the United States and to claim legal protections from the American government once they arrived.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ See Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982).

⁴⁵ According to Hirobe, the two groups were “in the forefront of American expansion” in the Far East and Asia. Hirobe, 10.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Sandra C. Taylor, *Advocate of Understanding: Sidney Gulick and the Search for Peace with Japan* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1985), 120.

Asians in America were the third major group of advocates for repeal before World War II. The first targets of explicit race-based restrictions, Chinese migrants were also their earliest resisters. With the help of consular officials and white Americans, Chinese contested and circumvented the legal restrictions placed upon them in myriad ways; they sought legal counsel, appealed immigration rulings, and otherwise employed the American legal system to circumvent the very restrictions it imposed upon them.⁴⁸ In *Chae Chan Ping v. U.S.* (1889) and *Fong Yue Ting v. U.S.* (1893), Chinese plaintiffs took their challenges all the way to the Supreme Court, albeit without success.⁴⁹ After 1913, Japanese and Indian Americans likewise turned to the U.S. judicial system: first, for relief from Alien Land Laws that prevented them from leasing or owning agricultural land in California and several West Coast states, and later, for the right to naturalize as U.S. citizens. Changes in U.S. immigration procedure, combined with Supreme Court rulings upholding Asians' racial ineligibility to U.S. citizenship in the early 1920s, foreclosed the courts as a forum to advance Asian rights with respect to land or naturalization.⁵⁰ But the act of challenging the legality of discriminatory laws served as an early crucible for the development of Asian Americans' political consciousness. Through these interactions with the U.S. state, Asian Americans gained familiarity with the American political and

⁴⁷ See, for example, Jennifer C. Snow, *Protestant Missionaries, Asian Immigrants, and Ideologies of Race in America, 1850–1924* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

⁴⁸ Lucy Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers: Chinese Immigrants and the Shaping of Modern Immigration Law* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Charles McClain, *In Search of Equality: The Chinese Struggle against Discrimination in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882–1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), Chapter 4.

⁴⁹ *Chae Chan Ping v. U.S.*, 130 U.S. 581 (1889); *Fong Yue Ting v. U.S.*, 149 U.S. 698 (1893).

⁵⁰ For more, see Salyer, xvii.

legal process, and the potential as well as the limitations of law to bring redress. To varying degrees, all three groups – government officials, white American business and religious interests, and Asian Americans – would remain active in lobbying for repeal during and after World War II.

Building a Network for Repeal

This study argues that the success of the repeal movement beginning in World War II depended on a strategic interplay of American, Asian, and Asian American forces. Despite their myriad differences, two things bound these motley groups together: first, a belief in the need to end wholesale Asian exclusion; and second, a common discourse of geopolitics and internationalist rhetoric from which they all drew. Each group brought a different sense of urgency and legitimacy to the cause. Among the state proponents of reform, U.S. State Department officials and other internationalists in the executive branch joined a small, bipartisan core of Congressmen and women to introduce bills, petition committees, and secure endorsements in their bid to convince lawmakers of the need for change. Asian state officials worked behind the scenes and used backchannels to prompt official debate in Washington, reflecting the significance of Asian exclusion repeal as a pressing matter of international diplomacy. Outside of government circles, white American liberals and religious advocates expertly mobilized U.S. media outlets, churches, and other organizations behind the cause of repeal. Lobbying vehicles such as the Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion provided a forum for influential cultural and literary figures to work toward a common goal through both informal and formal partnerships. Figures like Time-Life Inc. publisher Henry Luce and Nobel Prize-

winning author Pearl Buck used their influence to broadcast the case for repeal to a broader American public.

A small group of Asian American lobbyists seized upon U.S. officials' increased interest in Asia to advance the cause of repeal with renewed force. A diverse group, they included foreign-born immigrants, international students, and native-born U.S. citizens from several ethnic communities: Indian, Korean, and Japanese Americans, among others. While they did not always share the same goals, their mutual exclusion under the 1924 Immigration Act's exclusionary laws created at least a basis for solidarity. Because of their proximity to Washington and other centers of power, Asian American lobbyists emerged as a steady presence on Capitol Hill, where their facility in English and familiarity with the U.S. political system enabled them to speak to a broader American audience. Yet, without the formal political power of a large voting bloc, Asian American activists faced a formidable challenge. Over the 1940s and early 1950s, persons of Asian descent made up only 0.2 percent of the mainland U.S. population, and the majority of these were noncitizens.⁵¹ In terms of petitioning Congress, then, Asian Americans represented a politically insignificant force; their small numbers and racial ineligibility for naturalized citizenship suggested that this would not change anytime soon.

During a time when Washington increasingly looked to Asia as a key site of its overseas security interests, Asian Americans found that their most ready source of political leverage lay in their presumptive ties to Asia. They discovered that presenting themselves as unofficial spokespersons for Asian peoples gave their petitions greater

⁵¹ Within the continental United States, there were an estimated 254,918 persons of Asian descent as of 1940. 1940 U.S. Census (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1940). By 1950, that number had grown only incrementally to 321,033. These figures did not include the Hawaiian Islands.

weight in official circles. This gave rise to a political strategy in which Asian American advocates actively emphasized their ties to Asian homelands in order to secure a foothold as lobbyists on Capitol Hill and advance their legal struggles for rights. This reflects what one scholar has described as U.S. officials' tendency to conceive immigration policies toward Asia with "Asian, not Asian American, audiences in mind."⁵² By contrast, southern and eastern European groups during the same period drew upon their increased electoral power within the United States to make their own demands for immigration reform toward southern and Eastern Europe. African Americans, in addition to making internationalist claims, also leveraged their newfound power within the Democratic Party to push for civil rights reforms at the federal level. The persistent racialization of Asian Americans as extensions of peoples in Asia shaped the arguments they could make for repeal – less as Asian Americans with a stake in the United States, and primarily as presumptive spokespersons for their Asian countrymen abroad.

Creating Momentum for Repeal

After decades of activism by diverse actors for repeal, what accounted for the newfound political viability of repeal beginning in the World War II period? What changed?

Two important developments gave the mid-century movement for repeal the momentum to achieve success. In the first, Americans moved toward internationalism in the years leading up to World War II. Against the backdrop of growing conflict in both

⁵² Mae Ngai, "The Unlovely Residue of Outworn Prejudices: The Hart-Celler Act and the Politics of Immigration Reform, 1945-1965," in Michael Kazin and Joseph McCartin, eds., *Americanism: New Perspectives on the History of an Ideal* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 117-118.

Europe and Asia, the White House led the official shift in priority from domestic to international affairs. Historian Akira Iriye has described this development as the “emergence of geopolitical-mindedness” or “power-political thinking,” a change marked by a newfound “consciousness of power and the readiness to consider war as an instrument of national policy.”⁵³ Americans outside of official circles registered the change as well.⁵⁴ The popularity of such titles as Walter Lippmann’s *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic* (1943) reflected the broader shift in American public thought and the emergence of a public consensus that global peace and stability depended on American intervention. A new openness to sacrifice other elements of America’s own domestic interest for the sake of international peace and stability accompanied Americans’ willingness to accept, even if not outright support, an active U.S. role in world affairs.

Within this broader paradigm shift, Washington’s policy pivoted *toward* Asia and the world’s non-white peoples and *away* from its long-standing focus on Europe. Scholars continue to debate the precise turning point in U.S.-Asia relations, when Washington began to prioritize Asia in the context of America’s international interests.⁵⁵ But wide agreement dates the shift to the late 1930s, in response to Japanese expansionism and wide-scale devastation in China. If Asian weakness and American

⁵³ According to Iriye, this shift represented a “major phenomenon in American intellectual and diplomatic history.” Akira Iriye, *The Globalizing of America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 167, 169.

⁵⁴ A growing consensus of Americans both in and outside government came to embrace “military force, power politics, and international collective action as necessary to preserve the peace and to prevent aggression.” Iriye, 167, 169, and Chapter 10 in general, especially 164-169.

⁵⁵ Cohen, “American Leaders and East Asia,” 2, 25. For a longer discussion, see Waldo Heinrichs, “The Middle Years, 1900-1945, and the Question of a Large U.S. Policy for East Asia,” in *New Frontiers in American-East Asian Relations: Essays Presented to Dorothy Borg*, ed. Warren I. Cohen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 98-100.

indifference contributed to the longevity of Asian exclusion as a feature of U.S. immigration and naturalization policy, America's foreign policy pivot or reorientation toward Asia made repeal politically viable as a necessary response to mounting international scrutiny and critique by America's foreign enemies. As one historian has noted, the "coupling of East Asian and world politics" "finally produced a fundamental American commitment in East Asia."⁵⁶ In other words, Washington policymakers' view of Asia did not change, but rather, their understanding of Asia as connected to a broader international danger to American interests. As part of this mindset shift beginning in the late 1930s, Washington policymakers and officials began to consider Asian powers like China and Japan relevant to America's own security interests as never before. Slow at first, the pivot accelerated after World War II as Asia became a prime site of military conflict in America's Cold War battle against Soviet and later, Chinese, Communism.

In the second major development that laid the groundwork for repeal, Washington developed newfound concern with managing America's international image. Beginning in World War II, America's record on race, namely, its racial policies and treatment of racial minority groups, became a particular focus of Washington's anxieties. Japanese propaganda targeting U.S. Asian exclusion laws as evidence of U.S. racial hypocrisy began the process of raising the stakes of exclusion as a problem of wartime diplomacy. Soviet attacks on America's race record after 1947 added to the urgency. As historian Justin Hart explains, "changes in the nature of U.S. foreign relations also changed the relation of people and ideas to the foreign policy process."⁵⁷ The events described in this

⁵⁶ Heinrichs, 100.

dissertation particularly reflected Washington's newfound desire to manage America's international image, which gave previously marginalized and minority groups – Asian Americans, in this case – greater ability to influence foreign relations than ever before.

Chapter Summary and Outline

This dissertation narrates, in four parts, the longer movement by which Asian exclusion ended. The repeal movement cut across three major episodes in U.S.-Asia relations: the Pacific War, Asian decolonization following World War II, and the Cold War. In contrast to the Chinese case for repeal, which centered on a formal wartime alliance between China and the United States, complex questions about America's relationship to anti-colonial nationalism and Communism in postwar Asia complicated advocacy for repeal measures benefiting Indians, Koreans, and Japanese.

Parts I and II tell the story of the first two milestones in the legal dismantling of exclusion. The Magnuson Act (1943) and Luce-Celler Act (1946) extended immigration quotas and naturalization privileges to Chinese and to Asian Indians and Filipinos, respectively. The piecemeal legislation of the 1940s pitted different Asian groups against each other, privileging some and disregarding others based on which held greatest strategic importance to U.S. geopolitical interests at a given moment. As Mae Ngai has argued, to the extent that the 1917 and 1924 Immigration Acts imposed a blanket ban on all peoples from the Asia-Pacific region, Congressional lawmakers considered them in tandem, as a racial category united by their common exclusion.⁵⁸ Yet key markers

⁵⁷ Justin Hart, "Empire of Ideas: Mass Communications and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Relations, 1936-1953" (PhD diss., Rutgers University, 2004), vi-vii, 11, 24.

continued to distinguish one people group from another, such as differences in language, history, and cultural practice. Congressional hearings give insight into competing constructions of “Asian” as a racial, legal, and social designation, and efforts by some to exploit the vagaries of racial and ethnic categories toward particular ends. This section considers how the fight for piecemeal repeal legislation sifted and re-sifted racial and ethnic solidarities, both as perceived by outside observers and understood by Asian American activists themselves.

Part I, “World War II and the Problem of Chinese Exclusion, 1943” explores the immediate international and domestic developments during World War II that made repeal of Chinese exclusion politically viable as never before. Chapter 1, “The Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion: Establishing Geopolitics as the Language of Repeal,” considers how this initial legislative campaign and victory guided the longer movement’s organization, argumentation, and strategy.

Part II, “The Colonial Cases: Repeal as an Anti-Colonial Imperative, 1943-1946” analyzes cross-pollination between domestic campaigns for U.S. immigration reform and transnational activism on behalf of Asian independence. In a corollary to Thomas Borstelmann’s effort to relate the African decolonization struggle to the African American freedom movements of the late 1950s and early 1960s, my research draws links between the struggles of Asian colonial groups for inclusion in the United States with their diasporic campaigns for homeland independence.⁵⁹ Diasporic connections constitute a largely unexplored dimension of America’s relationship to Asian

⁵⁸ Ngai argued that the 1924 Immigration Act’s “Asiatic Barred Zone” created “Asian” as a “peculiarly American racial category,” a legal and racial group defined by its exclusion and ineligibility to U.S. citizenship. Ngai, 37.

⁵⁹ Borstelmann, 5, 46.

decolonization. This study considers Indian American campaigns alongside those of Korean Americans, expanding understanding of America's role in and relationship to the postwar decolonization of Asia as a larger phenomenon. Its focus on Asian colonial diasporas in America also reframes U.S. immigration reform as a transnational effort.

Chapter 2, "A Tale of Two Leagues: Entwining Indian Independence and Immigration Reform," situates the success of the Indian immigration and naturalization campaign in the United States within the longer story of India's struggle for independence from Great Britain. Chapter 3, "The Limits of Reform: Korean Americans and the Problem of Korean Independence," examines the concurrent Korean campaign to demonstrate the effect of colonial status in the lobby for rights. The failure of the Korean colonial campaign further illustrates the limits of geopolitics and international pressures as a compelling driver for repeal.

Part III, "The Cold War Campaigns: Bringing Asian Exclusion Repeal into the Story of Cold War Civil Rights, 1947-1952," analyzes Asian Americans' engagement with the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952. Passed at the height of the Korean War on the global stage and the rise of Senator Joseph McCarthy on the domestic front, the McCarran-Walter Act articulated America's early Cold War priorities. It formally ended America's policy of Asian exclusion by striking down racial restrictions to U.S. citizenship and opening America to small numbers of immigrants from Asia. At the same time, it retained the racial quotas of the Magnuson and Luce-Celler legislation and reaffirmed the federal government's power to deport and denaturalize suspected subversives, including many of Asian descent. The Act's national security provisions

would serve as the legal basis for some of the most repressive state practices associated with McCarthyism (the Second Red Scare) in the United States.

Chapter 4, “Reconceptualizing Civil Rights: The Japanese American Citizens League and the Judd Bill,” examines the Japanese American Citizens League’s role in passage of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act. As the most prominent Asian American organization supporting the omnibus measure, the JACL demonstrated the political viability of Asian American internationalism as a Cold War strategy. The League used Japan’s favored status within the U.S. Cold War project in Asia to support the law’s highly contested passage through Congress in 1952. The JACL campaign reflected how Asian Americans’ singular history of legal exclusion and racial alienage in the U.S. resulted in distinct goals and strategies for redress.

Chapter 5, “Bridging Korea and Korean America: The Cold War Campaign for Korean Rights,” considers the campaigns two Korean American organizations launched for citizenship eligibility during the early Cold War years. Shifting the focus from policymaking to enforcement, it traces the impact of the 1952 law’s deportation provisions on Koreans in the United States. The deportation cases of Korean-born radicals suggested that ties to an Asian homeland, whether real or perceived, could undermine Asian Americans’ claims to American-ness as readily as they advanced them.

The epilogue looks ahead to the fourth and final phase of the movement for comprehensive immigration reform in relation to Asian Americans: the 1965 Immigration (Hart-Celler) Act. The law abolished once and for all the national origins quota system created by the Immigration Act of 1924. Many considerations – economic, cultural, and political – contributed to the legislation in its final form. But few fully anticipated how

the new system of preferences it created would transform the racial and ethnic composition of the nation.⁶⁰

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If, as Matthew Jacobson writes, it is in the “crucible of foreign policy and immigration that dominant notions of Americanism and citizenship are largely formed,” the repeal of Asian exclusion heralded the transformation of Asian American citizenship in the context of America’s foreign policy pivot toward Asia after 1940.⁶¹ This dissertation reveals the transnational cast of actors scattered throughout the United States and Asia that remade the racial boundaries of the American nation through their participation in the movement for repeal.

As presumptive spokespersons for peoples in Asia, Asian American lobbyists communicated with particular force the significance of domestic policies passed at home for U.S. security goals in Asia. Through their petitions, speeches, and other lobbying activities, they concretized the link between the international and the domestic for Congressional and American popular audiences. But their use of racial foreignness as a political strategy had its own cost. For one, it shifted Asian Americans’ source of authority and legitimacy from the United States to an imagined ancestral homeland in Asia. The persistent racialization of Asian Americans as extensions of peoples in Asia indelibly shaped their perception as political actors in ways that resonate with us today:

⁶⁰ See, for example, David Reimers, “An Unintended Reform: The 1965 Immigration Act and Third World Immigration to the United States,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 3:1 (Fall 1983): 9-28. For a different perspective, see Gabriel J. Chin, “The Civil Rights Revolution Comes to Immigration Law: A New Look at the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965,” *75 North Carolina Law Review* 1 (November 1996): 273-345.

⁶¹ Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues*, 265.

reinforcing their image less as ethnic Americans with a stake in the United States, and primarily as presumptive spokespersons for their Asian counterparts abroad.

Part I

World War II and the Problem of Chinese Exclusion, 1943

On May 25, 1943, a Japanese radio broadcaster commented on legislation then pending in the U.S. Congress that proposed to repeal Chinese exclusion in the United States. In his telling:

Japan has no reason to oppose the [] Bill providing for repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act which has been existent for a half century to the humiliation not only of the Chinese but of all Asiatics. It is safe to assume that if such a discriminatory law had been repealed or even mitigated twenty or even ten years ago, the present conflict in the Pacific could have been avoided. In enacting a successive series of discriminatory laws against Orientals, the United States planted the seeds of irritation and conflict which later were to burst out in the Pacific.¹

Observers on both sides of the Pacific had been making similar arguments for years. Notoriously, the Japanese Emperor Hirohito was reported to have credited the rejection of Japanese immigrants in California as a major cause of the Pacific War.² Missionary activists and business interests championed this logic throughout the interwar years in their efforts to secure annual immigration quotas for Japan and other Asian powers formally excluded by the 1917 and 1924 Immigration Acts.³ But, to no avail. Washington's interest in bolstering a tenuous military alliance between the U.S. and China renewed the rhetorical power and political expediency of this logic during World

¹ Quoting from "May 25, 1943: Tokyo Domei in English to the Pacific Zone," U.S. House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Samples of Japanese-Controlled Radio Comments on America's Exclusion Act*, 78th Cong., 1st sess., 1943 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1943), 6.

² Cited in Izumi Hirobe, *Japanese Pride, American Prejudice: Modifying the Exclusion Clause of the 1924 Immigration Act* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 1, fn. 1.

³ See Hirobe, *Japanese Pride*, and Sandra Taylor, *Advocate of Understanding: Sidney Gulick and the Search for Peace with Japan* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1984), Chapters 7-9.

War II as an argument for repeal. By again singling out America's exclusion laws as a racial affront to Asian peoples, Tokyo broadcasters effectively elevated the issue of exclusion from a minor irritant in Chinese-American relations to a major problem of wartime diplomacy that warranted immediate action by the U.S. Congress.

* * * * *

The Magnuson Act marked both an end and a beginning. On the one hand, passage of the 1943 legislation, popularly known as the "Chinese Exclusion Repealer," culminated decades of activism by Chinese officials, Chinese Americans, and white American advocates to end America's exclusionary policies against Chinese. The 1943 law repealed the thirteen Chinese exclusion laws passed between 1882 and 1913, reopened the U.S. to nominal Chinese immigration with a race-based immigration quota of 105, and granted naturalization rights to an Asian group for the first time in American history. The 1943 Magnuson Act was also the beginning of the end of Asian exclusion in the United States. Chapter 1 examines the 1943 campaign to repeal Chinese exclusion as a starting point for the longer repeal movement. The main lobbying organ responsible for its success was the Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion (hereafter, Citizens Committee). The Committee created an organizational blueprint upon which subsequent campaigns consciously drew. Its main contribution was to establish geopolitics, or more precisely, U.S. international security interests, as a politically viable basis for repeal. The victory of the Chinese legislation demonstrated the newfound power of America's geopolitical interests in Asia to compel changes in U.S. immigration and naturalization policy.

From Interstate Irritant to International Problem

The World War II campaign to repeal Chinese Exclusion followed a longer history of contestation and resistance. Protest of the discriminatory laws began even before the original 1882 law passed Congress, and campaigns for repeal launched sporadically over the next six decades that the restrictions remained in effect. Nevertheless, several factors conspired to undermine the strength of the anti-exclusion movement before World War II. The first was the power of the legislative branch over immigration and naturalization policy. The White House and executive branch historically supported policy liberalization, but the control of Congress over this arena meant that a strategically placed contingent of restrictionist forces could block policy revision at will. Through the 1940s, a conservative coalition of restrictionist Southern Democrats and Western Republicans that overwhelmingly supported exclusion dominated Congressional committees on immigration. Their control over House and Senate immigration committees, the first gateway to legislative reform, enabled them to keep Chinese exclusion repeal off the Congressional agenda through the first four decades of the twentieth century. The second was the marginalized and decentralized nature of opposition to Chinese exclusion before World War II. Groups periodically launched protests and campaigns, but these were often small-scale and short-lived, due to limited resources.

Several groups led the charge against Chinese exclusion before World War II. The first were Chinese nationals, including both state and non-state advocates. Beginning in the 1880s, Chinese state officials and diplomats repeatedly petitioned for the repeal of the exclusion laws as an affront to the Chinese people. In May 1905, Chinese merchants

in China organized a boycott of American goods to protest recent U.S. legislation extending the exclusion laws indefinitely. Chinese throughout Asia and the United States joined the boycott in what one scholar of the episode described as an expression of “trans-Pacific Chinese nationalism.”⁴ Chinese in America offered another strong voice against exclusion. Scholars including Lucy Salyer, Charles McClain, and Erika Lee have documented the diverse and creative strategies that Chinese Americans of varied backgrounds – elite and non-elite, citizen and non-citizen alike – employed to challenge and circumvent legal restrictions.⁵ Organizations like the Chinese Six Companies and other chapters of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association retained lawyers to defend individual Chinese in U.S. courts and before state immigration boards.⁶ In 1942, less than one year before the Magnuson Act passed, a Chinese intellectual living in New York penned a pamphlet titled “What ‘Chinese Exclusion’ Really Means,” in which he called for a nominal Chinese quota to end the stigma of Chinese exclusion once and for all.⁷ As his deeply researched appeal reflected, Chinese in America remained some of the most committed and creative opponents of exclusion and advocates on their own behalf

⁴ Yong Chen, *Chinese San Francisco, 1850-1943: A Trans-Pacific Community* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 148-161.

⁵ Lucy Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers: Chinese Immigrants and the Shaping of Modern Immigration Law* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Charles McClain, *In Search of Equality: The Chinese Struggle against Discrimination in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), Chapter 4.

⁶ The Chinese Six Companies refers only to the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association in San Francisco.

⁷ For an early example, see K. Scott Wong, “Cultural Defenders and Brokers: Chinese Responses to the Anti-Chinese Movement,” in *Claiming America: Constructing Chinese American Identities during the Exclusion Era*, edited by Sucheng Chan and K. Scott Wong (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998): 3-40. On later protest, see Renqiu Yu, “Little Heard Voices: The Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance and the China Daily News' Appeal for Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943,” in *Chinese America: History and Perspectives* (1990): 21-35. Tso-Chien Shen, *What “Chinese Exclusion” Really Means* (New York: Chinese Institute in America, Inc., 1942).

throughout the exclusion era. But as “aliens ineligible to citizenship,” barred from the vote on racial grounds, they remained a negligible political force.

Private American actors composed the other main advocates of Chinese exclusion repeal.⁸ The American religious community, particularly missionaries, represented a key portion of this group. American missionaries William Speer, Otis Gibson, and Samuel Wells Williams were some of the earliest and most vocal challengers of Chinese exclusion, defending the right of Asians to immigrate into the U.S. and eventually to become American citizens.⁹ But the growing secularization of the public sphere made missionaries a marginal voice after World War I as Americans became more critical of the evangelical missionary project.¹⁰ Lured by the potential of the China market, American business and commercial interests comprised the second major group of white repeal advocates.¹¹ The Chinese boycott of 1905 prompted the American Asiatic Association (AAA), a group of American traders and business interests active in the Far East, to become one of the most vocal forces urging repeal.¹² For the next few decades until the organization went defunct in the late 1930s, AAA leaders continued to lobby for

⁸ Washington’s traditional emphasis on diplomacy with Europe meant that non-state or private actors historically exercised a disproportionate influence in American-East Asian affairs. In the absence of strong interest by Washington, the task of challenging Chinese exclusion fell largely to Americans outside of government. See Izumi Hirobe, *Japanese Pride, American Prejudice: Modifying the Exclusion Clause of the 1924 Immigration Act* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), Introduction.

⁹ See Jennifer C. Snow, *Protestant Missionaries, Asian Immigrants, and Ideologies of Race in America, 1850–1924* (New York: Routledge, 2007), Chapter 3.

¹⁰ Snow, xv.

¹¹ For more on the China market, see Paul A. Varg, “The Myth of the China Market,” in *The Making of a Myth: The United States and China, 1897-1912* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1968), Chapter 3; Marilyn B. Young, *The Rhetoric of Empire: American China Policy, 1895-1901* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968); Michael H. Hunt, “Americans in the China Market: Economic Opportunities and Economic Nationalism, 1890s-1931,” *The Business History Review* 51:3 (Autumn, 1977): 277-307.

¹² James J. Lorence, “Business and Reform: The American Asiatic Association and the Exclusion Laws, 1905-1907,” *Pacific Historical Review* 39 (November 1970): 421-438.

a modified immigration policy with China as the key to preventing recurrence of disruptions to Sino-American and U.S.-Asia commerce.¹³ Liberal, idealistic, and humanitarian organizations joined these religious and commercial advocates supporting repeal on moral, internationalist, and other ideological grounds. A motley group, they encompassed entities as diverse as the YMCA and YWCA, the National Institute of Immigrant Welfare, the National Council of Jewish Women, the American Civil Liberties Union, as well as individual Americans with an interest in China. But not until World War II, with the creation of the Citizens Committee, did any centralized vehicle exist to coordinate or channel the influence of these disparate forces to overturn Chinese exclusion once and for all.¹⁴

The single most important factor contributing to the persistence of Chinese exclusion was Asia's geopolitical weakness, and more specifically, China's inferior status, on the international stage. In the years before World War II, China was, at best, a semi-colonial power. If Chinese weakness facilitated the initial passage and persistence of America's exclusion laws through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, its heightened status as a formal U.S. partner in the Pacific War against Japan underwrote the newfound political viability of repeal beginning in the early 1940s.

A low point in the U.S.-China military alliance in the Pacific War created an ideal moment for advocates to call for repeal. America's entry into World War II following Pearl Harbor made American and China, led by the Nationalist regime of Chiang

¹³ See, for example, James J. Lorence, *Organized Business and the Myth of the China Market: The American Asiatic Association, 1898-1937* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1981).

¹⁴ The Citizens Committee followed an explicit strategy to "coordinate the activities of pressure groups" already working toward the goal on the one hand, and to "neutralize opposition" through argument or compromise on the other. Fred Riggs, *Pressures on Congress: A Study of the Repeal of Chinese Exclusion* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1950), 45-46.

Kaishek, formal military Allies and partners for the first time in the Pacific War against Japan. Never before had Americans fought alongside an Asian power as ostensible equals, and never before had U.S. policymakers had such incentive to maintain a strong relationship with China. Washington's top priority to defeat Germany on the war's Western front, known in shorthand as the "Europe First" policy, threatened this partnership. Throughout 1942, Washington diverted the bulk of U.S. troops and resources to Europe, leaving the war-weary Chinese to bear the brunt of Allied casualties in Asia. As U.S. promises of aid and supplies repeatedly failed to materialize, Chinese morale fell to an all-time low.

Japan sought to exploit this weakness with radio campaigns singling out America's history of exclusionary laws against Asians, and Chinese, in particular. In one December 1942 message, a Japanese broadcaster condemned America's racial hypocrisy, noting that "Chinese are rigidly excluded from attaining American citizenship by naturalization, a right which is accorded to the lowliest immigrant from Europe."¹⁵ In messages aired throughout occupied Asia, Japanese-controlled radio derided American claims to democracy, while calling on Asian audiences to unite under Japanese leadership against the forces of white, Western imperialism. The special publication and distribution of a pamphlet excerpting similar Japanese broadcasts for the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization in 1943 ignited alarm among Congressional lawmakers.¹⁶ Its contents identified America's exclusion laws as a major impediment to U.S. wartime

¹⁵ Quoted in Riggs, 161.

¹⁶ House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Samples of Japanese-Controlled Radio Comments on America's Exclusion Act*, 78th Cong., 1st sess., 1943.

goals in the Pacific. More than any other single factor, these attacks on America's anti-Chinese and anti-Asian laws strengthened the case for repeal of Chinese exclusion.

Impressed with the necessity of keeping China in the war at all costs, Roosevelt and the U.S. State Department turned to concessionary, symbolic gestures to reassure Chungking of America's commitment to the Pacific front. In January 1943, the United States renounced its extraterritoriality privileges in China with an official abrogation of the unequal treaties. Over the same period, Roosevelt took pains to include Chinese Nationalist President Chiang Kaishek at international conferences alongside leaders from Great Britain and the Soviet Union. This was part of the effort to elevate China's status to that of a Great Power on par with the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union – a step that Roosevelt and his advisors believed was necessary to ensure a postwar peace in East Asia. Calls for repeal legislation followed the same logic. The act of American goodwill, proponents argued, would not only advance Allied victory on the Pacific front by bolstering Chinese morale; it would actively promote a strong China, a move that would counterbalance an expansionist Japanese power in the region. The language and logic of geopolitics made repeal finally resonate with Congressional lawmakers. But the restrictionist opposition in Congress that had long blocked reform persisted and this coalition's views about race and America's rightful role in the world differed from the one on which these arguments depended.

Internationalism versus isolationism, and U.S. foreign versus domestic policy were some of the key issues woven through the repeal debates. With growing American involvement in the world, U.S. policymakers found American interests overseas and at home increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to separate. The task was especially

difficult to accomplish with respect to immigration, which historically cross-cut both arenas. Insofar as immigration laws were a domestic matter with direct implications for a nation's home society, the international community had long regarded a nation's immigration laws inviolate as a matter of national sovereignty. Yet, immigration policies necessarily involved relations with foreign powers, and as such, were simultaneously issues of foreign policy. During World War II, a small group of state and non-state advocates would successfully seize upon the latter understanding – emphasizing the geopolitical and foreign policy dimensions of U.S. immigration policies toward Asia – to make the case for Chinese exclusion repeal.

Chapter 1

The Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion: Establishing Geopolitics as the Language of Repeal

On February 18, 1943, Soong Meiling, the wife of Chinese Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek and “First Lady” of China, addressed a joint session of U.S. Congress to request more American aid to China in the Pacific War against Japan. America and the other Allied powers had it wrong, she suggested, if they believed that Germany was a greater threat than Japan; such a belief was “not borne out by actual facts,” particularly as Japan had far “greater resources at her command than Germany.”¹ A media sensation, the Madame’s speech unleashed an outpouring of public support for America’s Chinese allies.² Congressional lawmakers seized upon the momentum to introduce a series of bills intended to demonstrate America’s commitment to its Chinese allies. These included legislation to repeal the Chinese Exclusion Acts and extend immigration and naturalization rights to native-born Chinese. Such petitions were not new. Diverse forces – American missionaries and religious leaders, Chinese diplomats, and Chinese Americans – had been agitating to overturn the exclusion laws targeting Chinese for years. But only World War II, and a faltering Sino-American alliance on the Pacific front, could bring legislative change in the form of the 1943 Magnuson Act.

¹ Her exact words were that “. . . the prevailing opinion seems to consider the defeat of the Japanese as of relative unimportance and that Hitler is our first concern. This is not borne out by actual facts, nor is it to the interests of the United Nations as a whole to allow Japan to continue, not only as a vital potential threat but as a waiting sword of Damocles, ready to descend at a moment's notice.” Reprinted in “Speech to Congress,” *Life Magazine*, March 1, 1943.

² For more on American media coverage of the visit, see Lorraine Dong, “Song Meiling in America 1943,” in *The Repeal and Its Legacy: Proceedings of the Conference on the 50th Anniversary of the Repeal of the Exclusion Acts* (San Francisco; Chinese Historical Society of America, 1994): 39-46.

Many groups contributed to the success of the Magnuson Act. Within government circles, U.S. State Department officials and other internationalists in the executive branch joined a small bipartisan core of Congressmen and women to draft and sponsor legislation, petition committees, and secure powerful endorsements in the effort to convince lawmakers to vote for repeal. At the heart of the Magnuson bill's success was a pressure group called the Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion and Place Immigration on a Quota Basis (hereafter, Citizens Committee).³ Between the spring and fall of 1943, the group capitalized upon public support for China to push repeal through a reluctant Congress. Founded by New York-based publisher Richard Walsh, the Committee brought together some of the most powerful white American friends of China around a common cause.

An understanding of the history of the movement toward Asian exclusion repeal begins with understanding the critical legislative effort that began it all. This chapter reviews the 1943 campaign to repeal Chinese exclusion in light of the longer movement for Asian exclusion repeal. It argues that the Chinese repeal campaign laid the groundwork for comprehensive repeal in three main ways. The first was organization. The Chinese campaign brought together a core network of supporters committed to repealing exclusionary laws for not only Chinese, but for all Asian groups. Several of the figures involved in the 1943 campaign would become staples of the longer movement for repeal. These included former China missionary turned Congressman Walter Judd (R-

³ The tactics and strategies of the Citizens Committee are the subject of Fred Riggs, *Pressures on Congress: A Study of the Repeal of Chinese Exclusion* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1950). Its initial "Friends of China" mailing list included more than 4,400 names, along with the membership rosters of pro-China interest groups like the Committee for Non-Participation in Japanese Aggression, which numbered in the tens of thousands. With the possible exception of India, no other Asian power at the time could boast anywhere near that level of baseline support. Riggs, 46, 61.

MN). Judd's rise to influence testified to the political cachet of foreign policy expertise during World War II. An extended discussion of Judd's missionary background and early Congressional career establish the backdrop for his two decades of activism for repeal. The second area of influence lay in the strategy of the campaign. Ongoing negotiation between proponents and Congressional opponents of repeal produced the Citizens Committee's three-point agenda focused on Chinese gains. Its success established geopolitics as the definitive language and logic of the longer movement. Finally, the Magnuson Act influenced the movement for Asian exclusion repeal by emboldening members of other excluded Asian groups to make similar claims on behalf of their own communities, beginning with members of the Indian and Korean communities in the United States.

Laying a Blueprint for Repeal: The Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion

The Citizens Committee faced stiff opposition in its campaign for Chinese exclusion repeal in the early 1940s. During and immediately after World War II, American public opinion strongly favored maintaining or further restricting the numbers of people entering the United States. Groups that had long protested Chinese immigration – organized labor, veterans organizations, West Coast interests, and “patriotic societies” – continued to oppose any relaxation of restrictions as a threat to the nation. Within Congress, a “conservative coalition” of restrictionist Southern Democrats and Western Republicans maintained a majority on the committees overseeing immigration and naturalization policies.⁴ In the face of these harsh political realities, the Citizens

⁴ According to Tichenor, “[o]ne of the most important sources of restrictionist policy equilibrium” was the “chair of the standing Immigration Committee, in each house of Congress, who was almost invariably a

Committee and its allies seized upon all the advantages they could muster to mobilize popular and official support for repeal. Formed in the spring of 1943, the Citizens Committee channeled diverse forces working for repeal into a powerful force for change on Capitol Hill. As a “catalytic” pressure group, it did not “manufacture” public interest in China so much as it coordinated the efforts of other groups already seeking repeal.⁵ Far from challenging the racial ideas and prejudices that underwrote exclusion, the Citizens Committee relied on a strategy of political expediency and pragmatism to win the support of Congressional lawmakers. Although the organization formally existed for only seven months, its tactics and strategies would shape the longer movement for repeal for the next two decades.

* * * * *

The seeds of the Citizens Committee took root in 1941, when a U.S. consul in Hong Kong named Donald Dunham contacted New York publisher Richard Walsh to discuss the need for repeal legislation.⁶ Alarmed at the embarrassing effects of the exclusion laws on U.S. diplomacy with the Chinese, Dunham asked Walsh to initiate a popular campaign in America to overturn them. Walsh was a strategic choice. As the founder and president of the John Day Publishing Company, Walsh was well known for publishing important titles on Asia, including (his eventual wife) Pearl Buck’s Nobel

Southern or Western conservative and who worked closely with nativist groups to frustrate pro-immigration reformers seeking to dismantle national origins quotas. Their power was buoyed by the seniority system and a formidable ‘conservative coalition’ of Southern Democrats and Western Republicans.” These Committee heads took “pains to fashion a distinctly nativist implementation process.” In this way, Tichenor writes, restrictionists were able to maintain their policy regimes based on national origins quotas and Asian exclusion well after the 1920s. Daniel Tichenor, *Dividing Lines: The Politics of Immigration Control* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 149.

⁵ Riggs, 57.

⁶ Riggs, 48-50.

Prize-winning novel *The Good Earth* (1931). Moreover, as editor of the monthly journal *Asia and the Americas*, he enjoyed special influence among Americans with an interest in the Far East. Persuaded by Dunham's appeals, Walsh enlisted Charles Nelson Spinks, an expert on East Asia, to publish an article titled "Repeal Chinese Exclusion" in the journal's February 1942 issue. Describing repeal as an expedient act of wartime diplomacy needed to shore up the Sino-American alliance and blunt the edge of Japanese propaganda, the piece elicited offers of help from hundreds of individual Americans and organizations sympathetic to the cause.⁷ Respondents included representatives of organized labor, churches, missions boards, liberal and humanitarian groups, including several of the figures who came to make up the Citizens Committee's executive core: Pearl Buck, Monroe Sweetland of the C.I.O. labor union, Read Lewis of the Common Council for American Unity, and Bruno Lasker of the National Council on Naturalization and Citizenship. Roger Baldwin of the ACLU and U.S. Congressman Walter Judd, both of whom became mainstays in the longer movement for repeal, also joined the effort in its early stages.

The diversity of support for repeal presented both a strength and a challenge. By the time the Citizens Committee was officially formed in May 1943, a diverse coalition of groups had signed on to support the popular campaign for repeal under its direction, totaling more than 250 members from 40 states. Reflecting a wide range of motivations and political interests, not all supporters agreed on the basic contours of the campaign. The task fell to Committee chairman, Richard Walsh, and members of its executive core

⁷ Despite its titular focus on Chinese, the 1942 editorial was notably inclusive of other Asian groups, with an appeal to "racial equality" and a broad critique of America's exclusion laws that "so glaringly place the Asiatic races in a different category from the rest of mankind." "Repeal Chinese Exclusion," *Asia and the Americas* XLII (February 1942), 92-94. It was followed by a similar piece in *Contemporary China*. "Exclusion and Extraterritoriality," *Contemporary China* 1:26 (May 18, 1942).

to decide these matters. In practice, Walsh's mantra of accommodation for the sake of victory centrally informed all aspects of the campaign, from what the Committee would demand to the arguments it used to make its case and through which spokespeople. The Citizens Committee's top-heavy leadership and ad-hoc structure led to Walsh's outside influence. Approximately ten of the group's most committed New York-based members composed the Committee's executive committee and made all of its decisions. They served on a volunteer basis, and the Citizens Committee retained only one paid employee, a secretary and legislative agent based in Washington, DC, during the seven-month campaign.

As late as April 1943, up to half of the Citizens Committee's list of supporters reported a strong preference for a broad-based measure for general Asian exclusion repeal over a piecemeal bill for Chinese alone.⁸ Liberal, humanitarian, and religious groups who opposed racial restrictions on principle objected to a bill only benefiting Chinese people. Within the American Protestant community, the Federal Council of Churches (FCC) emerged as one of the most vocal advocates of comprehensive change. In fact, the outpouring of support from the Christian community had made such an impression that, in late 1942, Walsh offered to step aside and let Walter Van Kirk, one of the FCC's division secretaries, oversee the campaign for repeal. As an umbrella organization representing thirty-two mainline Protestant denominations, the FCC was well positioned to capitalize on long-standing support for repeal among American Christians, churches, and missionaries. Walsh changed his mind, however, after Van Kirk and the FCC refused to limit their demands to Chinese only but continued to insist on the

⁸ Riggs, 135.

comprehensive repeal of “Oriental exclusion” in its entirety.⁹ Officials in the U.S. executive branch shared the FCC’s broader commitment on pragmatic grounds; the U.S. State Department, for its part, had long supported wholesale repeal as necessary to the conduct of U.S.-Asia diplomacy. Over the first few months of 1943, members of the U.S. State Department worked closely with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the newly elected Walter Judd, a former China missionary turned Congressman from Minnesota, to draft legislation providing for the comprehensive repeal of the Asiatic exclusion laws.¹⁰

Although he agreed in principle with calls for broad-based repeal, Walsh countered that war with Japan and American anti-Japanese sentiment made it politically impossible. In written appeals to fellow supporters, he recounted the failure of a general Asian immigration bill introduced by Rep. Vito Marcantonio of New York earlier that year; the mere suggestion that such a bill could eventually open the United States to Japanese immigration had doomed the bill from the start.¹¹

Congressional actions eventually forced a decision. In April, the House Committee on Immigration announced a hearing on bills related to Chinese exclusion repeal only. With just weeks to spare, Walsh and a core group moved decisively to make membership in the newly formed Citizens Committee contingent upon the acceptance of three goals: (1) the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts; (2) an annual immigration

⁹ Riggs, 96.

¹⁰ The joint bill proposed to circumvent the issue of Japanese immigration by limiting the extension of immigration and naturalization rights to Asian groups “friendly” to the U.S., a detail that strategically exempted the enemy Japanese from these gains.

¹¹ Riggs, 53-54.

quota for Chinese; (3) Chinese eligibility for U.S. citizenship as an exception to the racial ban on Asiatic naturalization. While some protested, most supporters accepted Walsh's advice to see the Chinese campaign as a first step in a gradual process of repealing exclusion laws for all Asian peoples.¹² At Walsh's request, Judd and his government colleagues scrapped their broad-based proposal in favor of a Chinese-only measure. However, the broad-based proposal would later resurface as the basis for the Judd bill, a measure granting immigration quotas and citizenship eligibility to all Asian peoples, which the lawmaker introduced to Congress in 1947.

Two additional issues arose over the course of the public campaign for repeal. The first concerned the annual immigration quota. To mollify critics' concerns that the quota would usher a "flood" of Chinese into the United States (from Hong Kong, Southeast Asia, and the Western Hemisphere), the Citizens Committee agreed to support an amendment to the Magnuson bill stipulating that China's annual immigration quota would operate on the basis of race and not nationality. The racial quota would restrict the immigration of all persons of Chinese descent regardless of their place of birth (unless they were born in the United States and were therefore citizens by birth).¹³ As Congressional sponsor Rep. Warren Magnuson (R-WA) explained, the modification

¹² Van Kirk, as a representative for the FCC, continued to work independently for broad-based repeal. The organization presented a petition to the House Immigration Committee that May on behalf of the Council's twenty-four member denominations denouncing discriminatory laws against Asian peoples as doing "violence to the Christian view of one humanity under God" and called for the repeal of exclusionary laws barring the migration of "friendly" Oriental peoples to the U.S. Quoted in Riggs, 97.

¹³ This clause was intended to discourage Chinese immigration through Hong Kong, which, as a British colony, enjoyed access to the UK's generous annual quota. It was also designed to limit Chinese migrating to the U.S. from the Western Hemisphere, which through 1965, had fewer restrictions.

ensured that the total number of persons of Chinese descent entering the U.S. from anywhere in the world would never exceed 105 a year.¹⁴

The second involved petitions to allow the alien Chinese wives of U.S. citizens to enter the country outside the annual immigration quota. Chinese Americans like Boston resident Charles Lee had been lobbying on this issue for several years by the time the Citizens Committee took up the Magnuson bill in 1943. As scholar L. Ling-chi Wang has observed, the Citizens Committee tended to ignore the desires of Chinese Americans themselves, as their neglect of this issue likewise reflects.¹⁵ Chinese Americans had a much more prominent role in this largely separate campaign. In this regard, the Chinese War Brides Act passed in August 1946 legislation represented more of a direct victory for Chinese American activists and community organizations. The law amended the Magnuson Act to exempt Chinese alien wives of U.S. citizens and soldiers, a large number of whom were Chinese American, from the annual quota.¹⁶

¹⁴ The quota number of 105 was computed based on the formula outlined in section 11(a) of the 1924 Immigration Act: “The annual immigration quota of any nationality shall be 2 per centum of the number of foreign-born individuals of such nationality resident in continental United States as determined by the United States Census of 1890, but the minimum quota of any nationality shall be 100.”

¹⁵ L. Ling-chi Wang, “Politics of the Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Laws,” *Remembering 1882: Fighting for Civil Rights in the Shadow of the Chinese Exclusion Act* (San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America, 1993), 2-3. For more on both of these debates, see Riggs, Chapter 10.

¹⁶ H.R. 4844 (1946); Pub.L. 79-713; 60 stat. 975. It was formally titled, “An Act to Place Chinese Wives of American Citizens on a Nonquota Basis.” Another law the following year (1947) did away with racial restrictions on the admission of alien wives of American citizens altogether. See K. Scott Wong, *Americans First: Chinese Americans and the Second World War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 193-197.

Establishing Geopolitics as the Language of Repeal

Washington's military commitments to China and the Pacific War provided the language, but the Citizens Committee and its allies popularized the Magnuson bill's value as an expedient wartime measure necessary to advance Allied victory in Asia. The House Immigration Committee hearings on the proposed repeal, which took place over two weeks in late May and early June of 1943, exemplified this. Over the weeks prior to the House hearing, the Committee's secretary Geneva Cranston handpicked and personally coached witnesses on what points to emphasize and which to avoid in arguing for repeal.¹⁷ Witnesses strayed little from the Committee-endorsed script, presenting variations on the argument that repeal represented an act of wartime diplomacy needed to shore up the faltering U.S.-China alliance, blunt the sting of Japanese propaganda attacks on the United States, and ultimately ensure Allied victory in the Pacific War against Japan.¹⁸ These performances meant to maximize impact and neutralize the opposition, particularly critics' anxieties over race.

The racial climate of early 1940s Washington was unusually tense. Scholars often describe World War II as a "watershed" in America's domestic race relations, but in 1943, it was a shift still in the making. A. Philip Randolph's threatened March on Washington had forced Roosevelt to act on fair employment practices in 1941, and the African American media launched its "double V" campaign for victory against racism at home and fascism abroad in the same year. Black-white racial tensions were at their

¹⁷ For a list of the most and least effective arguments made for Chinese exclusion repeal, see Riggs, 127.

¹⁸ See House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts: Hearings on H.R. 1882 and H.R. 2309*, 78th Cong., 1st sess., 1943, 78-86.

height, and Southern Democrats remained on the defensive. On Capitol Hill, restrictionists still matched or outnumbered sympathetic lawmakers in key positions within the House and Senate immigration committees. The widespread vilification of the Japanese enemy counterbalanced wartime approbation for China in 1943. The valorization of Chinese and demonization of Japanese had immediate and divergent consequences for Chinese and Japanese Americans on the home front. Even as Congressional lawmakers debated repeal for Chinese, they staunchly upheld the internment of more than 120,000 Japanese Americans – the majority of them U.S. citizens – in camps along the West Coast as “enemy aliens” under suspicion of aiding the Japanese enemy. The fact that German (and Italian) Americans were not subjected to similar treatment underscores the racist nature of U.S. state actions targeting Japanese American communities.¹⁹

In an attempt to sidestep racial tensions, the Citizens Committee proactively defined the Magnuson bill in terms of U.S. wartime interests and encouraged others to do the same. Framing the legislation as a war measure had several immediate advantages. First, even the most reluctant Congressional lawmakers felt hard-pressed to deny a critical wartime ally during a time when Allied victory on the Pacific front was by no means assured.²⁰ Second, the tactic ensured broad appeal, enabling advocates to market the cause of repeal to a general American audience beyond China enthusiasts alone; the war effort concerned all Americans committed to an Allied victory on the Pacific front, and not simply those who cared about the plight of a benighted minority community.

¹⁹ Roger Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), Chapter 2.

²⁰ *Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts*, 215.

That it framed the debate apart from domestic impact – dodging, as one lawmaker said, “the racial question inside the United States” – undeniably presented the tactics’ greatest strength.²¹ The strategy aimed to neutralize the objections of Congressional Southern Democrats, who decried repeal’s potential to upset the domestic racial order and exacerbate racial unrest at home. By locating the locus for reform in Asia, advocates recast domestic questions of race as secondary concerns, less relevant to a discussion that emphasized U.S. military and security interests overseas.

For their part, the House Immigration Committee’s contingent of Southern Democrats resisted the characterization of repeal as a war measure and emphasized instead the bill’s dire implications at home. Rep. Winstead (D-MS) addressed the Chinese bill’s detrimental impact on black-white relations, in particular. He warned that allowing more Chinese into the United States would set America back “5 to 10 years” by worsening an already “serious” “Negro problem” and otherwise increasing “hatred between the races.”²² Rather than buffering tensions between black and white Americans, Winstead maintained that increased Chinese immigration would “create hatred between the two races” by introducing a third “*surly minority on the white side* that [would] go out and insult any Negro.” As Winstead saw it, as a third-party quasi-white group, Chinese immigrants would exacerbate African American militancy by feeding their sense of racial oppression. It was a remarkable statement, reflecting Asians’ ambiguous place in a domestic racial order still envisioned in biracial terms. Expanding on the connection

²¹ This accusation was also levied by Rep. Elmer (R-MO) against Walter Van Kirk of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. *Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts*, 121.

²² For an example that references Southern opposition to an antipoll tax, see *Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts*, 64-65.

between Chinese immigration and the “Negro problem,” Winstead likened the Chinese exclusion repeal bills to measures intended to restore voting rights to African Americans, several of which were pending in the House; to his mind, both represented attempts by “overstepping” federal lawmakers to “force down the Southerners’ throats” laws that went beyond their rightful jurisdiction.²³ The same coalition of Southern Democrats and Western Republicans that protested repeal also opposed civil rights reforms for black Americans.

The opposition’s fixation on domestic race relations created particular pitfalls for witnesses with liberal leanings on race. The most famous witness to speak at the hearing, Pearl Buck was a controversial figure. Her close ties with the African American community reinforced the impression by Allen and other Southerners on the committee that the Magnuson Act would upset the racial order in the South by promoting racial equality or, worse, integration. Buck’s record of liberal advocacy became a source of ammunition for Congressional critics. At one point, Rep. Allen read aloud an excerpt from a recent radio program in which the *Good Earth* author had called for “full and complete social equality among Negroes and whites, and all other groups,” and asked her to comment. Buck dodged the query by invoking the war, staying true to the Citizens Committee’s strategy. Coding her support in the neutral language of geopolitics, she maintained that the measure’s impact on the war made her views on domestic race relations irrelevant.²⁴

²³ *Repeal of Chinese Exclusion Acts*, 65, emphasis added.

²⁴ Quoted in Riggs, 236; *Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts*, 72-73.

Despite her controversial views, as a former missionary born and raised in China, Buck's widely recognized expertise on China and the Far East gave her wide berth during the hearing to elaborate on the necessity of repeal to salvage America's reputation among the Chinese, something she did at length. Invoking her forty years of personal experience as an "American in China," Buck testified to the costs of exclusion laws on Chinese attitudes toward the United States and the "wall" it had erected between Americans and the "kindly Chinese."²⁵ At a time when few Americans had firsthand knowledge of Asia, Buck's undeniable expertise gave her statements weight.

The opposition's objection to setting a racial precedent for repeal continued to loom over the debate, however. Congressional critics warned that passing the Magnuson Act granting rights to Chinese would prompt demands from other Asian groups for similar rights; that is, far from a one-time event, the law would set a precedent for further liberalization. Missouri Democrat Rep. A. Leonard Allen emerged as the main spokesman for this argument. "If you let one in, you let them all in," he gloomily predicted. Should Congress give rights to the Chinese, he warned, they could expect "hundreds of millions of other Asiatics" to "ask for that same thing," beginning with the "400,000,000 Hindus or Indians" living in Asia.²⁶ Over the course of the nine-day hearing, Rep. Allen's tirade against a precedent became a crusade. The lawmaker revisited the threat of the Chinese measure inviting an Asian flood into the United States no fewer than twenty-five times. He was particularly keen on rooting out witnesses'

²⁵ Buck grew up in Zhenjiang as the daughter of two Presbyterian missionaries and returned to serve in Nanking for nineteen of her adult years. She credited her nineteen years in the rural south of China for inspiring *The Good Earth* (1931), among her other writings about Asia. *Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts*, 69.

²⁶ *Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts*, 21, 26.

personal sympathies, seizing upon any hint of support for broader immigration reform toward Asia. Toward this end, he questioned witness after witness about their views on whether repeal should be expanded to Asians other than the Chinese – Indians, Koreans, or any of the other Asian groups that he insisted were “watching” in the hope of winning similar demands.²⁷

Nearer the beginning of the ten-day proceedings, Committee witnesses generally sidestepped the issue by denying its relevance or otherwise pleading ignorance. But as the hearing progressed, Citizens Committee strategists advised them to adjust their tactics. They should either emphasize the nominal nature of the immigration quota, which due to its limited size could have only “minimal impact” on American society, or underscore the unique merits of China’s wartime case and the necessity of repeal as a one-time act needed to bolster a critical but faltering Sino-American alliance. The Citizens Committee’s priority on short-term victory led it to emphasize China’s exceptionalism even though these arguments might damage the prospect of long-term reform. Ultimately, the Committee’s efforts to shape the debate notwithstanding, the argument that repeal would set a dangerous precedent would prove much harder to neutralize as when Korean and Indian American groups did precisely as Allen and other critics predicted.

The Politics of Representation: Race

At the Citizens Committee’s first meeting in May 1943, Richard Walsh and the eleven other members present voted to restrict membership to white U.S. citizens. Wary of how Congress would perceive the fledgling organization, they agreed that Congress

²⁷ *Repeal of Chinese Exclusion Acts*, 72.

would be “more impressed” by an organization of “*Americans*” – that is, white Americans – who did not have an “axe to grind.”²⁸ As L. Ling-chi Wang has argued, this decision made Chinese Americans “outside observers” to the Committee-led public campaign, with a limited role in the public effort.²⁹ In spite of their exclusion from the Citizens Committee, Chinese Americans fought for the success of repeal in other ways.³⁰ They raised awareness of the cause within the Chinese American community through writings in Chinese-language newspapers and other forums.³¹ They also supported the goal financially; funds collected by Chinese in Hawaii made up one-fourth of the Citizens Committee’s total operating budget.³²

After Madame Chiang Kai-shek’s February 1943 address to Congress spurred legislative momentum, other Nationalist Chinese officials living in the United States continued to promote repeal. Chinese consulates from Seattle to San Francisco quietly lobbied for the legislation through back channels, but largely refrained from public statements on the issue.³³ Over the spring of 1943, members of the Chinese Embassy in Washington worked closely with the Citizens Committee leadership to recruit witnesses for Congressional hearings and solicit written endorsements, although both sides

²⁸ Quoted in Riggs, *Pressures on Congress*, 243. Also see Riggs, 56-59.

²⁹ Wang, “Politics of the Repeal,” 4.

³⁰ Wang, 2.

³¹ Renqiu Yu, “Little Heard Voices: The Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance and the China Daily News’ Appeal for Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943,” in *Chinese America: History and Perspectives* (1990): 21-35.

³² Riggs, 112.

³³ As Meredith Oyen has shown, while “all-American” organizations may have been the public face of the “visible, vocal repeal movement” in the U.S., but Chinese consulate reports from sites including Seattle and Los Angeles reflect how the Chinese government took a “more activist approach than is normally portrayed by historians.” Meredith Oyen, “Allies, Enemies and Aliens: Migration and U.S. Chinese Relations, 1940-1965” (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2009), 84-89.

downplayed the Chinese government's role. They believed that Congress had enacted Japanese exclusion in 1924 in part because of the Japanese government's attempt to influence the vote's outcome, and this presented a reason to keep the Chinese government's role strictly in the background.

The witnesses at the House Immigration Committee hearings in the spring of 1943 did include two Chinese Americans at the Citizens Committee's request. Fred Yee, an electronics engineer for the U.S. War Department, and Dr. Li Min Hin, a medical doctor and former commander of the American Legion in Hawaii appeared as paradigms of American patriotic service and professional success. Their remarks reflected a specific purpose to neutralize common objections to Chinese immigration by proving their ability to assimilate and their loyalty to America and the U.S. war effort. Their presence highlighted the challenges of self-advocacy and the very narrow parameters within which Asian American activists could acceptably make their case, as well as a growing awareness of racial novelty's power at a time when Asian Americans made up only 0.2 percent of the mainland U.S. population, and it was commonplace for many white Americans never to have seen an Asian face firsthand.³⁴ Later repeal campaigns would evidence an understanding of these challenges.

Yee and Li may have played the role of patriotic Americans well, but their undifferentiated patriotism reflected an understanding of American identity that left little space for a Chinese identity. A third-generation Chinese American, Yee notably began his testimony by disavowing personal association with any Chinese organization, and underscoring how he was not there to speak for any particular group. He then went on to

³⁴ This figure is taken from the 1940 U.S. Census and excludes the territory of Hawaii.

reaffirm his U.S. citizenship status *in spite of* what he called his “Chinese” features. Using the language of wartime patriotism, Yee described how, far from coolies, Chinese “specialists” like himself were using their “special faculties” to advance American victory to a degree “unequaled by any other nationality.”³⁵

Li offered a similarly simple understanding of American identity devoid of hyphenates. Like Yee, he downplayed his Chinese-ness, claiming that as a lifelong resident of Hawaii, he no longer felt “conscious” of his Chinese roots. Claiming to speak not only for himself but other Chinese Americans like him, he insisted on his single-minded commitment to the United States. “The only home we have is America,” he asserted. “What else is there to fight for?”³⁶ Dr. Li went on to cite the Hawaii Chinese community as proof of Chinese people’s ability and eagerness to become American and contribute to the home front. With help from territorial delegate and House immigration committee member Joseph Farrington, he described the success that persons of Chinese descent in Hawaii had achieved in state and local government, the military, and the islands’ economy. In doing so, he suggested a color-blind understanding of American patriotism that did not differentiate on the grounds of color or race.

But race did matter, and not simply as an obstacle to overcome. In a remarkable statement, Yee offered himself to House Committee lawmakers as an example or specimen of a successfully assimilated American of Chinese descent. Noting how “not all Americans have met, or are acquainted with an American Chinese who is actually living here and who has become assimilated,” he said candidly, “I like to be here just to show

³⁵ *Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts*, 204.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 209.

you.”³⁷ Yee’s embrace of his role as a representative for his fellow Chinese in America suggested an awareness of the power he potentially commanded as a pioneer within Washington circles, where many officials and lawmakers had never seen, much less interacted with an Asian American, particularly one that claimed U.S. citizenship and spoke English fluently. The challenge, which he would share with Asian Americans involved in subsequent campaigns, was how to translate this novelty into political influence.

The Politics of Representation: Religion

The language of geopolitics served a different but equally valuable function for the Magnuson bill’s many religious, and specifically missionary, supporters. Missionaries had long represented a significant force in immigration advocacy, and their prominence in the 1943 campaign continued in the same tradition. Among the forty-two witnesses to speak at the House Committee hearings, no fewer than seven had been missionaries to China or close family members of missionaries. As a group, they represented more than eighty years of religious service in China.³⁸ Author Pearl Buck was arguably the most famous, while U.S. Congressman Walter Judd of Minnesota was the most important missionary mainstay in the longer movement for Asian exclusion repeal.

³⁷ *Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts*, 204.

³⁸ A product of America’s strong missionary and religious ties to China, churches and religious organizations emerged as important vehicles of publicity and recruitment. More than 150 of the 800 letters received by the House immigration committee in favor of repeal came from church leaders or other representatives of religious organizations. Riggs, 96. For more on the role of Catholics, see Riggs, 99, 101-102.

* * * * *

World War II brought mixed opportunities for Protestant missionaries and those with close missionary ties. On the one hand, American policymakers again turned to current and former missionaries to Asia as a source of much-needed intelligence and valuable eyewitness accounts to inform their wartime policymaking, while discouraging them from prescribing or promoting specific policies. Within the overwhelmingly secular and pluralistic climate of Washington and elite foreign policy circles, however, missionary credentials could hurt as much or more than they helped. As church historian Robert Handy has written, the “American religious depression” of the interwar years created a culture where the “rhetoric of a Christian America” was firmly “out of place” by the early 1940s.³⁹ According to historian Paul Varg, “increasing apathy among laity,” “growing uncertainty in the realm of religious beliefs,” and above all, a “mounting hostility among intellectuals toward missionary work” marked the decline.⁴⁰ Scholars and liberal writers used periodicals like *Harper’s* and *Atlantic Monthly* as vehicles to assail the traditional missionary project of world evangelization as not only foolish but inimical to other world cultures.⁴¹ Highly publicized events such as the Scopes trial (1925), fueled a “climate of opinion” in which the American missionary community had become a common target of ridicule, “satire and lampooning” by playwrights, pundits, and others.⁴² Most commonly, critics accused missionaries of being out of touch, overly sentimental,

³⁹ Robert T. Handy, *A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 181.

⁴⁰ See Paul Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats: the American Protestant Missionary Movement in China, 1890-1952* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), 162.

⁴¹ For more criticism of American missionaries, see Varg, 163-166.

⁴² Handy, 181.

and, most damning during a time of war, unpatriotic with divided national loyalties. During World War II, missionary advocates seeking repeal adopted geopolitics as an unsentimental and patriotic language that would negate criticisms of missionaries.

Walter Judd: A Missionary's Dilemma

Rep. Walter Judd (R-MN) came to Washington, DC, in 1942 after spending nearly ten years as a medical missionary in rural China.⁴³ His experiences serving the rural populations of inland China informed a fervent and life-long commitment to China. They also animated his twenty years of advocacy for U.S. immigration and naturalization reform toward Asia. Two main forces shaped Judd's missionary service: first, his Midwestern Congregationalist upbringing; second, his post-college work with the Student Volunteer Movement of Foreign Missions (SVMFM) during the 1920s. Exposed to missionaries from the time he was a child, Judd felt the call to service during his junior year of college. He went abroad after medical school in order to serve the physical as well as the spiritual needs of the peoples in his mission field.⁴⁴ As a traveling secretary for the SVMFM in 1924-1925, Judd came under the influence of leader John Mott and his view of "Christian missions" as the "great and true internationalism." Like many others of his generation, he had found the vision Mott described of a "missionary statesmanship," which cast individual student volunteers as "ambassadors, interpreters,

⁴³ Judd served in China as a medical missionary from 1925-1931 and again from 1934-1938.

⁴⁴ Judd explained his commitment as not only to "preach the gospel of healing to the sick" but to "preach the gospel of religion through medicine." Quoted in Tony Ladd, "Mission to Capitol Hill: A Study of the Impact of Missionary Idealism on the Congressional Career of Walter H. Judd," in Patricia Neils, ed., *United States Attitudes and Policies Toward China: The Impact of American Missionaries* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1990), 265.

and mediators in the most vital aspects of international and inter-racial relationships,” inspiring.⁴⁵

As a medical missionary in the Chinese countryside, Judd witnessed the human impact of Japanese expansionism on the Chinese people firsthand; in his telling, these experiences drove his personal crusade against Japanese aggression upon returning to the United States in 1938. Escalating violence and repeated bouts with malaria were the main factors that forced Judd to leave China. But he also cited his growing conviction that he “could do China more good” from America, and “in the Congress of the United States [more] than anywhere else.” Well-received appearances before the House and Senate Committees on Foreign Affairs in 1939 raised his profile in Washington and in the media at large as an expert on Far Eastern affairs.⁴⁶ In the wake of Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor, Judd parlayed his growing reputation for foreign policy expertise into a Congressional seat representing Minnesota in the U.S. House of Representatives.⁴⁷

From the time he took office in early 1943, Judd sought the repeal of all Asian exclusion laws. In private correspondence with likeminded colleagues, he frequently cited his desire for repeal as the reason he pursued office in the first place. He wrote bluntly to A.I. Ludlow, a prominent American medical missionary to Korea.

⁴⁵ John R. Mott, “New Forces Released by Cooperation,” in *The Foreign Missions Convention at Washington, 1925*, ed. Fennell P. Turner and Frank Knight Sanders (New York: Foreign Missions Conference of North America, Fleming H. Revell, 1925), 209. At a 1925 Foreign Missions conference, Mott declared “Christian missions” the “great and true internationalism” and called on Student Volunteers like Judd to “Christianize the impact of our Western civilization upon the non-Christian world.” Ladd, 265.

⁴⁶ Senator Lewis B. Schwellenbach (D-WA), quoted in Lee Edwards, *Missionary for Freedom* (New York: Paragon House, 1990), 70.

⁴⁷ For more on Judd’s crusade against Japan and his wartime Congressional campaigns, see Edwards, chapter 6-8.

One of the things that was most important in influencing my decision to leave medicine and go into politics was the hope that sometime during the next two years I could help get through legislation that will remove the stupid and insulting immigration measures which stigmatizes all non-Caucasians as hopelessly inferior peoples.⁴⁸

Yet Judd knew that missionary ties could evoke public skepticism in Washington. He often worried that including too many missionaries in the public campaign would discredit the cause as a religious or moral crusade driven by the “starry-eyed idealism” of “sentimental and impractical” missionaries.⁴⁹ In another letter to a colleague, Judd expressed concern that his “close identity for many years with the Chinese might give some opponents the weapon of saying that ‘Judd was more interested in China than in America.’”⁵⁰

Judd’s own constituents dismissed his work in precisely this way. In a letter, U.S. veteran Major Jones described repeal as an ill-timed distraction from the real concerns of war, which as a military man, he felt obliged to protest. While he thanked Judd for the “good work” he had done in Asia, Jones chided the Minnesota representative now to “do some of that same good for the people of your own country,” – taking exactly the line of questioning Judd’s loyalty that he feared opponents might. The Chinese could wait, Jones insisted, and Judd – with his firsthand “knowledge of the giney [sic] pig tendencies of the oriental peoples” – should know that.⁵¹ Lulu Avery of St. Paul, Minnesota, issued a more personal attack on the grounds that the lawmaker had not only spent ten years in China,

⁴⁸ March 27, 1943 letter, Box 25, Walter Judd papers, Minnesota History Center (MHC), Minneapolis, MN.

⁴⁹ Box 25, Folder: Sept 1943, Judd papers, MHC.

⁵⁰ Judd to J.W. Dyson, February 26, 1943, Box 25, Folder: Jan-May 1943, Judd papers, MHC.

⁵¹ Major Jones to Judd, September 1943, Box 25, Folder: Sept 1943, Judd papers, MHC.

but had married an Australian.⁵² “Where is our American Congress?” she demanded. Citing Judd’s highly cosmopolitan resumé, she lamented that her district had been fooled into electing a “United Nations’ representative” they could not possibly expect to represent the interests of patriotic Americans like herself.⁵³

Judd focused on building his reputation as an authoritative voice on East Asian affairs. A review of his early speeches in the House suggests how Judd skillfully turned his years of missionary service in China into a qualification for, rather than a liability to, his political efficacy in Washington. In his first major address on the House floor in February 1943, he laid out the qualifications of Americans like himself with firsthand experience in Asia to speak on U.S. foreign policy issues. According to Judd, only Americans who had spent time in the Far East and “knew something of the psychology of the peoples who live there” could offer knowledge beyond the limited information in “Department of Commerce reports” and “the World Almanac”; he could offer, he argued, an understanding of what Asian peoples “really want, what they feel, what they are after.” He presented himself as an expert: “it is only because of such a background that I presume to stand before you . . . [and] discuss our situation in the Pacific exactly as a doctor studies the body of a patient at the autopsy table.” His prognosis: America’s relations with Asian powers could improve through “true understanding” and “knowledge.”⁵⁴ House members responded to his words with a standing ovation.⁵⁵

⁵² Judd’s wife, Miriam Barber had actually been born in India, the daughter of two American missionaries stationed there.

⁵³ Avery argued that real Americans would put U.S. interests first and not waste time worrying about Asians at a time of war when Americans are “about to lose our identity as a Nation.” Lulu Avery of Minneapolis, MN, to Rep. Carl Curtiss (forwarded to Judd’s office), January 11, 1944 letter, Box 25, Folder: undated 1943-4, Judd papers, MHC.

Judd extended the medical imagery a few weeks later in a second speech on the House floor. In an early expression of the logic that would underpin American containment policy in the Cold War, Judd called for a “biopsy” to root out the expansionist Japanese in Asia. Likening the Japanese enemy to a cancerous growth, he cited the danger of letting such a thing grow unchecked; appeasement was a “mistake” Americans should “learn from” and “not make . . . again.” “If they are lawless, we do not need to examine the rest,” he argued. “We know the whole thing is vicious and we care not temporize.” The next time “lawlessness breaks out anywhere in the world,” he therefore concluded, “Americans, in their own self-interest, must see that it is checked early, because if we do not check it early by preventive means, as was possible in the case of Japan, then we have no other means ultimately except rivers of American blood.”⁵⁶ House Speaker John McCormack received his words with much enthusiasm; from across party lines, the Democratic Congressman hailed Judd’s “great contribution” as “having taken away the mist from [his] eyes,” revealing America’s interwar practices of neutrality and appeasement as “an inverted warlike policy” that had helped pave the way for the “tremendous catastrophe” of World War II.⁵⁷ American media outlets, including liberal ones that typically did not endorse Republicans like Judd, joined the applause. That same month, *The Nation*’s Richard Rovere declared the Minnesotan as one of “eight hopeful Congressmen” to watch.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Quoted in Ladd, 272-274.

⁵⁵ Ladd, 273.

⁵⁶ *Congressional Record*, 78th Cong., 1st sess., Vol. 89, Pt. 3 (April 22, 1943), 3713-3714.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

By the time Judd addressed the House Immigration Committee at the repeal hearings in May 1943, he had an established reputation as an expert on East Asian affairs. His statement played a decisive role. In testimony that ran over twenty-five pages in the transcript, Judd explained that America could use U.S. immigration policy as a tool of diplomacy not only to further Allied victory in the Pacific but, in the longer term, to resolve America's race problems in Asia and secure America's place in the hearts of Asian peoples as a whole.⁵⁹ According to Judd, achieving U.S. aims in Asia required immigration legislation. If, as he maintained, the Asian exclusion acts in 1924 had been a "major reason" for America's current war with Japan, and Japan's 1939 invasion of China had been, in turn, a "first step" in Tokyo's plan to "get vengeance on America" as payback for its "racial humiliation of her," then – according to Judd – preserving China's friendship was the only way to stop the race war between the "white and colored races" that now raged in the Pacific.⁶⁰

As Judd explained it, both principle and practice prompted repeal, and the two rationales did not have to be at odds. "We ought to do it out of a sense of decency and brotherhood," he maintained, "but if we are not that far advanced in our civilization then we ought to do it out of a decent instinct of self-preservation."⁶¹ Rather than "try and bribe Orientals to go along with us" with "huge appropriations," Americans should recognize that repeal offered the "most effective" and "cheapest" way to "gain Asians'

⁵⁸ Richard H. Rovere, "Eight Hopeful Congressmen," *Nation*, February 27, 1943, 294-297. Yet even in this brief piece Rovere arguably gave fodder to Judd's critics, citing the Minnesotan's desire to "do all I can for China."

⁵⁹ Riggs, 151.

⁶⁰ After affirming the truth of Rep. Allen's warnings of an impending "race war" in the Pacific, Judd insisted that an immigration measure was now the "only way to solve it." Riggs, 163-164.

⁶¹ Judd to A.I. Ludlow of Cleveland, Ohio, January 12, 1943, Box 25, Folder: INC, Judd papers, MHC.

favor.”⁶² He concluded: “The cynics always say that is idealism, but as a matter of fact, history is providing that those who imagined America could live by herself were the unrealistic dreamers, whereas our position was and is the practical one if we really want peace.”⁶³ An exchange at the spring House hearing revealed how the debate over repeal became a proxy for more fundamental disagreement between isolationist and internationalist worldviews. Judd’s assertion that “America cannot live by herself alone” evoked a quick retort from Rep. Elmer (D-MO) to the contrary. “Yes, we can,” the Southern lawmaker protested. “We have, for 150 years, and have made a pretty good success at it.”⁶⁴ Elmer’s response notwithstanding, Judd’s overwhelmingly positive reception among House lawmakers testified to his reputation, which leveraged his knowledge of Asia during a time when experts were few and hard to find.⁶⁵

Public skepticism toward religion notwithstanding, missionaries had acted as advisors to U.S. military and intelligence officials as valuable sources of information on Asian affairs since at least World War I. Minimal American scholarship on China, Japan, and East Asian affairs, coupled with scant coverage by major media outlets, left American military and political officials with limited information on the region. Few Americans had spent significant time in Asia, so missionaries – mostly Protestant – filled a vacuum. The writings and accounts of missionaries – who generally fit the same

⁶² Judd to Ruthanna Moon, January 28, 1943, Box 25, Folder: INC, Judd papers, MHC.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ *Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts*, 162.

⁶⁵ According to Warren Cohen, throughout the 1930s, the East Asian region “commanded the attention of only that handful of Americans, a few score at most, whose life work was focused on China or Japan. Few Americans in the 1930s, in or out of government, concerned themselves with events in Asia—and most of these did so only under duress, under the pressure of crises across the Pacific that would not go away.” Warren Cohen, “American Leaders and East Asia, 1931-1938,” in *American, Chinese, and Japanese Perspectives on Wartime Asia, 1931-1949*, ed. Akira Iriye (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1990), 2, 25.

dominant socio-religious Anglo-Saxon Protestant mold – had long provided information to guide U.S. foreign policy decisions.⁶⁶ The deficit in American scholarship persisted in the 1940s, and World War II marked the first time that the United States formally fought in the Pacific. Judd’s seeking and holding elected office distinguished him from other missionaries, who had shied away from the overtly political, however.⁶⁷

Additional factors strengthened the importance of missionary influence in the campaign for Chinese exclusion repeal. Although their numbers remained small, missionary supporters included some of the most prominent and well-connected figures in publishing and media. As three of the most influential writer-publishers of the time, Henry Luce, Pearl Buck, and Buck’s husband Richard Walsh exemplified the power of a few well-placed individuals with missionary ties to make the difference in public reception to a cause. Together they used their influence to draw public attention to the Chinese exclusion repeal cause. Changes within American Protestantism also bolstered the level of faith-based activism for repeal. The overall decline of Protestantism during the interwar years coincided with the splintering of the American Christian community and the growing popularity of ecumenicalism as an alternative to evangelicalism and the traditional conversion-centered missionary project.⁶⁸ For the purposes of the repeal campaigns, the ecumenical movement’s emphasis on social progress, world unity, and racial equality dovetailed neatly with the effort to rid U.S. immigration policy of race-

⁶⁶ According to historian James Reed, this was ultimately to “disastrous” effect. James Reed, *The Missionary Mind and American East Asian Policy, 1911-1915* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 3, 94-95, 198.

⁶⁷ In this vein, Protestant missionary John Mott famously turned down President Wilson’s offer to appoint him a U.S. minister to China, for example.

⁶⁸ Patricia Neils, “Introduction,” in *United States Attitudes and Policies Toward China: The Impact of American Missionaries*, ed. Patricia Neils (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1990), 13; Varg, 163.

based discrimination. This confluence explains, in part, the repeal movement's wide appeal among liberal and ecumenical Protestants and organizations like the Federal Council of Churches, as well as American missions organizations.⁶⁹

That repeal could bring together missionary figures as diverse as Pearl Buck, Henry Luce, and Walter Judd testified to its wide appeal across the political spectrum. While Judd first went to China as an adult, both Buck and Luce grew up in China as the children of American Presbyterian missionaries. After finishing college in the U.S., Buck returned to rural China as a missionary, serving alongside her first husband, another Presbyterian missionary, for nineteen years (1914-1931). It was during this time that she wrote the *Good Earth* (1931), a book that, in the words of historian Harold Isaacs, “‘created’ the Chinese . . . for a whole generation of Americans.”⁷⁰ While her relationship with the missionary community and views on the evangelical missions project itself changed dramatically after 1931, her time spent living among and serving the Chinese people continued to animate her advocacy on behalf of Asia and its peoples until her death in 1973. Henry Robinson Luce, the co-founder and president of *Time-Life* Inc., also spent much of his childhood in China as the son of American Presbyterian missionaries. A lifelong and sometimes controversial crusader for American involvement in Asia, Luce unabashedly used his highly influential publications as a “secular pulpit” to preach the “virtues of American engagement in Asia,” and especially to rally U.S. support for Chiang Kai-shek and his Kuomintang (KMT) government in China.⁷¹ Although co-

⁶⁹ Patterson, 73-91, esp. 87-88, 90.

⁷⁰ *The Good Earth* (1931) would earn Buck the Nobel Prize for literature in 1932. Harold R. Isaacs, *Scratches on Our Minds: American Images of China and India* (New York: John Day, 1958), 155-159.

⁷¹ According to Luce biographer Robert Herzstein, two forces shaped Luce's “character and worldview”: “Protestant Christianity” and “a fervent faith in America's God-ordained global mission in Asia.” Luce

lobbyists in the campaigns for repeal, the three missionary figures sharply diverged in their visions for American engagement with Asia during the Cold War. Buck, for her part, drew upon her years as an educational missionary in rural China to develop a gendered critique of U.S. interventionism in Asia as another form of Western imperialism.⁷² Staunch anti-Communists, Judd and Luce mobilized their substantial influence and connections in U.S. government and media circles in support of Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT. As founding members of the China Lobby, they championed U.S. intervention whenever and wherever Communist forces threatened Asian democracy.

Toward Broad-Based Repeal

Restrictionists' main argument against passage of the Magnuson bill – namely, that it would set a precedent for other Asian groups – turned out to be prescient. And the agitation came sooner than expected. Even before the Magnuson bill reached the floors of Congress for a full vote in the fall of 1943, Korean and Indian Americans initiated efforts to secure similar legislative gains. They were discreet at first. While the Chinese bill remained in contention, they limited their petitions to personal correspondence and other private channels. But their efforts behind the scenes of the Magnuson lobby set the stage

wielded his editorial power over *Life* and *Time* magazines, two staples among educated middle-class Americans, as tools to “advance his ideological program of intervention, capitalism, democracy, and Christian activism” to the world broadly and to Asia, in particular. This was no small matter, as *Time-Inc* publications reached upwards of 10.5 million Americans, and a quarter to half of the middle-class reading public, by the late 1940s. It was the most popular magazine among every income group, and Luce’s demographic in particular—wealthy Republicans and Cold War liberals – who for the most part shared his vision of an U.S.-dominated postwar world. Crossley, Inc., *National Study of Magazine Audiences 1952* (Cowles Magazines: 1952). Robert E. Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce, Time, and the American Crusade in Asia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), i, iv, 20, 136.

⁷² Robert Shaffer, “Women and International Relations: Pearl Buck’s Critique of the Cold War,” *Journal of Women’s History* 11:3 (Autumn 1999): 151-175.

for highly visible campaigns, which members of both communities and their allies launched in earnest the following year.

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News of the Chinese repeal measure ignited a flurry of discussion in more than one Indian American group over the prospect of a similar bill for Indians. In the wake of Madame Chiang Kai-shek's February 1943 Congressional address, the New York-based India Welfare League seized upon growing momentum for Chinese relief to revive its petitions for greater Indian rights. Welfare League president Mubarek Ali Khan approached Acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles for the State Department's help in securing citizenship for long-time Indian residents of the United States. When Welles demurred, on the grounds that Congress determined naturalization policy, not the executive branch, Khan turned to Welles' colleague, Cordell Hull for assistance.⁷³ While he called the Magnuson bill an "act of justice," the Indian leader protested that in making an exception of China the bill "split the unity of the Chinese and Indian peoples" during a time when Allied military operations in Asia depended on their cooperation. This gave Indian and Japanese critics fodder to allege American favoritism for "China over India," a charge potentially detrimental to the U.S.-Indian relationship.⁷⁴ In the meantime, Khan appealed to Congressional lawmakers directly on behalf of his organization's more limited measure. Employing an ambitious letter-writing campaign, he put the Welfare League's demands in the hand of every member of the House and Senate. In this he won the support of a new Congressional sponsor, Senator William Langer of North Dakota

⁷³ Sumner Welles to Ali Khan, March 27, 1943, Folder on *S. 1595*, Senate Immigration Committee on Immigration, 78th Cong., 2nd sess., Legislative Records Office (NARA I), Washington, DC.

⁷⁴ Mubarak Ali Khan to Cordell Hull, October 6, 1943, Senate Immigration Committee, *File on S. 1595*, 78th Cong., 2nd sess. (1944), Box 22, NARA I.

(D-ND), who reintroduced a previously unsuccessful bill for Indian citizenship on their behalf later that year.

Half a world away on the Asian subcontinent, news of the Magnuson bill stirred resentment among members of the Indian National Congress and the British Colonial Government in Delhi at America's apparent slight favoring China over its Indian ally. In June 1943, Indian Agent-General Sir Girja Bajpai, the Government of India's official representative attached to the British Embassy in Washington, approached Assistant U.S. Secretary of State Adolph Berle to inquire about the possibility of a bill for Indians in the Magnuson Act's mold to affirm India's "equality with the Chinese." As Bajpai reported back to Delhi, U.S. officials had received the proposal favorably, although Berle advised waiting until the Chinese bill had passed before taking action on an Indian one. The Agent-General unabashedly spelled out the value of a strategy in which Indians capitalized on American approbation for the Chinese to win collateral gains for India; if Indians could win similar gains "by skillfully riding the high tide of American Sinophilism, he maintained, "so much the better."⁷⁵

Similar attempts by Korean Americans met with less enthusiasm. In the weeks leading up to the House Committee hearings on Chinese repeal, Kilsoo Haan of Hawaii pled with Rep. Warren Magnuson (D-WA), the bill's sponsor in the House, to introduce an amendment to the legislation that named Koreans the co-beneficiaries of immigration quotas and citizenship eligibility. Haan argued that China and Korea's military partnership against Japan and Korea's long history of enmity with Japan, which had

⁷⁵ Agent-General Bajpai to O.K. Caroe, Secretary of Indian External Affairs Department, June 10, 1943, File 379-X/43, Department of External Affairs, Indian National Archives, Delhi, India. For further discussion of Indians' use of this strategy, see Chapter 2.

lasted “more than three and one-half centuries,” called for the measure. As Japan’s “number one enemy,” Koreans deserved whatever form of relief the United States could provide.⁷⁶ Already anticipating a difficult legislative battle, Magnuson’s office gave no reply. As Chapter Three explores in greater depth, several factors complicated Korea’s cause. The Sino-Korean military partnership to which Haan alluded was real, but cooperation was informal and limited. Relative to the central role played by the Chinese military, which bore the brunt of Allied casualties on the Pacific front, U.S. policymakers estimated Korea’s military value to the war as minimal at best.⁷⁷ Moreover, unlike Indians, Korean Americans lacked a friendly colonial government advocating on their behalf. As a Japanese colony, Korea was technically under enemy rule. For many Washington lawmakers, this made diplomatic intervention or negotiation with anyone claiming to represent Korea or the Korean people impossible so long as the war continued.

Kilsoo Haan, speaking for the Hawaii-based Sino-Korean People’s League (SKPL), joined long-time U.S. resident and Indian scholar Dr. Taraknath Das to testify in support of the Magnuson bill at the Spring House Committee hearings. As the only non-Chinese witnesses of Asian descent to address the House Immigration Committee, at least rhetorically, they were the two speakers best positioned to assuage Southern lawmakers’ fears that the Magnuson bill would set a precedent for other Asian groups.

All they had to do was reassure lawmakers that their communities had no plans to renew

⁷⁶ Haan to Warren Magnuson, April 30, 1943, Box 1, Folder 33, Kilsoo Haan papers, University of California-Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA.

⁷⁷ The Japanese prohibition against firearm ownership effectively precluded any real potential for an internal uprising. The scarcity of American resources led officials like Assistant Secretary of State Kermit Roosevelt, Jr. to argue as early as 1942 that priority should be given to China, which could, in turn, allocate some of its aid to Korean military units under Chinese command. Timothy L. Savage, “The American Response to the Korean Independence Movement, 1910-1945,” *Korean Studies* 20-21 (1996), 215.

or launch similar campaigns of their own, regardless of whether that was actually true. Haan generally complied. But Das – who two decades earlier, had sued the government for U.S. citizenship – did not. Not surprisingly, their remarks elicited very different reactions from the House lawmakers present.

Haan disavowed personal investment in the cause to present a more neutral war-centered case for repeal. He began his statement by clarifying that he did not appear on behalf of “Korea or the Koreans,” but rather, out of a desire to “save as many lives of Americans as possible” in the war against Japan. Echoing the Citizens Committee line, he called on lawmakers to consider repeal “purely as a war measure” and not “a domestic immigration question”; winning the war, he stressed repeatedly, was the “first consideration.” When a committee member asked him whether Koreans would seize upon a Chinese bill to make similar demands, he avoided a direct response, denying the charge implicitly by reiterating the exceptionality of China’s case. When a member asked him whether he believed Indians should receive a similar bill, Haan likewise sidestepped; describing the future of the subcontinent and its people as a matter unrelated to America’s “conduct of the war,” he maintained that it was “a problem in which England must say more than we.”⁷⁸ Insofar as he focused his comments on the war in Asia, Haan’s statement passed without major comment.

Haan’s history of anti-Japanese warnings gained the favor of lawmakers, who saw his Korean identity as a source of special insight. The SKPL spokesman notably claimed wartime loyalty to America in a way that explicitly disavowed the relevance of his Korean heritage, even as it invoked unique advantages of his Korean-ness that made him an asset to American policymakers. In citing special knowledge of Japanese plots

⁷⁸ *Repeal of Chinese Exclusion Acts*, 133, 136, 140.

purportedly obtained by his network of informants, Haan presented his Korean identity as a badge that gave him access to networks of intelligence beyond the reach of white American officials. He described global schemes by Tokyo to expand Japanese influence across Asia and America. He recounted an official “Japanization” program to inter-marry 150,000 Japanese women to grooms across Southeast Asia, as well as a secret peace proposal sent by Tokyo to Chungking pledging a return of China’s former territories and a lend-lease aid program in exchange for China’s withdrawal from the United Nations. The latter report would have raised alarm at a time when the Sino-American alliance remained strained. Within the U.S., Haan cited ongoing efforts by Tokyo to mobilize a “Jap occupation army” that employed “Jap-Americans [who] know the Pacific coast only too well.” He described the force, which was eventually to take over the West Coast United States, as comprising “10,000 American citizens of Japanese ancestry, born in Hawaii and America” and “2,000 Japanese born in Japan but who grew up and were educated” in America. A year and a half after the Pearl Harbor attack, Haan’s positive reception by the House committee’s staunchest opponent of repeal as the “the man who tipped [Congress] off on Pearl Harbor” testified to lawmakers’ anti-Japanese sentiment.⁷⁹ It also suggested how antipathy for the Japanese could serve as common ground for supporters and critics of repeal alike.

If Haan lessened lawmakers’ concerns about precedent, the Indian witness, Dr. Das, amplified them. He openly argued that repeal should benefit other Asian groups, including the Indian community. Das used the hearing as a platform to admonish white

⁷⁹ *Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts*, 133-134, 136. On Japanese American internment, see Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial*; Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1998), 379-406; Brian Hayashi, *Democratizing the Enemy: The Japanese American Internment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

Americans, and U.S. government officials in particular, for what he described as their “unholy attitude” of white superiority and “Nazi-like race prejudice against the peoples of the Orient.” So long as Anglo-American powers continued to practice this discrimination against Asian peoples, he warned, the “vast majority” of Asians have no “genuine confidence” in Western “professions of...world democracy and world brotherhood.”⁸⁰ Das’ frank statement elicited a harsh response from the committee’s Southern Democrats. An indignant Rep. Allen protested that an “Oriental...born thousands of miles away” could not come before Congress and “criticize [the U.S.] country and courts.” Das attempted to conciliate by affirming the “debt” that he owed America. As a long-time resident of New York City and professor at a public university, he noted he could not repay the United States “even by giving [his] life for this country.” But his words came too late. In overall effect, Allen likely congratulated Das accurately for having done the cause of repeal “more harm than anybody else.”⁸¹ Das’ reception reflects the very narrow grounds upon which Asian Americans could advocate for themselves, and the real consequences of the decision to cross the line separating acceptable petition from unacceptable critique. It not only diminished the chances of legislative success but unleashed nativist sentiments.

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After the Spring 1943 hearing failed to bring any immediate action by the House, the Citizens Committee launched an ambitious publicity and media offensive that summer to build momentum for the Magnuson bill going into the fall Congressional term.

⁸⁰ *Repeal of Chinese Exclusion Acts*, 35-36.

⁸¹ *Repeal of Chinese Exclusion Acts*, 40-41.

The group's efforts received a great boost with the endorsement of the Roosevelt White House and the U.S. State Department that October. In his letter of support, the President described exclusion as a "historic mistake" and called on Congressional lawmakers to pass the Magnuson bill for the "cause of winning the war and of establishing a secure peace."⁸² Congressional lawmakers complied, resigned to accept, even if not actively support, the measure. President Roosevelt signed the bill into law on December 17, 1943.

Confirming its critics' worst fears, the passage of the Magnuson bill ushered a flurry of legislation proposing similar legal gains for other excluded Asian groups. No longer compelled to be discreet, Indian and Korean American advocates began lobbying openly on behalf of their communities. Encouraged by the Chinese victory to envision success, community representatives including Mubarek Ali Khan, Kilsoo Haan, and others looked to the tactics and strategies modeled by the Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion to guide their own efforts. But the Citizens Committee's discouragement of conspicuous involvement by Chinese and other Asian Americans, offered little guidance. Moreover, as Indian and Korean Americans and their allies sought to adapt the language of geopolitics to make their case, fundamental differences distinguishing India and Korea from China soon became apparent. Chief among these was the problem of colonialism.

⁸² Quoted in Oyen, 89. For more on the role of the White House in the campaign, see Karen Leong, "Foreign Policy, National Identity, and Citizenship: The Roosevelt White House and the Expediency of Repeal," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 22:4 (Summer, 2003), 3-30.

Part II

The Colonial Cases: Repeal as an Anti-Colonial Imperative, 1943-1946

If concerns associated with the Sino-American alliance facilitated the successful repeal of Chinese exclusion, pressures related to imminent decolonization in Asia drove the next episode of Asian exclusion repeal between 1944 and 1946. Enacted in July 1946, the Luce-Celler Act granted immigration and naturalization rights to Indians and Filipinos upon the national independence of their homelands.¹ While at least one scholar has described the act as a “sequel” to Chinese Exclusion repeal, the problem of colonialism made the legislation fundamentally different in kind from the Chinese measure that preceded it.² Not simply a matter of negotiation between sovereign states, repeal campaigns for Asian colonial groups became embedded within anti-colonial struggles for homeland independence, with ramifications that went beyond the fight for domestic inclusion alone.

¹ In July 1946, the Indian legislation was combined with a Filipino naturalization bill due to a technicality. The Filipino bill made all natives of the Philippines eligible for U.S. citizenship upon the islands’ independence on July 4. Many Washington observers described the merging of the two measures as fitting insofar as both stemmed from a common desire by Washington to affirm America’s commitment to the self-determination of Asian peoples. The U.S. Congress quietly extended natives of Pakistan the same eligibility to immigrate and naturalize upon the nation’s creation in 1947.

² Fred Riggs, *Pressures on Congress: A Study of the Repeal of Chinese Exclusion* (New York: King’s Crown Press, 1950), 41. As a U.S. territory and, later, protectorate, the Philippines never came under exclusion in the same way as other Asian powers. Moreover, because of their special status as American “nationals,” Filipinos followed a different path to U.S. citizenship eligibility. Due to these essential differences, this study does not treat Filipinos at length, although Washington’s granting of Philippines independence in 1946 marks an important moment in the U.S. relationship to Asian decolonization. For more on the racial politics of Philippines independence, see Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), Chapter 6.

The Problem of Colonialism Within Asian American History

Colonialism left a lasting imprint on migrant communities in America, and Asian colonial groups were no exception. According to historian Sucheng Chan, immigrants from colonized lands differed from their sovereign counterparts in at least two key respects. First, their “nationalist concerns for the homeland” helped “preserve their ethnic identity” to a greater extent than for other, non-colonized immigrant groups. They expressed their persistent ties to the Old World, in part, by remaining active in anti-colonial movements for their homelands’ independence. Second, they were “more likely to be mistreated than those from sovereign nations because they do not have a homeland government to defend their interests.”³ Asian colonial groups in the United States experienced these disadvantages with particular acuteness, and their racial ineligibility to naturalize as U.S. citizens intensified the defenseless that accompanied their repudiation of colonial subjecthood. European colonials, who only had to wait a few years to apply for American citizenship, experienced only temporary disenfranchisement in contrast to the permanent plight of Asian colonials.

The fight for homeland independence defined the community-based activism and politics of Indian and Korean Americans in a way that fundamentally distinguished their struggles for rights from those of Chinese and Japanese Americans. Unlike their sovereign counterparts, Asian colonial groups came to the cause of repeal with decades of experience in lobbying Washington on behalf of their homelands. Not only did this give them an added level of familiarity with both the limits and possibilities of the American political system, these previous experiences gave their activism a different political

³ Sucheng Chan, “European and Asian Immigration into the United States in Comparative Perspective, 1820s to 1920s,” in Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, ed., *Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology, and Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 39.

valence, raising the stakes of the legal rights for which they fought. More than simply a matter of incorporation into America, colonial advocates maintained that the extension of immigration and naturalization rights to Indians and Koreans would reaffirm Washington's professed commitment to Asian powers on the verge of independence and to the principle of self-determination on the international stage. Furthermore, as one of the world's preeminent powers, America's recognition of Indians and Koreans would bring prestige and uphold the sovereignty of two historically oppressed peoples.

A symbiotic relationship developed between the goals of repeal and homeland independence during World War II and the immediate postwar years. On the one hand, the issue of repeal offered Asian colonial groups in the United States a platform from which to renew attention to the plight of their colonized homelands and escalate calls for Washington's assistance to advance their compatriots' struggles for independence. On the other hand, diasporic involvement in anti-colonial independence movements laid an organizational infrastructure that supporters of repeal remobilized in service of their cause. Within both communities, groups originally formed to support the cause of homeland independence became prime vehicles of activism for repeal.

Bridging Asian and Asian American Freedom Struggles

To bring the story of exclusion repeal for colonial groups into the same framework of analysis as anti-colonial independence struggles changes the way we think about Asian American activism for repeal as more than a linear pursuit of inclusion or incorporation. Rather, the approach situates the colonial campaigns as part of what Thomas Borstelmann has called the twentieth-century's "global movement toward racial

equality and self-determination.” According to Borstelmann, the “African and African American freedom movements encouraged and reinforced each other” in various ways. I argue that a similar dynamic applied to the Asian and Asian American freedom movements during the same period.⁴

Existing literature frequently poses the pre-1965 Asian American struggle for U.S. citizenship as an exemplar of the American immigrant paradigm, in which reformers and immigrants themselves seek citizenship and incorporation into the nation.⁵ While scholars have nuanced the forms that this incorporation may take, they generally envision the trajectory for Asian American activism within this schema as one oriented, unidirectionally if not uninterruptedly, toward U.S. citizenship and all of its associated benefits as the desired end.⁶ The Indian and Korean repeal campaigns of the mid-1940s unsettle this understanding. Describing American citizenship as an instrumental achievement, they suggest how, for many Asian colonial advocates in America, the effort to secure legal recognition from the U.S. government became embedded in and structured by a set of transnational discourses and political projects.

⁴ Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 1, 5.

⁵ To be clear, this was the express goal of many early scholars writing on Asian immigration to the United States. Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1995); Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1998); H. Brett Melendy, *Asians in America: Filipinos, Koreans, and East Indians* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1977). For a more recent and specific example, see K. Scott Wong, *Americans First: Chinese Americans and the Second World War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005). Chinese and Japanese Americans were distinct cases. The major factors that distinguished them from Indians, Koreans, and Filipinos included the much larger size of their communities, their longer migration history to the United States, and as this discussion highlights, the sovereign status of their homelands before World War II.

⁶ Joan Jensen, the most prolific historian of Indians in America, has also expressed this view, even suggesting that the existence of these legal restrictions encouraged Indians’ permanent U.S. settlement in ethnic enclaves. Joan Jensen, *Passage from India: Asian Indian Immigrants in North America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 270.

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The chapters in this section explore how Indian and Korean Americans and their allies played on U.S. officials' anxieties regarding imminent decolonization to push for repeal. Advocates argued that the passage of repeal measures would invite the loyalties of the soon-to-be independent peoples of India and Korea to the United States and uphold America's claims to support the self-determination of all peoples, as reflected in the Atlantic Charter. But the specter of Asian independence proved a precarious basis for reform. As the two cases demonstrate, in the lobby for rights, colonial status could alternately help or hinder legislative progress, and legislative success was ultimately tied to the resolution of their homeland's sovereignty. The success of an Indian immigration bill in 1946 and the failure of a concurrent Korean measure tracked the divergent paths of India and Korea from colony to (formal) independence during and immediately after World War II. In the case of legislation for India, the prospect of the subcontinent moving toward full independence by 1947 and the logic of anti-colonialism proved compelling. By contrast, the protracted failure of a joint Soviet-American occupation to agree on the terms of Korean independence and self-government helps explain why a measure providing similar gains for Koreans did not pass.

Chapter 2 ties the success of the Luce-Celler bill ending Indian exclusion in the United States to India's path toward independence from Great Britain. In so doing, it also assesses the Luce-Celler campaign in the context of the longer-standing movement for Indian independence. Using the case studies of two Indian American organizations, the chapter demonstrates how the U.S.-based legislative contest for Indian American rights

became an unlikely forum in which the Indian national debate over Pakistan and the partition of the subcontinent were rearticulated in a distinctly (Indian) American context.

Chapter 3 demonstrates the limits of Washington's professed commitment to self-determination in the failure of a Korean Immigration and Naturalization Bill (KINB) between 1943 and 1946. Presented as a counterpoint to the success of the Indian campaign, the KINB lobby speaks to the limits of geopolitics and international pressures as compelling drivers for repeal. If the granting of immigration and naturalization rights to Indians anticipated the subcontinent's transition from colony to sovereign nation, the vicissitudes of the Korean American campaign for rights tracked the inability of the United States and Allied powers to resolve the question of Korean independence during and immediately after World War II.

Chapter 2

A Tale of Two Leagues: Entwining Indian Independence and Immigration Reform

In April 1942, J.J. Singh, a Sikh businessman living in New York, wrote Indian National Congress (INC) leader Jawaharlal Nehru to offer some advice. He had heard that the Indian Congress was considering the selection of a spokesman to rally support for the INC's goal of Indian independence in the United States. Singh wished to share his knowledge of Americans, gleaned from sixteen years of living in New York and Philadelphia, with the Indian leader. Whoever was chosen as spokesman should not have "too dark a complexion," he cautioned, because of the "Negro problem in this country." If the representative – who should certainly be male – had a wife, she should be "of the type who could readily and easily mix with the American social circles" because "[w]omen in this country play a vital role."¹ Singh expressed a "burning" desire to counteract what he perceived as a pro-British bent in U.S. coverage of India but cited the small number of Indians living in America as a hindrance to this goal. Nevertheless, he insisted that change was imminent. "I know Americans," Singh wrote, "They admire strength, even in their opponents. India will have to show guts to win admiration and understanding in this country. And I feel somehow that the coming mass Civil Disobedience movement will prove not only to America, but to the whole world, we have the guts."²

¹ J.J. Singh to Jawaharlal Nehru, April 10, 1942, J.J. Singh papers, Nehru Museum & Memorial Library (NMML), Delhi, India.

² J.J. Singh to Jawaharlal Nehru, August 4, 1942, NMML, Delhi, India.

Nehru had little time to act on Singh's letter. On August 8, 1942, the All India Congress Committee, the central decision-making assembly of the Indian National Congress, passed a resolution calling for India's immediate independence and an orderly British withdrawal from the subcontinent. In his Quit India speech later that same day, Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi declared the beginning of a non-violent Civil Disobedience movement, including non-cooperation with the Allied war effort, in the event that the British did not comply. Reprisal came swiftly. Hours later, British authorities arrested Nehru, along with Gandhi and the entire Indian National Congress working committee, and put them in jail, where most would remain for the duration of the war.³ As he later recalled, "something snapped" inside of J.J. Singh when he heard the news, and he "vowed not to rest" until Nehru and the other Congress leaders were released.⁴

Singh made good on his pledge. As president of the India League of America (ILA), a New York-based organization created in 1937 "to interpret India and America to each other," J.J. Singh emerged as one of the most prominent voices for Indian independence in the United States. His name appeared regularly in the *New York Times* and other American media outlets as an expert on Indian affairs, and in 1944, a writer for *Time* magazine dubbed him a "one-man lobby" for India.⁵ Under his leadership, the ILA became a prominent voice for Indian independence in the United States. Its lavish fundraisers and prominent white American advocates attracted both the ire of British

³ Nehru remained imprisoned until June 15, 1945. Gandhi was released earlier due to his severe health issues.

⁴ J.J. Singh to Nehru, November 2, 1945, J.J. Singh papers, NMML, Delhi, India.

⁵ The moniker "one-man lobby" was first used in "Mr. Singh Goes to Washington," *Time*, February 28, 1944, 19.

officials and the support of a small but dedicated Indian American community to the independence of their homeland.

Using the Citizens Committee's wartime campaign for Chinese exclusion repeal as a model, the ILA publicly took up the fight for an Indian immigration and naturalization bill in early 1944. Modeled after the Magnuson Act that repealed Chinese exclusion, the Celler bill had two main provisions: an immigration quota for India of 100 persons per year, and citizenship eligibility for all natives of India.⁶ Between 1944 and 1946, J.J. Singh and other supporters of the ILA lobbied for Congressional passage of the Celler bill as a symbolic measure instrumental to the ultimate goal of India's independence. If India's future lay in achieving equal status and recognition in the international community, they maintained, an American bill granting Indians nominal parity with European peoples under U.S. immigration and naturalization advanced the goal of Indian independence as a goodwill gesture affirming the nationalist aspirations of Indians everywhere. Writing to J.J. Singh in 1944, ILA supporters Mumtaz Kitchlew and Tarani P. Sinha expressed joy at the "great international prestige that will come to our people by having lifted from our brows the present stigma [about] our ineligibility for American citizenship." Such "prestige," they asserted, would be of "immense value" to India's struggle to secure independence from the British.⁷

⁶ Unlike the Langer bill, the Luce-Celler naturalization provisions imposed no temporal restrictions for citizenship eligibility based upon date of entry.

⁷ Mumtaz Kitchlew and Tarani P. Sinha to J.J. Singh, March 9, 1944; quoted in Premdatta Varma, *Indian Immigrants in USA: Struggle for Equality* (New Delhi: Heritage Publishers, 1995), 272. Historian Varma notes that the logic was not new. Adherents of the Ghadr movement had likewise tied together the national movement in India with the Indian community's fight for equality in America during the World War I years. Varma, 273.

Not all Indians in the United States agreed with the ILA's emphasis on the legislation's symbolic and global significance. At least not at first. Even as ILA supporters hailed the promise of U.S. legislation to advance the diasporic fight for Indian independence, members of the India Welfare League, a community relief group also based in New York, underscored the immediate material needs of Indians already living in the United States, particularly those who considered America to be their permanent home.⁸ Far from representing mere symbolism, Welfare League president Mubarek Ali Khan, a Muslim living in New York, protested that the right to U.S. citizenship had practical value for thousands of Indian farmers and workers who struggled to secure relief as "aliens ineligible to citizenship." In his telling, Indians' primary need for the legislation was pragmatic rather than ideological. The conflict shifted in nature over the next few years, as the New York-based Welfare League developed closer ties with Indian Muslim leader Mohammed Ali Jinnah and the India Muslim League headquartered in Bombay. Through Khan's growing collaboration with Jinnah, the Welfare League increasingly came to serve as a diasporic arm of the India Muslim League's religious crusade for Pakistan. Drawing from U.S. and Indian sources, this chapter traces the transformation of the wartime Indian immigration campaign from an internal conflict centered around class difference to a forum where competing visions of Indian independence were rearticulated in a U.S. diasporic context.

⁸ Senate Subcommittee on Immigration, *To Permit the Naturalization of Approximately Three Thousand Natives of India: Hearing before the Senate Committee on Immigration*, 78th Cong., 2nd sess., 1944, 52-3; Varma, 288.

A History of Indian Immigration and Independence

Relative to other Asian groups, Indians had only a brief period of legal migration – roughly ten years – before they, too, came under exclusion. Indians began arriving in the U.S. in larger numbers after 1908, when the legal restriction of Chinese and Japanese workers left West Coast agriculture looking for an alternative source of inexpensive labor.⁹ As the population grew, peaking at 6,000 during World War I, Indians increasingly became a target of West Coast exclusionists who lamented the threat posed by the “tide of turbans” to American society; among the most common grievances were that Indian workers displaced white labor and resisted assimilation into American society.¹⁰ Indian farmers in California, who made up the largest U.S. Indian community, bore the brunt of the harrasment. With the restriction of Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans now successfully complete, the San Francisco-based Asiatic Exclusion League (formerly the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League) joined with California officials and local media to stop the “tide of turbans” flowing into the U.S. West Coast. They found little support in Washington, however. Before World War I, East Coast lawmakers were more interested in limiting the entry of the less desirable eastern and southern peoples of Europe than they were in the “Oriental problem.”

This changed with the rise of revolutionary activity among Indians in America during World War I. Probably the best-known episode in Indian American history, the “Hindu-German Conspiracy” of 1917 implicated hundreds of Indians along the West

⁹ The restrictions on Chinese and Japanese immigration were due to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Gentleman’s Agreement of 1907, respectively.

¹⁰ For a more detailed history of Indians’ legislative exclusion in the U.S., see Joan M. Jensen, *Passage from India: Asian Indian immigrants in North America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), especially Chapter 7.

Coast United States in a German-supported plot to overthrow the British colonial government in India.¹¹ Although it was tried in a U.S. court, the case was notably prosecuted at British prompting and facilitated with the help of intelligence collected and supplied to the prosecution by British agents. The defendants were charged with using the U.S. as a base for plotting to overthrow British rule in India during a time when America was still formally neutral. The seventeen Indian leaders on trial were found guilty of violating America's neutrality laws in a highly dramatic and sensational San Francisco trial that ended in the murder of one Indian witness by another as an entire courtroom looked on. The ensuing media frenzy coincided with Congressional debates over an Asian exclusion bill known as the Immigration Act of 1917. Media depictions of Indians as revolutionary and violent bolstered the exclusionists' cause, and helped cement Congressional support for broad Asiatic exclusion. The first in a series of three pieces of legislation (1917, 1921, 1924), the Immigration Act of 1917 created the "Asiatic Barred Zone." As a geographical designation that included the Asian subcontinent, the "Barred Zone" cut off migration from India for the first time in American history, prompting one scholar to dub it the "Indian Exclusion Act."¹²

Formal exclusion from U.S. citizenship soon followed. In *Thind v. U.S.* (1923), the Supreme Court ruled that, even if "Caucasian," Indians were not "white" according to the commonsense understanding of the term and therefore did not qualify to naturalize

¹¹ For more on the Conspiracy, see Don K. Dignan, "The Hindu Conspiracy in Anglo-American Relations during World War I," *Pacific Historical Review*, 40:1 (Feb., 1971): 57-76, and Joan M. Jensen, "The 'Hindu Conspiracy': A Reassessment," *Pacific Historical Review* 48:1 (Feb., 1979): 65-83.

¹² Arthur Helweg, "The Immigration Act of 1917: The Asian Indian Exclusion Act," in Hyung-Chan Kim, ed., *Asian Americans and Congress: A Documentary History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 153-223.

under the “free white persons” provision of the 1790 Nationality Act.¹³ The Johnson-Reed Act, or Immigration Act of 1924, marked the final step that completed Asiatic exclusion. The legislation consolidated the broad legal exclusion of Asians by conjoining immigration and naturalization policy, or more specifically, by making the ability to immigrate to the U.S. contingent upon a person’s eligibility for American citizenship. Indians and other natives of Asia were “aliens ineligible to citizenship,” and consequently barred. Two efforts by Indians in America to overturn the 1924 restrictions met resounding defeat.¹⁴ The interwar years marked a general closing to immigrants by U.S. lawmakers, and Asians, long perceived as racially inassimilable, were especially unwanted. The next serious challenge to exclusion brought by Indians would not come until 1939.

A Tale of Two Leagues: The Legislative Battle Takes Shape

The fight for Indian citizenship during World War II began humbly, with five Indians from New York on a bus to Washington, DC. All were members of the India Welfare League, a support organization for unemployed Indians. The five men were on their way to Capitol Hill to find a sponsor to introduce a bill giving Indians in America the right to citizenship. Their strategy for winning a Congressional audience was simple: knock on doors until someone agreed to hear them. Their efforts paid off on June 21, 1939. Upon their fourth visit to the New York Democrat’s office, the five Welfare

¹³ The 1924 Act also added Japan to the list of excluded nations. As a U.S. territory, the Philippines was exempted from the restrictions.

¹⁴ These campaigns were led by two Indian nationalists in the U.S., Sailendra Ghose of the Friends for the Freedom of India, and Taraknath Das, who founded the *Free Hindustan* newspaper in 1908.

League representatives were ushered in to meet Samuel Dickstein, chair of the House Immigration and Naturalization Committee. According to Welfare League leader Haridas Muzumdar, a “ten-minute interview stretched out, at the Congressman’s initiative, into an hour-long conference.”¹⁵ Persuaded by their appeals, Dickstein granted the League’s citizenship petition a hearing in June 1939, and another the following January.

Over the two hearings, representatives of the Welfare League argued for Indian citizenship on a variety of grounds. The core of the India Welfare League’s case called for response to the material needs of long-time Indian residents of the U.S. Three of the organization’s representatives testified to the economic concerns plaguing Indians in America: League president Mubarek Ali Khan, co-founder Professor Haridas Muzumdar, and chairman Ramlal Bajpai. In their telling, Indians’ ineligibility to citizenship imposed two primary material harms. For Indian farmers, alien land laws in many Western states prevented them from owning or leasing agricultural land. Farmers had devised schemes to circumvent those laws, but tightening restrictions during the Depression years had made that increasingly difficult to do. In urban areas, the bar to citizenship prevented Indians from participating in New Deal employment and relief programs reserved for U.S. citizens. Furthermore, exclusion from citizenship also left them subject to undue exploitation by employers: as aliens with few legal protections, Khan remarked, Indians were always among the “last to be hired and the first to be fired.”¹⁶ To redress these grievances, the India Welfare League’s bill proposed that the approximately 3,000 Indians who had entered the United States before the 1924 Immigration Act be made

¹⁵ Haridas Muzumdar, *America’s Contribution to India’s Freedom* (Allahabad, India: Central Book Depot, 1962), 36.

¹⁶ U.S. House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Naturalization of India-Born Immigrants: Hearing on H.R. 7110*, 76th Cong., 3rd sess., 1940.

eligible for citizenship. The measure's circumscribed provisions were strategic.

Restricting the act to benefit those who had entered the country before 1924 ensured that the measure only applied to Indians who had entered the U.S. legally. And by limiting eligibility to Indians already in the United States, the Welfare League sidestepped questions of foreign policy that an immigration quota or a general dispensation of citizenship might have raised.

The Welfare League bill had three distinctive features, all of which reflected the importance of economic concerns in the depression era. First, the bill treated Indians in the United States as an economically disadvantaged group; according to Khan, "95 percent of Indians" then living in America belonged to the "laboring class." Second, the legislation was intended to benefit Indians who planned to stay in the United States indefinitely. As Dr. Muzumdar argued: "These people are here. They intend to remain here the rest of their lives . . . shall we let them remain as permanent aliens or almost in the status of refugees who are not permitted to avail themselves of the various advantages that the American Government agencies extend to citizens, or shall we incorporate them?" Third, the bill was purely domestic in scope, not intended "in any way [to] open up the question of immigration from the Orient, from the barred zone" or any such issue of "foreign relations," whether between Delhi and Washington, or between Washington and the British imperial government at Whitehall.¹⁷

Nevertheless, reflecting the racial tensions and isolationist views of the interwar years, Indians' domestic claims to citizenship met an unreceptive Congressional

¹⁷ House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *India-Born Residents of the U.S. Request for Naturalization*, 76th Cong., 1st sess., 1939, 15-19, 34-36.

audience.¹⁸ The testimony of House immigration committee, Paul Scharrenberg of the American Federation of Labor encapsulated the restrictionist and racist attitudes of the Southern lawmakers who comprised the bill's main opposition. In one of his more memorable lines, the labor representative castigated committee members for their apparent willingness to welcome "another brown race. . . We do not have enough negroes. They want to give us some more." Nevertheless, by far the greatest danger, Scharrenberg argued, was the threat of a precedent; if Congress gave citizenship rights to Indians, it would then be obliged to grant the demands of other Asian groups for similar gains, which would surely come.¹⁹ The Southern lawmakers who dominated both committees readily agreed, and tabled the proposal indefinitely.

The repeal campaign reflected a constant consciousness of the Magnuson Act as a model for success. As advocates were quick to point out, of all the Asian powers, India was most similar to China in that both were Allied powers in World War II even if India fought with the Allies as merely a British colony.²⁰ Emboldened by this similarity, Khan and the Welfare League launched efforts to secure a bill for Indians immediately after Madame Chiang Kaishek's speech before the U.S. Congress in February 1943. In the fall

¹⁸ The emphasis on Indians' need for public aid invited particular scrutiny, attesting to how the citizenship restrictions on federal relief programs had been very deliberate. What limited state aid there was to disperse, critics countered, should be given to U.S. citizens first.

¹⁹ The logic of Scharrenberg's statement attested to the broader tendency among critical observers to see immigration and citizenship law as a continuum notwithstanding careful attempts – like this one – to disentangle the two. Citing a precedent, Khan implored the committee "not to permit the smallest loophole . . . so far as orientals [were] concerned." U.S. House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Naturalization of India-Born Immigrants: Hearing on H.R. 7110*. 76th Cong., 3rd sess., 1940, 16, 33-34. The objection to setting a precedent was one of the key tactics used by the opposition in later campaigns to repeal Asian exclusion.

²⁰ Notably, India was brought into the war by British decree, without the formal consent of the popularly elected Indian National Congress. This was one of the main grievances outlined in the Quit India resolution issued by the Indian National Congress in 1942.

of 1943, Khan and the Welfare League revived a measure for Indian citizenship under the sponsorship of North Dakota Senator William Langer (R-ND), who remained one of Khan's closest allies during his time in Washington.²¹ The Langer bill proposed citizenship for all Indians who entered the country before the 1924 Immigration Act took effect.²² Over the months that followed, Khan devoted himself to gathering support for the bill, sleeping "many a night in Washington, DC, on the Union Station Bench" in the hope of overturning the permanent alien status to which Indians in America had long been relegated.²³ But he would soon encounter unexpected interference from J.J. Singh and the India League of America.

Entwining Immigration and Independence: The India League of America

Within months of the Langer bill's introduction to Congress, the work of the ILA under J.J. Singh began to overshadow it. Indian businessman N.R. Checker had established the organization in 1937 as a loose analogue to a London-based group led by Indian nationalist (and close friend and colleague of Nehru) V.K. Krishna Menon. Under Singh's leadership, the ILA rose to prominence as a voice in the United States for *purna swaraj*, or complete Indian independence from Britain. The organization had an executive board of prominent white Americans with an interest in Indian independence. By 1944, the ILA's leadership included New York publisher (and head of the Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion) Richard Walsh, who served as the League's

²¹ Langer, a well known and controversial isolationist, served in the U.S. Senate from 1940 until his death in 1959.

²² S. 1595 (1943).

²³ Khan to Richard Russell, April 17, 1946, Senate Immigration Committee, file on S. 236, 79th Cong., 2nd sess. (1946), Legislative Records Office (NARA I), Washington, DC.

chairman; Nobel Prize-winning author (and Walsh's wife) Pearl Buck; writer Louis Fischer; and ACLU founder Roger Baldwin. Lin Yutang, the renowned Chinese author, and Buck were appointed the ILA's two honorary presidents in September 1943 and 1944, respectively.²⁴

The ILA campaign began in March 1944 with the introduction of legislation by Reps. Clare Boothe Luce (R-CT) and Emmanuel Celler (D-NY), two Congressional supporters of both the ILA and of the Indian independence cause.²⁵ Like the recently enacted Chinese measure, the Luce-Celler bills had two main provisions: an immigration quota for India of 100 persons, and citizenship eligibility for all natives of India.²⁶ In crafting the measure, ILA leaders specifically sought to redress what they perceived to be the two main deficiencies of the Welfare League bill. First, by limiting citizenship eligibility to long-time U.S. Indian residents, it did not address the general problem of the racial discrimination formalized by the 1923 *Thin*d decision that blocked all Indians from seeking citizenship. Second, its narrow focus on naturalization made no provisions to place Indian immigration on a quota basis. On a more personal level, Singh expressed serious misgivings about Khan, who was known among Indians as a "shady sort of fellow" whose entry into the United States was itself of dubious legality.²⁷ On a similar

²⁴ Varma, 202-203.

²⁵ In a congratulatory letter upon her election to the U.S. House of Representatives that fall, Singh had expressed his hope that she might use her office to become "India's Pearl Buck," and champion India's cause as Buck had done for China. During Luce's trip, she met and began a personal correspondence with Nehru. Varma, 309.

²⁶ Unlike the Langer bill, the Luce-Celler naturalization provisions imposed no temporal restrictions for citizenship eligibility based upon date of entry.

²⁷ Among other things, Khan was suspected of blackmailing recent Indian arrivals and collecting funds from California Sikh communities under false pretenses. For more on the tens of thousands of South Asian seamen, mostly Muslim, who entered the United States through similar means and created multiracial lives

note, Senator William Langer of North Dakota was notorious for a history of corruption and graft. As Agent-General Sir Bajpai, the Indian Government's representative to Washington, wrote in one of his official reports to Delhi, Langer was an "unwelcome champion of Indian rights" who might have to "be tolerated but ought not to be wooed."²⁸

Emanuel Celler (D-NY), who co-sponsored the first set of immigration and naturalization bills in March 1944 at the ILA's request, was controversial in his own right; the Brooklyn Democrat known for his liberal views on immigration and, as one Delhi official put it, his "left-wing Zionist sympathies."²⁹ Recognizing this, the ILA recruited the additional sponsorship of Clare Boothe Luce, a conservative Connecticut Republican (and the wife of *Time-Life* founder-editor Henry Luce) fairly new to the House, as a counterbalancing, bipartisan force.

The Celler bill quickly trumped the Langer measure in attracting official, media, and popular support. Toward this end, the ILA's ties to the Citizens Committee campaign for Chinese repeal in the prior year carried several advantages for the Celler bill. As founder-chairman of the Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion, ILA chairman Richard Walsh had personally overseen the successful campaign for Chinese repeal legislation.³⁰ Having run an effective lobby once, he now brought the benefit of his experience to the Indian cause. Noting how the Magnuson Act had boosted China's prestige and affirmed its equal status with other Allied powers on the world stage, Walsh and other ILA advocates called on Washington lawmakers to do the same for India. At

in America, see Vivek Bald's excellent study, *Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

²⁸ File 205(2)-X: Agent General Bajpai's Report for February 1944, 38, INC, Delhi, India.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ See Chapter 1.

ILA rallies in New York City and Washington, DC, Walsh, J.J. Singh, and the bill's Congressional sponsors, Reps. Luce and Celler described Indians as the next logical beneficiary of rights after the Chinese.³¹ Echoing the Citizens Committee's logic of expediency, they underscored Indians' contributions to the Allied war effort and India's status as an ally of both the U.S. and China.

The intended message was clear: just like the Magnuson Act, the Celler bill should be understood primarily as a wartime gesture to bolster goodwill with a military partner in the war against Japan. Within a few months of their introduction to Congress, the ILA-endorsed legislation received the editorial endorsements of the *New York Times*, *New Republic*, and *Los Angeles Times*, among other prominent periodicals; writers uniformly stressed India's similarity to China as the Asian power only second in importance, and elaborated on the military contributions that made Indians especially deserving of recognition.³²

But, as would soon become clear, India's colonial predicament made negotiating the Luce-Celler bill significantly more complicated than the Chinese legislation after which it was modeled. Never simply a matter of negotiations with a sovereign state, the comprehensive immigration and naturalization measure implicated not only Washington's relations with Indian officials in Delhi but also America's wartime alliance

³¹ Rally speakers echoed the war-related arguments featured in the previous campaign, which Clare Luce maintained "applied with equal measure to India." In more individualized appeals, J.J. Singh, a merchant, remarked on the "great handicap" that exclusion posed to improved trade relations between India and the United States, while Rep. Celler stressed the need for America to "fight racial arrogance" on principle. *Ibid.*, 24.

³² Not limited to the U.S. alone, the Indian National Congress (INC) passed a resolution in April 1944 expressing its support for the legislation on the grounds that India deserved a place in America's national quota system for its contributions to the Pacific War. "1944 Motilal Statement on Proposed Indian Immigration Bills," File 776(3)-X (1944), Indian National Archives (INA), Delhi, India; "India Bids America Naturalize People," *New York Times*, April 3, 1944, 11.

with Great Britain. The INC's independence demands leading to the imprisonment of Jawaharlal, Mahatma Ghandi, and other INC leaders in 1942 caused a quandary for U.S. officials.³³ Unable to convince Churchill of the need for decolonization, and unwilling to risk a rift in America's special relationship with Britain, Roosevelt and his advisors became spectators to the steady deterioration of the British-India relationship. For the duration of World War II, Washington officials rhetorically distanced themselves from the colonialism of Britain, while acting to protect the Anglo-American relationship on the other.

U.S. officials were reluctant to support Indian repeal if doing so might be read as an indirect endorsement of Indian independence. When a group primarily focused on Indian independence, the ILA, championed the Luce-Celler immigration bill, this prompted some speculation that the bill could ruin the Anglo-American relationship. Charles Colby of the University of Chicago wrote Senator Richard Russell of the immigration committee insisting that Congress must reject the bill, lest its passage "put the U.S. on record as officially favoring the establishment of India as a commonwealth." America, he insisted, "should not take sides."³⁴ Adopting the opposite view, but nonetheless believing in a foreign policy impact, Edward Manice of Yale wrote to the same committee expressing hope that the measure's passage would "better the Indian faith in America's great democratic principles," which Washington had long forfeited to

³³ Gary Hess, *America Encounters India, 1941-1947* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), ix. For more on the U.S. predicament regarding India, see Sarah Ellen Graham, "American Propaganda, the Anglo-American Alliance, and the 'Delicate Question' of Indian Self-Determination," *Diplomatic History* 33 (2009): 223-259.

³⁴ Charles Colby of the University of Chicago to U.S. Senator Richard Russell, June 7, 1944, Senate Immigration Committee, *File on S. 1595*, 78th Cong., 2nd sess., 1944, Box 57, RG 46, NARA I, Washington, DC.

“Great Britain’s continued control of India for her own economic advantage.”³⁵ Both scholars argued that the Luce-Celler bill would be read as an implicit gauge of Washington’s views on the independence question, and it was on these grounds that they urged U.S. officials to craft all India-related policy carefully.

Privately, Indian supporters of the Luce-Celler bill expressed similar logic. Two ILA supporters from Chicago, Mumtaz Kitchlew and Dr. Tarani Sinha, articulated the link between the bill and Indian independence. Writing to J.J. Singh in March 1944, Kitchlew and Sinha frankly stated that they had “no intention whatsoever of ever becoming American citizens” but rather, “wish[ed] to remain & die Indians.” However, they welcomed the “great international prestige” that the Luce-Celler measure promised to give the Indian people by lifting from their “brows the present stigma” of ineligibility for American citizenship. The immigration bill promised “immense value” to Indians’ “immediate struggle with the english [sic] to get our Independence of and from them.”³⁶ If India’s future lay in achieving equal status and recognition in the international community, they reasoned, then surely an American bill granting Indians nominal parity with European peoples under U.S. immigration and naturalization laws served Indian nationalists’ cause. In this emphasis on the symbolic value of victory, and on the importance of India instead of America, ILA differed sharply from the Welfare League’s practical view.

Conflict and Communal Critique: Adopting the Lens of Religion

³⁵ Edward Manice, Yale University Christian Association, Dwight Hall, to Russell, July 31, 1944, Senate Immigration Committee, file on S. 1595, 78th Cong., 2 sess. (1944), Box 57, RG 46, NARA I, Washington, DC.

³⁶ Mumtaz Kitchlew and Dr. Tarani Sinha to J.J. Singh, March 9, 1944; quoted in Varma, 272.

At a Senate subcommittee hearing in the fall of 1944, the practical campaign represented by the Welfare League came into conflict with the more symbolic campaign represented by the ILA. Mubarek Ali Khan addressed the subcommittee to say that little had changed since the Welfare League last addressed a Congressional committee four years earlier. The problem, as he described it, was still a fundamentally “domestic” issue of incorporation: would Indians in America be left to live as “men without a country” and suffer because of their permanent alien status or would they be allowed to become an “asset” to the society in which they planned to “spend their lives and die”? Emphasizing how their Indian constituents saw their future in America, not India, Khan deliberately and repeatedly distanced the petition from India and its troubles with Great Britain, emphasizing instead their constituents’ commitment to America. Unrelated to matters of “foreign policy,” the intention of the citizenship bill was to “take care of those people who are in the country now.”³⁷

What was intended to be an opportunity for the Welfare League to restate the merits of their limited citizenship bill quickly became a losing battle to defend it. J.J. Singh, speaking for the India League, took the opposite position. He downplayed the domestic implications of any citizenship provision with a variation of the instrumental view articulated in Kitchlew and Sinha’s March letter. Insofar as the exclusion laws represented a “slur and stigma” against Indians everywhere, he called for their removal

³⁷ Senate Subcommittee on Immigration, *To Permit the Naturalization of Approximately Three Thousand Natives of India: Hearing before the Senate Committee on Immigration*, 78th Cong., 2nd sess., 1944, 52-3; Varma, 288.

on principles of equity and justice, in keeping with the larger goals of “India’s freedom” and the “freedom of the world . . . [and] of mankind” as a whole.³⁸

Disagreement erupted in vitriolic confrontation during the testimony of ILA supporter Dr. Krishnanal Shridlani, as he listed the advantages of the broader Luce-Celler immigration bill to “inspire Indians toward greater collaboration with the United States” and to uphold America’s moral claims to “world leadership.” Khan interjected, accusing the sociologist and other Indian “newcomers” of co-opting an effort into which he and other long-time residents had invested five years of struggle. He then went on to deride the ILA contingent as a group of “lecturers, emotional blackmailers, businessmen, and other claimed ‘authorities’ on India” who came to the United States for “transient and propaganda purposes,” and as such, utterly failed to understand the “experience of their [fellow] country brothers” while being “only interested in themselves.”³⁹

Several participants asked Khan when the Welfare League could not support the Luce-Celler bill, which encompassed the Langer bill’s narrower citizenship provisions. Fuming, Khan declared his unwillingness to “risk winning half the loaf by asking for the whole one.” He claimed to have little faith that Congress would pass a bill that included provisions for both immigration and naturalization, saying that the 3,000-plus Indians already living in the United States should forego their chance at citizenship on account of the “selfish” actions of an upstart group.⁴⁰

The conflict reflected a number of divergences between the two Leagues. Most immediately, it reflected the divergent projects pursued by the two groups, which

³⁸ *To Permit the Naturalization of Approximately Three Thousand Natives of India*, 52-3.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 45, 49-50, 54.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 45, 50, 54.

correlated closely with basic differences in class.⁴¹ For Khan and the Welfare League, the proposed citizenship gains had an immediate material purpose to improve the livelihood and daily welfare of Indian laborers already living in the United States. Described in one Indian Government report as “seamen, laborers, and poor Indians,” Welfare League members were long-time residents of America who had built lives in their adopted land and planned to remain there.⁴² Khan often described himself as one of them, having spent his first decade in America as a farmer in Arizona and his second as an auto mechanic in New York City. The Welfare League desired the long-term incorporation of Indians into America.

J.J. Singh and the India League were a more elite and transient group, with migration experiences very different from the West Coast farmers who made up the majority of the U.S. Indian population. The majority of the ILA had come to the United States as students. J.J. Singh often joked that he was the least educated among the ILA’s so-called “Indian brain trust,” a “lowly merchant rather than a Ph.D.”⁴³ Even as a lowly merchant, Singh had what few Welfare League constituents had—a steady job and

⁴¹ In a recent study of South Asian Muslims during this period, scholar Vivek Bald suggests that class difference, rather than sectarian divisions of nation or religion, were at the center of the community’s internecine conflicts. I would argue that class and religious identities among Indians in the United States during this period were mutually overlapping and cannot be neatly separated. That a large percentage of Muslim Indians living in the United States by World War II entered the United States as deserting seamen already meant that they were drawn from a particular class of persons. At the same time, the disproportionately intellectual nature of the New York-based India League of America leadership meant that they included a large number of upper-caste Hindus (although at least one India League “brain trust” member, Anup Singh, was Sikh). Vivek Bald, *Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 184.

⁴² Report on India League, File 379-X/43 (1943), 57, INA, Delhi, India.

⁴³ Robert Shaplen, “One-Man Lobby,” *New Yorker*, March 24, 1951, 37-8. It is notable that other members of the ILA’s “brain trust” also drew distinctions between themselves and J.J. Singh. For more on the tensions between Singh and the ILA elites, including the formation of a rival group called the National Committee for India’s Freedom, see Varma, 212-213.

comfortable income, with or without citizenship. India League members like Dr. Anup Singh, who edited the League's monthly bulletin *India Today*, and Dr. Krishnanal Shridlani, a sociologist and lecturer, epitomized the group's ideological approach, a luxury of their position. They wanted India to have symbolic parity with China under American law. Anything less than full citizenship extension and the establishment of an annual immigration quota only reaffirmed India's second-class status and thereby undercut India's international standing as a power in its own right.

The conflict between the two Leagues also reflected religious differences. This exchange marked the first time that religion featured centrally in the wartime discussion of Indian American rights.⁴⁴ Since before World War II, Khan had been a loyal follower of the Bombay-based All India Muslim League, which was also the INC's main political rival in the Indian national sphere and advocated for a separate Muslim Indian state.⁴⁵ The Welfare League, founded by two Hindus in New York City, had not begun as a Muslim organization, but Khan's partisan leadership had accelerated a shift toward an explicitly Muslim identity. By 1944, the organization actively described itself as the Muslim League's unofficial voice in the United States, complete with an all-Muslim membership and the insignia of a Muslim flag emblazoned on its letterhead. By contrast, the India League of America and its mostly Hindu affiliates in the Luce-Celler campaign continued to follow the INC, including the Congress' policy of secular nationalism that embraced

⁴⁴ The Indian American community included Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus. The majority were Sikh. R. Narayanan, "Indian Immigration & the India League of America," *Indian Journal of American Studies* 2:1 (1969): 3.

⁴⁵ Hindu-Muslim tensions within the U.S. Indian community were not new. Indeed, communal relations had become so strained by August 1944 that Richard Walsh insisted on including a provision in an India League document that called for members to make "special efforts for relations with Muslims in New York and elsewhere." Varma, 289.

Indians of all faiths – Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, and others.⁴⁶ President J.J. Singh was himself a non-observant Sikh who made the decision early on to discard the distinctive turban, beard, and long hair traditionally worn by Sikh males because of the inconvenient attention they invited in daily life.⁴⁷

Having concluded that there was greater support for the broader Indian measure, the Senate subcommittee unanimously voted to table the Langer bill. This decision cleared the path for the Luce-Celler measure to have its first hearing early the following year. A furious Khan vented his anger in a letter to Anup Singh, editor of the India League's monthly bulletin. Khan's anger remained strong when in early 1945, he, echoing Singh, framed the burgeoning legislative contest between the two Leagues in Washington explicitly in terms of the larger Indian independence struggle. However, the two men's opposing visions for Indian independence resulted in different interpretations. In Khan's telling, the legislative contest between the Langer and Luce-Celler bills not only tracked the divergent class-based priorities of the Welfare League and the ILA in the United States. Rather, the roots of the conflict could be traced back to the communal struggle in India pitting the Hindu-dominated Indian National Congress against the All India Muslim League.

To illustrate this point, Khan used the example of his own personal shift in allegiance from the Indian Congress to the Muslim League at the beginning of World War II. Once a devoted "follower of Gandhi," his "change of heart" came after hearing news of Congress leader Nehru's goodwill travels through Europe and China.

⁴⁶ Varma, 180.

⁴⁷ Singh complained about the "awful mental strain" he experienced as a "6-ft. Sikh" in New York City "stopping traffic at every corner" as a "cynosure of all eyes." Shaplen, "One-Man Lobby," 38, 40.

Disillusioned with the Congress leader for going on international bids to “buy friendship” while ignoring his “own poor countrymen . . . women and children starving” at home, Khan condemned the INC’s Hindu elites for consistently “fail[ing] to place the needs of the Indian people first.”⁴⁸ Khan argued that it was Hindus’ common neglect for the poor and suffering that had caused millions of Indian Muslims to reject the INC and embrace Mohammed Ali Jinnah and the All India Muslim League in its place. Through their interference at the Langer bill’s September hearing, the “two Sikhs and one Hindu” – here he referred to J.J. Singh, Anup Singh, and Shridlani – had followed in the INC’s same elitist tradition. By neglecting the “3,000 people who are in the United States NOW” to press for the Luce-Celler measure, they had sacrificed Indians’ livelihood to take up a “dream” measure which they “should know will never come true.” Extending his communalist critique into Koranic exegesis, Khan went on to explain the Welfare League’s Indian citizenship bill as an expression of the Islamic imperative to “translate” the “‘Golden Rule’ into deeds, to “clothe the naked and feed the hungry” throughout the “Muslim world.”⁴⁹ A statement of support from All India Muslim League leader Mohammed Ali Jinnah himself, in which he expressed “warm sympathy” for the Langer legislation, powerfully reaffirmed Khan’s claim to represent the communal view.⁵⁰

Non-Indian observers probably weren’t aware of the debt Khan’s position owed to Jinnah’s letter of support. It established a basis for Khan’s later claims to speak as a diasporic representative of Mohammed Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League in India. In this way, Khan’s supposed ties to the Indian political group bolstered his legitimacy in

⁴⁸ Mubarek Ali Khan to Anup Singh, November 4, 1944, *File on S. 236*, NARA I, Washington, DC.

⁴⁹ *New India Bulletin*, August-September 1945, 2-3.

⁵⁰ Reprinted in the *New India Bulletin*, November 1944, 3-4.

Washington. He spoke as more than the figurehead of an obscure Indian American group, but rather as an overseas spokesman for the one of the most powerful Muslim politicians in India. And as Jinnah's international profile grew, so did Khan's.

* * * * *

Wartime developments over the first half of 1945 bolstered Washington's interest in the Luce-Celler bill, culminating with its first victory in the House Immigration and Naturalization Committee that June. The American-British relationship had deteriorated, and after a year of setback due to infighting within the Indian American community the ILA's position benefited.⁵¹ With Whitehall officials insisting that Britain's plan was still Indian self-government within a British system, not independence, and U.S. officials under growing pressure to demonstrate their commitment to Indian independence, Acting Secretary of State Joseph Grew issued a statement in late January 1945 affirming America's sympathetic commitment to help settle the India question. While far from explicit, his statement renewed hope among some Indian observers of Washington's growing willingness to intercede on India's behalf. Expectations for passage ran high, bolstered by official nods from the U.S. Attorney General, U.S. State Department, and the White House – first under Roosevelt and then under Truman – calling for passage as vital to help “win the war and to establish a secure peace.”⁵² Recalling how the President's endorsement had come just before the Chinese repeal bill passed Congress in the fall of 1943, advocates optimistically predicted that victory would come just as swiftly in India's case. The outpouring of official support was accompanied by popular

⁵¹ Kenton Clymer, *Quest for Freedom: The United States and India's Independence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 206.

⁵² Reprinted in *India Today*, March 1945, 2.

mobilization among religious groups, organized labor, and Indian American groups in California that claimed to represent the the “overwhelming majority of East Indian residents” in America in their “whole-hearted” support for the Luce-Celler bill.⁵³

Testimony by ILA representatives at the Luce-Celler bill’s first Congressional hearing in March 1945 reflects how the independence movement not only created the organizational infrastructure and networks of support subsequently remobilized in service of repeal. The immigration issue also gave Indian independence activists in the United States a high-profile platform to renew attention to the plight of their colonized homelands and revive long-standing calls for American intervention – if largely unheeded – in the British-Indian impasse. Continuing the Chinese campaign’s strategy of expediency, ILA representatives at the hearing focused their arguments for the Luce-Celler bill’s passage on U.S. wartime and postwar interests in India. One recurring theme was the measure’s promise to improve America’s image among Indians. Singh reported that the bill was already “front-page news” in India, where it was widely touted as a “test case” of America’s “professions of democracy and equality.” Citing reports of Communism’s growing popularity on the subcontinent, Rep. Luce warned that a legislative defeat would only push Indians further toward the Kremlin. Further underscoring the urgency of passage, America needed a strong position at the upcoming San Francisco Conference from which to pressure its European allies – here she presumably meant Great Britain – to relinquish their colonial possessions. If Congress

⁵³ Religious support came from the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ and the Foreign Missions Conference, representing over one hundred foreign missions boards and organizations. The C.I.O. and International Ladies’ Garment Workers Union both endorsed the bill. Indian American supporters included B.S. Sunga of the Hindustan Welfare Society of America and Surain Singh Dhillor of the India National Congress Association of America House. Committee on Immigration, *File on H.R. 1624*, 79th Cong., 1st sess. (1945), Box 100, RG 46, Legislative Records Office (NARA I), Washington, DC.

refused to pass this bill, she warned, American criticisms of European imperialism would suffer” from a “certain degree of hypocrisy” insofar as America “cannot successfully deplore a policy which we practice.”⁵⁴

Singh was more direct in his criticisms of the British. In fact, he strategically appealed to America’s interest in distancing itself from its British ally by emphasizing how the measure’s enactment would not only increase Indians’ already “tremendous amount of friendly feeling toward the people of the United States,” but also distinguish more sharply the “line of demarcation” between the two Allied powers. The second argument was economic. If passed, Singh argued, the commercial benefits for Americans would be substantial. In his signature forthright style, the India League president counted off the many things India would need to industrialize after the war –“technicians...capital, machinery, machine tools,” among others. “Give me any other country that will be able to supply us to fill all our needs excepting you,” he declared. Rep. Celler took up the argument in his subsequent statement, reiterating the bill’s purpose to foster goodwill between the two powers “primarily” for the “enlargement of [America’s] foreign trade.”⁵⁵

J.J. Singh took advantage of the forum to present a scathing critique of British wartime policies in India. With his anti-British testimony, Singh effectively transformed the House Immigration Committee hearing into a dual forum for Indian independence.

⁵⁴ House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *To Grant a Quota to Eastern Hemisphere Indians and To Make Them Racially Eligible for Naturalization: Hearings on H. R. 173*, 79th Cong., 1st sess., 1945, 85-86, 89.

⁵⁵ The economic argument was further supported by a State Department witness’ reference to a telegram received from New Delhi in which the Government of India cited pending negotiations for a U.S.-India trade and commerce treaty as collateral to leverage official interest in the immigration measure. The note advised U.S. officials that “in the absence of such legislation...sentiment in India may preclude the extension of reciprocal trade treatment to the US.” Acting Secretary of State Joseph Grew, to Samuel Dickstein and Richard Russell, Immigration Committee Chairs, March 6, 1945, Senate Immigration Committee, file on S. 236, 79th Cong., 1st sess. (1945), NARA I, Washington, DC.

Addressing previous criticisms of the Indian war effort as “half-hearted,” the India League president maintained that if any Americans “found fault” with India’s “lack of war effort,” the responsibility lay “at the door of the British imperialists and not on the Indians.” If the British had really wanted to mobilize a popular war in India and mobilized the people’s sentiments, he contended, they would not have put a “great disciple of democracy” like Congress leader Jawaharlal Nehru in prison; even today a “great man who should be sitting in the conferences at Yalta and San Francisco, is rotting in jail in India.”⁵⁶ In a bold calculation, he maintained that, were it not for British intransigence on the Indian independence issue, the Indian volunteer army would have seen at least five times the number of current Indian enlistees join the fight against Japan. Upon hearing Singh’s statement, Noah Mason of Illinois (R-IL) declared Singh’s the “most spectacular” presentation at the hearing, which had done more to sway him in favor of the bill than those of “all the other witnesses put together.”⁵⁷

The bill’s Southern Democratic opponents were not so easily persuaded. Both Rep. Allen of Louisiana and Ed Gossett of Texas argued that Congress had gone far enough in breaking down our immigration laws. Allen specifically objected to witnesses’ use of war-related arguments as “ridiculous”; Indians’ desire to defend themselves and their country from Japanese attack had “nothing to do with the U.S.,” he countered, but arose out of their desire to “defend their own homes.” Furthermore, so long as India remained under British control, he anticipated that any future increase in trade would benefit Great Britain more than it did the United States. Revisiting the colonial question, Rep. Gossett of Texas objected that the British might interpret passage of the act as an

⁵⁶ Nehru was released from prison in June 1945.

⁵⁷ *To Grant a Quota to Eastern Hemisphere Indians*, 82-86.

American attempt to “alienate the affections of some of their oppressed Empire people” against them. Others echoed his concern, questioning the likely impact on Anglo-American relations.⁵⁸ The endorsements of Delhi and the White House may have tempered their concerns, but short of a formal statement from Whitehall, Southern critics insisted that they could not vote for the Luce-Celler measure in good conscience. In reality, the argument was a ruse, and passage a game of numbers. Restrictionists, Southern lawmakers opposed any proposal to liberalize immigration on principle, but the colonial issue offered a reasonable grounds for objection. Sensing that the bill was poised for passage, Georgia Democrat Robert Ramspeck discreetly recruited several absentee members of the committee – Southern Democrats and isolationist Republicans – to show up on the last day of the hearing and vote against the measure; the simultaneous absence of three lawmakers who supported the bill cinched its defeat.

Rep. Celler promptly wrote the White House and State Department soliciting their intervention to keep the legislation alive. He pointed to the outpouring of negative press in the Indian media and grumbling in official Delhi circles as proof of the resentment unleashed by the committee’s negative vote. Indians in America expressed similar disappointment. A Sikh farmer in California’s Imperial Valley, Rattan Singh conveyed the “great shock” of the local Indian community and growing dismay at what the legislative defeat might mean for Indian farmers like himself. If nothing was done, the farmer lamented, Indians in the area would soon “lose their lands or ranches” at the hands of racist judges looking to disenfranchise Indians on the grounds of their ineligibility to

⁵⁸ *To Grant a Quota to Eastern Hemisphere Indians*, 82-86.

citizenship.⁵⁹ But the appeals were in vain. Roosevelt's death a few weeks later, coupled with Assistant Secretary of State Dean Acheson's unwillingness to get involved, precluded any immediate action for relief by the executive branch.

At this juncture, official intervention by the Government of India at Delhi brought the bill back into contention later that spring. Sir Girja Bajpai, the official Indian representative to Washington, had first approached the U.S. State Department two years earlier to ask about the possibility of a similar bill to affirm India's "equality with the Chinese." The proposal, Bajpai reported back to Delhi, was favorably received, but at Berle's request, Indian officials limited their efforts to private forums lest the perception of foreign meddling evoke a backlash among the restrictionist bloc of Southern lawmakers who dominated the House and Senate Immigration Committees.⁶⁰ The Luce-Celler bill's defeat in the House Immigration Committee spurred him to action – this time, to secure Whitehall's approval and thereby neutralize Southern fears of British reprisal. The effort was timely. Germany's surrender that May shifted the Allied focus to India as a vital military partner in the remaining Pacific battle against Japan. Recognizing its own need to curry Indians' goodwill and ameliorate tensions with the INC, Whitehall gave its endorsement for the Luce-Celler measure in May 1945 as a "gesture of friendship" honoring India's past military contributions and anticipating its future role in

⁵⁹ Rattan Singh to Khan, March 26, 1945; reprinted in *New India*, May 1945, 2.

⁶⁰ Bajpai to Foreign Office in Delhi, June 9, 1943, Telegram R, File 379-X/43 (1943), Department of External Affairs, INA, Delhi, India. Bajpai was decidedly unabashed about the strategy of capitalizing on American approbation for the Chinese to win collateral gains for India. In another report to Delhi, he cited the high level of sympathy for the Chinese Repealer measure in the U.S. press to argue that "if this sympathy shows signs of bearing fruit, there is no reason why advantage should not be taken of the situation to bring Indians within the scope of the proposed relief. Bajpai to O.K. Caroe, Secretary of Indian External Affairs Department, June 10, 1943, File 379-X/43, Department of External Affairs, INA, Delhi, India.

finishing the fight.⁶¹ Whitehall's approval was the lynchpin. With British support assured, the India League and its advocates moved quickly to expedite another hearing on the Luce-Celler bill before the Congressional session ended. Truman pre-empted further deadlock in the House by meeting personally with Rep. Robert Ramspeck of Georgia who agreed not to interfere with the bill's progress. The entire House Immigration Committee convened within weeks and reported the measure out favorably in late June 1945, to await a vote by the full House of Representatives that fall.

"What Does Iowa Know of India?": Translating Indian Communal Struggle to an American Audience

Khan watched the rapid progress of the Luce-Celler bill with dismay and alarm, as the ILA's campaign discredited more than five years of his personal toil. As the Langer bill's prospects continued to diminish, Khan increasingly drew from India's long history of Hindu-Muslim communal conflict to bolster flagging interest in the Welfare League's more limited citizenship bill. If, as he framed it, the battle between the two Leagues was a diasporic manifestation of the historical Hindu-Muslim conflict, it was also a prime arena for redress; framed differently, the Langer bill was important as a corrective to the global and longstanding Hindu domination of Indian Muslim populations. During a time when such rhetoric had become commonplace among Muslim leaders in India, Khan's turn to religious themes was not without precedent. But he soon found himself facing another challenge to reformulate the Hindu-Muslim conflict in terms comprehensible to an American audience whose limited knowledge of the conflict

⁶¹ The British Ambassador formally notified the U.S. State Department of British government support for the Indian immigration bill in a telegram dated May 3, 1945; Telegram 73, File 256-F.E./45 (1945), INA, Delhi, India.

presented both an opportunity and a hindrance to the Welfare League's final bids for support.

By all indications, few Americans were familiar with India's pluralistic tradition, much less its central place in political debates over independence. Even by World War II, American experts on Asia were mostly limited to policymaking, religious, and academic circles.⁶² The general dearth of reporting on Asian topics by many mainstream media outlets did little to remedy the situation.⁶³ A poll taken shortly before the Simla Conference revealed most Americans' rudimentary understanding of the negotiations over India's independence as being only between Indian leaders and the British; few Americans, the figures showed, were aware of any other factors in the debate beyond the colonial relationship. Of the approximately fifty Midwest counties surveyed, 70 percent of respondents had never heard of Muslim League leader Jinnah; of the remaining 30 percent, 2/3 could not name the party he headed. Eighty-five per cent had never heard of Pakistan, and of those who had, most could not explain what it was.⁶⁴ Congressional transcripts indicated that the situation among American lawmakers was similar. Primers on India's diverse religious traditions were a staple at every India-related hearing between 1939 and 1945; these usually featured an Indian witness trying to explain why the terms "Indian" and "Hindu" were not, in fact, synonymous. When lawmakers invoked

⁶² Historian Warren Cohen made this argument for East Asia specifically but suggested that it extends to other parts of the continent as well. Warren Cohen, "American Leaders and East Asia, 1931-1938," in *American, Chinese, and Japanese Perspectives on Wartime Asia, 1931-1949*, ed. Akira Iriye (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1990).

⁶³ Herzstein notes how under Henry Luce, *Time-Life* magazines were among the first to devote significant attention to Asian affairs starting in the 1930s. Reflecting Luce's own missionary roots, however, the emphasis remained on China. Robert Herzstein, *Henry Luce, Time, and the American Crusade in Asia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁶⁴ By contrast, 82 per cent knew of Gandhi, though these same respondents were unable to name any other Indian leader. S. Chandrasekhar, "What Does Iowa Know of India and China?" *Asia and the Americas*, June 1945, 298-300.

religion in the discussion – usually in the form of an objection – they often did so vaguely, their statements suggesting only a dim awareness of what religious strife in India actually involved.⁶⁵

Khan's embrace of communal themes benefited from American media coverage of the Simla Conference in June 1945, which brought British and Indian leaders together to negotiate the terms of an Indian transitional government leading toward self-government. The meeting signaled a turning point in the political debates over Indian independence. According to INC President and Muslim leader Maulana Azad, Simla marked the first time that "the communal issue dividing different Indian groups" derailed progress toward independence rather than the politics between India and Britain.⁶⁶ Nehru's remarks after the conference registered the hardening of Congress-League factional lines in the conference's wake. In a statement widely reprinted in U.S. periodicals, the Pandit went on the offensive, deriding Muslim League demands for a separate Muslim state as "absurd" and untenable, and communalism itself as a "product of medieval . . . pre-modern urges."⁶⁷ Echoing Nehru's stance, virtually all the major American media outlets attributed the conference's failure directly to Jinnah's unwillingness to compromise. In so doing they cemented Jinnah's standing as an

⁶⁵ Citing a 1943 report written by two Senators after their visit to the subcontinent, for example, Rep. Ramspeck (D-GA) recalled their descriptions of India as "divided up into fifty-odd different religious sects" with each sect made up of "fanatics in their religion." Yet when pressed, he was unable to elaborate with any further detail. Suffice to say, he cited the official assessment to support his argument that Indians should not be allowed entry to the U.S. lest this opening step cause "more complications" for American society. *To Permit the Naturalization of Approximately Three Thousand Natives of India*, 1944, 19-20, 26.

⁶⁶ Quoted in Peter Heehs, *India's Freedom Struggle, 1857-1947: A Short History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 151.

⁶⁷ Tillman Durdin, "'Revolts' in India Feared by Nehru," *New York Times*, July 16, 1945, 4.

important actor in Indian politics while introducing many Americans to the Muslim League leader for the first time in a highly unflattering light.⁶⁸

The hardening division between the INC and Muslim League in India led to a corresponding polarization between the Langer and Luce-Celler lobbies in the United States. Reversing its long record of condemning the British first, the India League of America joined Nehru and other INC leaders to blame Jinnah for hindering India's progress toward independence.⁶⁹ Coverage in the India League newsletter amplified the case against the Muslim League leader, in particular, challenging his claim to represent, under the exaggerated banner of the All India Moslem League, "90% of the 90 million Moslems of India."⁷⁰

Khan, for his part, dismissed such claims as "false rumors." In a July 1945 speech before the New York-based All Nations' Association, the Welfare League leader invoked his other title as New York secretary of the India Muslim League of America to reassure the audience that all of India's Muslims looked to Jinnah as a "symbol of freedom" as the guarantor of their dream for Pakistan. Using his earlier analogy of the legislative contest as a microcosm for the INC-Muslim League struggle, Khan painted a different portrait of Jinnah than the American press had reported. Rather than a power-hungry villain, Khan

⁶⁸ A lengthier *Time* cover story and profile piece on Jinnah the following year would prove far less flattering, depicting an icy urbane sophisticate "lax in his religious observances" who wore his Muslim faith as one did a change of clothing. "Long Shadow," *Time*, April 22, 1946. Such a profile is in keeping with the Jinnah described in Bose and Jalal's *Modern South Asia* (1997), as someone whose use of religion was a "political tactic, not an ideology to which he was even committed." Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, and Political Economy*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge), 159.

⁶⁹ As quoted in the *New York Times* following the talks' collapse, Singh asserted that the Indian Viceroy was only to blame "to the extent that he allowed himself to be bullied into retreat by a small minority." The title of the article was strikingly ill-fitting and did not reflect its actual contents. "Blame Put on British," *New York Times*, July 15, 1945, 6.

⁷⁰ Several exceptions were named, including INC President Maulana Azad and the Premier of Punjab Malik Khan Tiwana, both of whom denied the League's right to speak for them. "Failure at Simla," *India Today*, July 1945, 1.

described Jinnah as a victim of Hindu oppression and himself as Jinnah's analogue in the American context. Just as the "Hindu leaders" of the other camp had repeatedly "undermined" him at multiple Congressional hearings, so had uncompromising Hindu INC leaders undermined Indian Muslims like Jinnah and other religious minorities in the Indian political arena. Misunderstood and alienated, with his efforts blocked at every turn by power-hungry Hindu leaders, Khan claimed that he had "as much experience with the Hindu leading parties here in the U.S. as Mr. Jinnah had in India." Based on their experiences, he concluded, "Mr. Jinnah and I know it is impossible for us to get any cooperation from the Hindu PHD's."⁷¹

But Khan's deployment of communal rhetoric in the American context was never simply an extension of the rivalry between the INC and Muslim League. Even as he interpolated common communal discourses from the subcontinent, Khan recast his arguments to appeal to an American public with limited knowledge of Indian culture and history. Khan was deliberate, tailoring his petitions to resonate with deeply held American values. In one example, he invoked Americans' dedication to religious liberty to advocate for Pakistan as a safeguard against religious oppression to protect Indian Muslims then living in a "state of religious oppression."⁷² Before Muslims accepted the terms of British dominion status for India, Hindus needed to stop forcing their faith practices upon their Muslim counterparts. Otherwise, a separate Muslim state was the

⁷¹ *New India Bulletin*, August-September 1945, 3.

⁷² *New India*, May 1945, p. 2. The appeal was also consistent with the imperative to protect minority rights, which emerged as an important theme underwriting both the Welfare League's support for Indians' citizenship rights and for a separate Muslim state. Writing in the Welfare League's regular newsletter, *India News Bulletin*, Khan regularly called attention to Indians' plight as an oppressed minority group in the U.S., the vast majority of which shared the "social and economic segregation" suffered by African Americans. Not limited to America alone, he maintained that the plight of Indians in the U.S. was part of a global phenomenon in which the Indian national is "unrecognized and unwanted in many parts of the world." Mubarek Ali Khan, "Case of India," *New India Bulletin*, October-November 1945, 3.

only viable solution to protect India's beleaguered Muslim communities.⁷³ Lamenting the poor job that the U.S. media had done to explain the rationale for the proposed Muslim state, Khan attempted to convey, in terms comprehensible to Americans, what the state meant to Muslims like himself. In one of his more striking analogies, Khan again drew on America's own history to liken the Pakistan ideal to the original thirteen American colonies; in the same way that the American colonies formed the original core from which the present-day United States had developed, he explained, Pakistan marked a restoration of the subcontinent to the way things once were. Using historical references foreign to most Americans – citing the “great Mogul Empire” and its “great Muslim king” – Khan concluded his explanation by affirming Pakistan's symbolic importance as Indian Muslims' guarantee of “freedom and sovereignty.”⁷⁴

In a separate appeal, Khan revisited familiar territory when he invoked the India-related trope best known to American audiences – the Hindu caste system – to blame Hindu caste consciousness, instead of Muslim demands, for keeping the Indian people divided and fighting among themselves. It was not Americans' fault if they all they knew of India were Hinduism, Gandhi, and Nehru, he prefaced; that was what the “lecturing PHD's” and “Mr. Gandhi's propaganda ministers” in the United States – presumably, J.J. Singh and other likeminded pro-Congress Indians – had misled them to think. But Americans' misunderstanding of Indian affairs had made them blind to the injustices

⁷³ In an indirect call to arms, Khan declared that Muslim survival in India depended on their taking the situation “in their own hands,” claiming their “proud heritage,” and proclaiming “Islamic Nationhood or else, perish in a 'Hindu Sea.'” Mubarek Ali Khan, “Case of India,” *New India Bulletin*, October-November 1945, p. 3-4.

⁷⁴ *New India Bulletin*, August-September 1945, 2. It could be argued that Khan's vague description also encapsulated the ambiguities left gaping in the Muslim League's demand itself. For more on the contradictions of the Muslim League plan, see Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

carried out by Hindu leaders in the name of caste divisions. To illustrate his point, he drew a sharp contrast between the high-caste Brahmins who regularly treated India's "42 million untouchables" as "outcastes," and Muslims like Jinnah and himself, practitioners instead of "one caste, which is brotherhood."⁷⁵ No wonder internal divisions were so rampant in India, he maintained; under a majority Hindu Congress leadership, how could it be otherwise? Khan echoed the argument of wartime resolutions passed by the All India Muslim League, which frequently decried the Hindu caste system's "creation of barriers between man and man" as violently opposed to Islam's celebration of "nationalism, equality, [and] democracy."⁷⁶

Deployed in an American context, the trope took on a different resonance. In criticizing the Hindu adherence to caste differences, Khan followed in a long tradition of American denunciations of caste as antithetical to liberal, Western values and as a synecdoche for "all the elements in Hindu society" perceived to "retard" India's advancement.⁷⁷ As early as the 1850s, American missionary writers in India had singled out caste as the both the "heart of Hinduism, and hence of Indian society," and the main obstacle to their project of conversion and civilization.⁷⁸ Seventy years later, Chief Justice Sutherland invoked caste to justify the Supreme Court's decision to deny self-described "Brahmin" Bhagat Singh Thind his claim to American citizenship; even if

⁷⁵ *New India Bulletin*, August-September 1945, 3.

⁷⁶ The same resolution affirmed the Muslim League demand for "sovereign independent state" for Muslims. "Resolution Passed at the Convention of the Muslim League Legislators held at Delhi on 8th & 9th April 1946," reprinted in C.M. Naim, ed., *Iqbal, Jinnah, and Pakistan: The Vision and the Reality* (Syracuse, NY: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, 1979), 209-210.

⁷⁷ Harold Isaacs, *Scratches on Our Minds: American Images of China and India* (New York: John Day Company, 1958), 388.

⁷⁸ Quoted in Jennifer C. Snow, *Protestant Missionaries, Asian Immigrants, and Ideologies of Race in America, 1850-1924* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 132.

Brahmins were classified as Caucasian, Sutherland had argued, caste was the marker of an alien mindset not in keeping with the “white civilization.”⁷⁹ Khan’s use of the same trope twenty years after *Thind* as part of a campaign to reclaim that lost citizenship was both ironic and tragic, revealing the extent of his desperation to shore up the Welfare League’s failing campaign.

In the absence of additional sources, it is unclear how many Americans heard or read Khan’s speeches and petitions, but clear that the All Nations’ Association’s had a limited audience. Even so, Khan’s embrace of communal language attracted a few likeminded supporters to the Welfare League’s waning cause. In its final days, the lobby for the Langer bill became an inter-organizational effort, as the newly created India Muslim League of America and the All Nations Association joined Khan to rally support on its behalf.⁸⁰ According to Welfare League records, one person who did read and respond to Khan’s appeals was All India Muslim League leader Mohammed Ali Jinnah himself. Khan had been in contact with Jinnah since at least 1941, when the Welfare League president initiated correspondence to solicit Jinnah’s endorsement for the citizenship bill.⁸¹ But Jinnah’s letters to Khan grew decidedly warmer and frequent, as the Muslim leader came to recognize the importance of international opinion to the Pakistan question. He said as much in a September 1945 letter to Khan. Citing the “need”

⁷⁹ *United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind* (261 U.S. 204, 43 Sup Ct. 338: 1922), Appellant’s Brief, 12; quoted in Snow, 125.

⁸⁰ While not a Muslim himself, Henry Tudor Mason served alongside Khan as regional chairman of the India Muslim League of America’s New York branch.

⁸¹ Ali Jinnah expressed his support for the “betterment of the Indians and particularly of the Musalmans” in attaining the status of “full fledged American citizens.” Ali Jinnah to Khan, August 27, 1941, Senate Immigration Committee, file on S. 1595, Box 22, 78 Cong., 2 sess. (1944), RG 46, NARA I, Washington, DC.

for the “American public to understand the creed . . . policy and program” of the All India Muslim League as well as its “goal of Pakistan,” Jinnah requested regular correspondence with the New York Indian leader and enclosed literature for the Welfare League to use in rallying support for partition among American audiences.⁸²

Khan readily obliged. In stark contrast with its early petitions for citizenship, the Welfare League’s later appeals emphasized communal difference. These appeals ignored the 3,000 Indian residents, most of them Sikh farmers neither Hindu nor Muslim, on whose behalf the citizenship bill had first been drafted. Perhaps the starkest testament to their erasure from the campaign came during a speech Khan gave at an All Nations’ Association rally in New York City. Narrating the migration history of Indians to the U.S., he described how early Indian immigrants – in his words, the “majority of them Hindus” – had traveled to America “eager to spread the word of Hindu Domination in this part of the world.” Nowhere in the long address did he mention the Hindus’ much larger Sikh cohort; by the 1940s, Sikhs made up 70 percent of the Indian American community compared with the Hindus’ 5 percent.⁸³ Spoken by someone who had lived and worked with Indians on both coasts for over two decades, this could be nothing short of a deliberate misrepresentation. In order to make his arguments pitting a weak and oppressed Muslim India against a domineering “Hindu India” suffice, Khan ultimately used American ignorance in service to the Muslim League’s political agenda. Khan’s statement further reflected one of the wartime campaign’s greatest ironies: how, in the battle for Indian rights, the most disenfranchised voices were arguably those of the West

⁸² Montague A. Machell, *Muslim Valley Forge: An Introduction to Mubarek Ali Khan* (1949), 22.

⁸³ R. Narayanan, “Indian Immigration & the India League of America,” 3.

Coast farmers who made up the majority of the Indian American community and stood to benefit most directly from the proposed legislation.

By the end of 1945, the focus on communalism had thus transformed the Welfare League campaign from a community-based campaign for material relief to an overseas extension of the Muslim League effort to raise international support for Partition. The partnership culminated in a great honor for Khan one year later, when he and the New York-based Welfare League accompanied two representatives of the All-India Moslem League on a U.S. speaking tour intended to publicize the case for Pakistan before American and international audiences.⁸⁴ In this way, the relationship ultimately came full circle. Even as Khan drew upon his homeland ties to Jinnah and the All India Muslim League to shore up his and the Welfare League's legitimacy in American circles, Jinnah looked to Khan and the U.S. Indian community to bolster the Muslim League's case for Pakistan on a wider world stage. All would see their dream realized within the year, resulting in such violent upheaval and loss of life that few could have imagined would be the legacy of their efforts.

The Victory of Luce-Celler

While Indian American activism (and infighting) largely defined the first year and a half of the Luce-Celler campaign, inter-branch politics in Washington, coupled with pressure from both Delhi and Whitehall dominated the final year. As such, the eventual passage of the Luce-Celler bill in July 1946 was as much a testament to Congressional

⁸⁴ Madame Shah Nawaz of the Punjab Legislative Assembly and Mr. M.A.H. Ispahani of the Bengal Legislation Assembly were handpicked by Jinnah himself. "Back India Opposition," *New York Times*, November 26, 1946, 24. M.A.H. Ispahani would return to the U.S. three years later as Pakistan's first official Ambassador to the United States.

lobbying by an executive branch anxious to court the sympathies of Indians on the verge of independence, as it was the culmination of efforts by Indian American lobbyists like J.J. Singh and groups like the India League of America.

Four months after an intervention by Delhi revived the bill in the House committee, the Luce-Celler bill passed the full U.S. House of Representatives by a vote of nearly three to one. Belying the wide margin of the final vote, the floor debate was a long and contentious one; the many vitriolic statements made over the four-hour discussion indexed the significant opposition that remained among Southern Democrat opponents. Only the staunchest House opponent of repeal, Representative Allen of Louisiana raised the issue of communalism, and just once. Citing recent reports of Hindus and Muslims “killing each other on the streets,” he questioned the wisdom of “transport[ing] to America” an “internal quarrel” that had been “going on for ages over there.” But with so many lawmakers already committed to passage on the strength of U.S. security and commercial interests in India, his warnings passed unremarked.⁸⁵ Subsequent reports of increasing violence on the subcontinent facilitated direct intervention by the Truman Administration after the bill hit a roadblock in the Senate Immigration Committee. As growing disillusionment over American policies on decolonization manifested in public condemnations and displays of violence, Truman personally persuaded committee chairman and Southern Democrat Richard Russell of Georgia to allow the measure to proceed. A Senate subcommittee led by freshman

⁸⁵ Statements by sponsors Emanuel Celler and Clare Boothe Luce reiterated the expedient motivations behind its passage. Celler harped on the promise of the Indian market for American goods, while Luce focused on the legislation’s “political expediency” during a time when “Asiatic colonial peoples” were “shopping for political ideologies” and, in another allusion to the rising Communist threat, were “inclined” to do so “in Moscow.” *Congressional Record*, October 10, 1945, 9526-7.

Senator J. William Fulbright issued a favorable report in April 1946. The full committee sent it to the Senate floor for a vote, where like its companion bill in the House, it passed easily that June.

* * * * *

On July 2, 1946, President Truman signed the Luce-Celler bill into law.⁸⁶ Its passage unleashed a wave of congratulatory and jubilant reports in the United States and Indian media. Not unexpectedly, Singh received wide praise for his role in the process. Having watched the progress of the campaign from Delhi, Nehru noted the “striking tenacity” behind Singh’s “single-handed piloting” of the Indian immigration bill. A note from Gandhi to American writer Louis Fischer called the ILA president’s lobbying work “solely responsible” for its successful enactment.⁸⁷ The *Time* reporter covering the bill’s passage described Singh’s efforts in great detail, noting the letters, phone calls, and hours that the “handsome, swarthy . . . 6-ft. Sikh from Kashmir” had spent “tirelessly stalk[ing] Capitol Hill hallways” in order to secure passage.⁸⁸ The statement ignored Mubarek Ali Khan and the other Indian advocates who pioneered the strategy in 1939.

The goal of Pakistan realized, Khan returned to his home in Phoenix, where he continued to support the Indian Muslim community through the work of the *Pakistan*

⁸⁶ Due to a technicality, the Indian legislation was combined with the recently passed Filipino naturalization bill, which made all natives of the Philippines eligible for U.S. citizenship upon the islands’ independence. An event originally scheduled to take effect earlier, but delayed by war, formal Philippine independence from U.S. colonial rule was completed two days later on July 4. The conjoining of the two bills was described by many Washington observers as fitting, insofar as both bills stemmed from a common impetus to affirm America’s commitment to the self-determination of Asian peoples. The U.S. Congress quietly extended natives of Pakistan the same eligibility to immigrate and naturalize upon the nation’s creation in 1947.

⁸⁷ Both quoted in Varma, 299.

⁸⁸ “100 Indians,” *Time*, June 17, 1946. Indeed, Singh tried in the fall of 1946, but after a series of frustrated inquiries with U.S. immigration officials, he abandoned the idea as too complicated.

Welfare League, so renamed to reflect the new state of affairs on the subcontinent.⁸⁹

After the legislative victory, all but one of Singh's fellow Indian lobbyists in the Luce-Celler campaign returned to India, fulfilling Khan's predictions (if not his condemnations) of their essential transiency.⁹⁰ J.J. Singh stayed in the United States for another twelve years, continuing to lead the ILA until he, too, left for India in 1959.⁹¹

After four decades as a bachelor, Singh married and had a son, and he claimed he returned for his son's sake. Spoken by the individual dubbed a "one-man lobby" for Indian American rights, Singh's words encompass the diverse motivations animating the drive to repeal Indian exclusion in the years leading up to independence.⁹² Anticipating the difficulties the next generation of Indians in America would have growing up with "dual loyalties – to the country of [their] birth and to the nationality of [their] parents," Singh decided to spare his young son of these "conflicts" by moving back to the subcontinent. "Life, as such, is difficult and full of problems," he concluded. "I did not want to add another problem for my son. And that is why I came back to India."⁹³

⁸⁹ In subsequent years, the organization played host to Muslim leaders from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, its emphasis shifting from minority rights to a pan-Muslim imperative to foster "unity among the Muslims for the sake of Peace in the Middle East and Near East and Peace in the World." For example, Amir Saud, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, was the Arizona Indian Muslim community's guest in January 1947; Machell, *Muslim Valley Forge*, 13-15. Also see Bald, 184-188.

⁹⁰ Dr. Shridlani, Khan's antagonist at the 1944 hearing, settled in Delhi as a journalist. Dr. Anup Singh, the former editor of the India League newsletter, served several terms in the Upper House of the Parliament in Delhi and later as an Indian representative to the United Nations Commission on Korea. Several others returned to take up academic posts at Indian universities.

⁹¹ Without the unifying goal of Indian independence, the organization floundered over many years for a new focus, which it never found.

⁹² Robert Shaplen, "One-Man Lobby," *New Yorker*, March 24, 1951, 35-55.

⁹³ J.J. Singh, "Why I Came Back to India," *Times of India*, January 26, 1969, 5.

Chapter 3

The Limits of Reform: Korean Americans and the Problem of Korean Independence

In view of this uncertain situation of Korea's future status could it be humanly possible for you to introduce an amendment to the H.R. 3070 to include the Koreans too?¹

Indians were not the only colonial group to seize upon the Chinese repeal campaign to demand rights of their own. During World War II, Koreans in the United States launched a parallel campaign invoking America's anti-colonial imperative to justify similar gains for Koreans. Between 1943 and 1946, Hawaii-based activist Kilsoo Haan and other Korean community leaders worked closely with Joseph Farrington (R-HI), Hawaii's territorial delegate to Congress, to make a case for a Korean immigration quota and Koreans' citizenship eligibility. Advocates of the Farrington bill, or Korean Immigration and Naturalization Bill (KINB), seized upon Korea's geographical position between America's Chinese ally and its Japanese enemy to justify the extension of legislative gains to Koreans. In so doing, they claimed for Korea common enmity with the United States against the Japanese on the one hand, while playing up their solidarity with America's Chinese allies on the other. Following the success of the Indian immigration campaign after 1945, KINB advocates invoked Korea's similarity to India as a decolonizing power. They advocated for the KINB as an anti-colonial measure that would shore up goodwill for U.S. wartime and postwar projects in the Pacific and serve as proof of America's commitment to self-determination for all peoples. Unlike the Indian immigration campaign, however, their efforts did not result in legislation.

¹ Haan to Senator Guy Gillette, October 21, 1943, Box 1, Folder 33, Kilsoo Haan papers, University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC), Santa Cruz, CA.

This failure reflected America's divergent relationships with Korea and India's respective colonial masters, Japan and Great Britain. In the minds of many U.S. officials, Korea's relationship with Japan created the suspicion that Koreans would be loyal to America's wartime enemy – and Koreans' perceived racial similarity to their Japanese masters heightened the suspicion. Migrants' relationship to the fight for independence also damaged the Korean case for repeal in contrast to India's. The KINB campaign's failure suggests the importance of migrants' long-standing struggles for homeland independence on Congress' reception of the movement for exclusion repeal. Like their Indian counterparts, Korean Americans claimed a connection between their campaigns for immigration and naturalization rights in the United States as connected and their diasporic struggle for homeland independence. Unlike their Indian counterparts, U.S. Koreans played a central role in the fight for their homeland's independence. This central role invested their activism with greater significance over the long term; it also affected Korea's course after its liberation at the end of World War II.

This chapter argues that the United States' conflicted relationship to Korean independence primarily caused the legislative failure of the KINB. If granting immigration and naturalization rights to Indians anticipated the subcontinent's transition from colony to sovereign nation, the vicissitudes of the KINB campaign between 1943 and 1946 reflected the struggles of the United States and other Allied powers to resolve the question of Korean independence during and immediately after World War II. In the same season that Chinese exclusion repeal passed, the United States, Britain, and China, jointly issued the Cairo Declaration, which anticipated the ambiguities of Korea's transition from a Japanese colony during World War II to a site of Allied tutelage in

preparation for independence after 1945. The Allies, “mindful of the enslavement of the people of Korea,” agreed to uphold Korea’s right to independence and self-government after its liberation from Japan “in due course.” The ambiguity of “in due course,” set the stage for conflict in and about Korea.

This chapter further highlights the World War II campaign for the KINB as a point of meaningful intersection between the repeal movement and the debate over Hawaiian statehood. Hawaii represented the one place in 1940s America where persons of Asian descent constituted a meaningful political force. The receptivity that Hawaii delegate Joseph Farrington showed to the Korean community’s demands reflected their local influence. In general, however, the wartime roots of the KINB campaign in Hawaii weakened its political viability at the national level, because the marginalization of Hawaii mimicked the marginalized status of Koreans in the United States.

A History of Korean Immigration and Independence

Japanese expansion into Korea shaped the early history of Koreans in America. Through the joint efforts of American Protestant missionaries working with Hawaii sugar planters, the first waves of Koreans came to the islands as laborers between 1903 and 1907. Young, male, and unmarried, most migrants planned to stay in America for only a few years, accumulate savings, and return to Korea. But escalating Japanese aggression after 1905 precluded the possibility of safe return. The peninsula’s formal annexation by Japan in 1910 left Koreans in America without a homeland to claim as their own, and many decided that they would rather stay in a foreign land than return to Korea and live

under Japanese rule.² Korea's colonization transformed this early group of Korean migrants from sojourners to long-term exiles. It also effectively curtailed future Korean migration, as Koreans – reclassified as Japanese subjects under U.S. law – came under, first, the terms of the 1907 Gentleman's Agreement ending the flow of Japanese laborers into the U.S., and later the Immigration Act of 1924 which excluded Japanese altogether. These first waves of immigrants and their children formed the foundation of the World War II Korean American community, which numbered approximately 8,600 in Hawaii, and 1,500 in the mainland United States (mostly California) by 1940.³

Home to one of the largest Korean populations outside the peninsula, the U.S. territory of Hawaii quickly emerged as an important site within the diasporic movement for Korean independence. Korean Americans' activism to liberate their homeland from Japanese rule sustained a strong sense of Korean nationalism and ethnic identity, as migrants established organizations and published newspapers dedicated to the cause.⁴ Established in 1908, the Korean National Association (KNA, or *Kungminhoe*) was the most important and far-reaching of these; by World War I, KNA chapters were active in Honolulu, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, among other U.S. cities. China served as the seat of the Korean Provisional Government (KPG) in exile after 1919, but Hawaii remained the homebase of many of the movement's most important nationalist leaders as well as the primary source of the movement's funds.

² Korean picture brides and a limited number of Korean students were the main exceptions to the Korean immigration ban in effect from the Gentleman's Agreement of 1907 until the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952.

³ Bong-Youn Choy, *Koreans in America* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1979), 143.

⁴ Richard Kim, "Managing the "Foreign" and "Domestic": Kilsoo Haan, Korean Diasporic Nationalism and the U.S. Liberal State, 1931-1945," *Seoul Journal of Korea Studies* 19:1 (December 2006): 15-60.

The best known Korean American of the pre-World War II period, Syngman Rhee exemplified the diplomatic approach that defined the early Korean independence movement. He was well-suited to the task, having studied at Harvard and Princeton, where he purportedly gained an acquaintance with the future U.S. President Woodrow Wilson.⁵ Born in 1875 in the Korean city of Kaesong, Rhee earned his nationalist credentials early, serving several years in prison for his anti-Japanese activities before immigrating to the United States. Once in the United States, Rhee capitalized on his reputation in both Washington and within Korean community circles to become the chief spokesman for Korean independence to American and international audiences. He figured prominently in the events of 1919, which culminated in the KPG's formation as the representative governing body of a sovereign Korean nation in exile. After being unanimously elected the KPG's first president, Rhee was impeached six years later for abusing his authority and subsequently withdrew from public life.

Rhee's marginalization cleared the way for Korean Hawaii activist Kilsoo Haan to take on a more visible role in the movement after 1933.⁶ Twenty-five years Rhee's junior and of humbler background, Haan migrated to the islands in 1905, the son of plantation workers. Educated in Hawaii and San Francisco, he received his Captain's

⁵ For more on Rhee's early life, see Chong-Sik Lee, *Syngman Rhee: The Prison Years of a Young Radical* (Seoul, Korea: Yonsei University Press, 2001); Robert T. Oliver, *Syngman Rhee: The Man Behind the Myth* (New York: Dodd Mead and Co., 1960). Especially in light of his later position as president of the Republic of Korea (ROK) from 1948 to 1960, Rhee continues to dominate U.S. scholarship on the Korean Independence Movement and its aftermath.

⁶ A figure long overlooked, Kilsoo Haan features prominently in several recent studies about the Korean independence movement in America and about Korean Americans during World War II. These include Richard S. Kim, "Managing the "Foreign" and "Domestic": Kilsoo Haan, Korean Diasporic Nationalism and the U.S. Liberal State, 1931-1945," *Seoul Journal of Korea Studies* 19, no. 1 (2006) and Lili M. Kim, *Resisting the Orientalization of the Enemy: Korean Americans, World War II, and the Transnational Struggle for Justice on the Homefront* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, forthcoming). Also see Wayne Patterson, *The Ilse: First-generation Korean Immigrants in Hawai'i, 1903-1973* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2000).

commission with the Salvation Army in 1920 but resigned after several years, citing irreconcilable theological differences. He then began a career in real estate, but never achieving much success, he drifted from job to job for the rest of his life. Haan began his public advocacy in the early 1930s, joining the KNA to fight for Korean liberation from Japan. After a brief stint as an officer in the Hawaii KNA, Haan resigned, citing personal disagreements with Rhee. The rivalry between the two men would persist into the World War II years. As part of the “in-between” or *haksaeng* (student) generation of Korean American leaders to come of age during the interwar years, Haan was representative of the shift away from the conservative, old-guard diplomacy embodied by Rhee, and toward the more direct-action, militant approach that gained ground after 1930. While this more radical strain did not become dominant among Korean nationalists in America until after World War II, left-leaning groups like the Korean National Revolutionary Party gained a steady following among Korean Americans through the 1930s, and set the stage for the postwar turn described later in the chapter.⁷

In 1933, Haan co-founded the Sino-Korean Peoples League (SKPL) of Hawaii, the organization with which he would remain most closely associated. Formed as a U.S. chapter of the Shanghai-based organization, the Hawaii SKPL called for Koreans across the United States, China, and Korea to support direct military action against Japan. The mission of the Hawaii branch of the League was to enlist U.S. military aid in Korea’s battle against Japanese militarism. Younger activists like Haan not only diverged from their elders in their approach to Korean independence. Having grown up and spent most

⁷ This growth tracked the rising militancy of Korean nationalist leaders and communities in China, which received the material support of Chinese Nationalist officials after the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931.

of their lives in the United States, many explicitly desired to improve life for Koreans living in America, especially those who had made it their permanent home and did not plan to return to Korea even after independence.⁸ This distinction fueled the prominence of younger activists in the 1940s campaigns for a Korean immigration and naturalization bill. Over the next decade, Haan carried out his lobbying efforts for both Korean independence and immigration under the SKPL banner, making its dual emphases on Sino-Korean solidarity and shared enmity against Japan on the Pacific front features common to both wartime campaigns.⁹

Haan's early career as a lobbyist was defined by his indictment of the Japanese. He first gained wide notice in Hawaii for a 1933 pamphlet in which he described an official plot by Tokyo to "Japanize" the islands in preparation for an eventual takeover by Japanese forces. Haan's writings complemented the official warnings against Japanese subversion and "menace" that dominated U.S. military assessments of Hawaii, among other state reports, throughout the 1920s and 1930s (well before Japan's 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor).¹⁰ Yet even federal officials and other local island leaders criticized Haan's writings as "bitterly anti-Japanese" and "alarmist."¹¹ Undeterred, Haan escalated his

⁸ See Anne Soon Choi, "'Unity for What? Unity for Whom?' The United Korean Committee of North America, 1941-1945," in *From the Land of Hibiscus: Koreans in Hawai'i, 1903-1950*, ed. Yong-ho Ch'oe (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007).

⁹ For more on the SKPL, see Richard Kim, "Managing the 'Foreign' and 'Domestic': Kilsoo Haan, Korean Diasporic Nationalism and the U.S. Liberal State, 1931-1945," *Seoul Journal of Korea Studies* 19:1 (December 2006), 16.

¹⁰ Gary Okihiro, *Cane Fires: The Anti-Japanese Movement in Hawaii, 1865-1945* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1992), Chapters 6-8. Okihiro frames the anti-Japanese movement in Hawaii as a longer phenomenon that spanned from the beginning of Japanese migration to the islands through the World War II years and after.

¹¹ OSS confidential memo re: Haan, 28 April 1942, RG 165, Box 2267, Folder 1, NARA II, College Park, MD.

admonitions a few years later in a statement before a specially appointed Joint Congressional committee on Hawaiian statehood. His appearance at the 1937 hearing marked his introduction to an official audience; it would be the first of Haan's five appearances over the next few years. Haan confirmed rumors of a Japanese plot to "unite the peoples of oriental descent as a unit" in a race war against island residents of "white racial origin." Citing his time in the Japanese consulate's employ, he claimed to have seen official pamphlets with instructions for Japanese domestic servants employed in American homes to "poison white children" in the event that war broke out between the United States and Japan.¹² Verifiable or not, Haan's self-described "secret evidence from the Japanese Consul" won him the ear of Senator Guy Gillette of Iowa (D-IA). As a member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, Gillette took great interest in these reports, and all the more so as Japanese propaganda advertising a "co-prosperity sphere" for "Greater East Asia" heightened Washington's fears of an impending race war.¹³

Haan's circle of influence expanded steadily after 1937, benefiting from U.S. policymakers' growing interest in Japanese aggression across Asia. Speaking at a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing in 1939, Haan foretold a Japanese attack on American soil and preached the dangers of appeasement and passivity in the face of Japanese expansionism. In a nod to his distinctly Korean heritage, Haan offered his colonized homeland as a cautionary tale and prime example of "Japanese fascistic ambition," of which China had recently become victim. Chinese and Koreans alike now

¹² U.S. Joint Congressional Committee on Hawaii, *Statehood for Hawaii*, 75th Cong., 2nd sess., 1937, p. 467.

¹³ For more on the Pacific War as a "race war," see John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986). For more on Guy M. Gillette and his work in U.S. foreign affairs, see "Guy Mark Gillette," in *The Biographical Dictionary of Iowa*, eds. David Hudson, Marvin Bergman, Loren Horton (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2008).

looked to America as their “only hope” to maintain “security and peace” in Hawaii and in the Far East.”¹⁴ In a statement that would later be cited to presage Pearl Harbor, Haan warned that if the United States did not take definitive action, Japanese militarists would gradually encroach on U.S. territory “starting with Hawaii, Alaska and Guam, moving down to the Panama Canal.” While largely dismissed at the time, U.S. officials would later reference his warnings as missed opportunities for preemptive action.¹⁵

These comments set the stage for Haan’s brief rise to local media celebrity as a “prophet” of Pearl Harbor after December 1941. In the months following the Japanese attack on Hawaii, Haan capitalized on Americans’ antipathy for Japanese to expand his influence to the mainland. In a speaking tour of the Pacific Northwest, Haan foretold a second wave of Japanese attacks programmed to target the West Coast United States early that summer. Imploring U.S. lawmakers to see Japanese American for the “menace” that they were, Haan called for more comprehensive security measures than detention alone.¹⁶ With anti-Japanese sentiment at its peak, his diatribes found receptive ears.¹⁷ At

¹⁴ U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *American Neutrality*, 76th Cong., 2nd sess., 1939, p. 513, 516, 520.

¹⁵ Haan buttressed his oral testimony with a written piece titled, “Japanization: A Threat to Hawaii.” While reiterating his general argument that “indecisive policy” by the U.S. would encourage Japanese aggression, the pamphlet singled out the subversive influence of Japanese-language schools in Hawaii. According to Haan, because the schools promoted “Japanism” to the hindrance of “Americanism,” they ultimately produced Japanese American youth who “retain[ed] Japanese traits and culture” and therefore could never become “100 percent American citizens.” RG 165, Box 2266, Folder 5: Propaganda Releases for 1939-41, NARA II, College Park, MD.

¹⁶ In one of his more memorable claims, Haan described Japanese plans to have 100 first-generation Japanese set forest fires across the Pacific Northwest, to be timed in conjunction with a larger Japanese invasion of the West Coast. To prevent such a scenario, Haan called for additional measures to protect against Japanese American treachery, including the liquidation and confiscation of Japanese aliens’ funds and assets for government use and the conscription of all males of Japanese descent between 18 and 44 years of age into a special U.S. army Agricultural Division charged with growing vegetables for the fighting men. “Propaganda Releases for 1942,” April 3, 1942, Regional File: Box 2266, p. 1, 3, 6, RG 165, NARA I, College Park, MD. Haan later claimed that his travels had been commissioned by the OSS, though officials denied any involvement. Charles Crittenden, Chief of Map Information Section at the OSS, to Haan, September 21, 1943, Box 1, Folder 33, Kilsoo Haan papers, UCSC, Santa Cruz, CA.

Haan's urging, local groups wrote their state representatives and local newspapers to demand harsher surveillance of Japanese American communities. But these were arguably redundant; by early 1942, federal plans for the internment of West Coast Japanese and Japanese Americans were already underway.

To be sure, not everyone believed Haan was what he claimed. FBI head J. Edgar Hoover, for example, described Haan as a "man whose loyalties [we]re for sale."¹⁸ So long as American interests dictated greater attention to the Pacific front, however, U.S. officials were reluctant to dismiss Haan altogether. And all the more after the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor seemed to bear out the truth of his warnings. Yet, Haan reached the height of his influence during World War II. Struck by the Korean American lobbyist's apparent success, U.S. military officer Elizabeth Ito of Hawaii attempted to explain how an otherwise obscure Korean from Hawaii had been able to attract a significant following among U.S. media and official circles. In a December 1943 report, Ito described how Haan had successfully exploited the public's ignorance of Asian affairs to pass himself off as a "Korean leader" who spoke "authoritatively for the 26,000,000 Koreans in Asia." She singled out two factors as the key to Haan's success: first, his "ability to convince these groups that he has far more prestige in Korean affairs and knowledge of the Far East than he actually has; and second, his flexible technique of identifying himself with the groups whose support he seeks." Although his fellow Koreans might know better, Ito noted how, in the "consciousness of the American public," Haan was being widely

¹⁷ Local rotaries and newspapers reprinted Haan's lectures in sensational front-page features that catered to indignant American audiences.

¹⁸ Writing in a July 1942 report to the State Department, Hoover also charged the Korean activist with aiding Japan by "deliberately trying to divide the Koreans" and of being open to play "a puppet for either the Japanese or for Russia." "Government Reports Concerning Haan," RG 165, Box 2267, Folder 1, NARA II, College Park, MD.

celebrated as an “anti-Japanese agitator motivated by patriotic, pro-American principles” with special “access to secret information” that helped the U.S. war effort. Shifting from Haan to a broader statement about the ignorance of white Americans, Ito stressed that the real danger lay in Haan’s influence among Americans who “either know so little about the Far East that they are apt to believe hearsay and unconfirmed reports or who agree with Haan’s viewpoint and see in him a useful exponent of their common attitude.” Already, she reported how in certain circles, Haan had a greater following than did the older and more established statesman, Syngman Rhee. In Ito’s estimation this was a dangerous situation, insofar as Haan posed a “considerable” threat to U.S. wartime interests as a “mercenary and political opportunist” who sought “support or furtherance of his personal and political prestige through any channels” available.¹⁹ The logic of the 1943 military report suggests how Americans’ lack of familiarity with Asia created opportunities for ambitious and, in some cases, unscrupulous Asian Americans like Haan to represent themselves as valuable experts on Asian affairs.

The Korean American Predicament During World War II

Korean independence activists agitated in vain before World War II. America’s long-standing practice of subordinating its Korea policy to other interests continued to undercut Koreans’ attempts to marshal Washington’s support toward their nationalist goals.²⁰ Years of protests and petitions to the U.S. government by Syngman Rhee, Kilsoo

¹⁹ “Military Intelligence Division Regional file (Korea) 1922-44,” p. 1, 2, 8, 11, RG 165, Box 2260, File 2030, NARA II, College Park, MD.

²⁰ The declaration of Korean independence during the March First movement followed by the establishment of the KPG after World War I briefly renewed hope that Washington would finally take up the Korean independence cause in line with America’s claims to support self-determination. But, as historian Erez Manela has shown, the promise of the “Wilsonian Moment” ended instead in the widespread

Haan, and others from across the Korean diaspora were met with ambivalence. Reluctant to offend a rising Japanese imperialist power or jeopardize America's colonial interests in the Philippines, U.S. policymakers refused to intervene on Korea's behalf. In the words of one Korean American writer, Washington's inaction represented a "betrayal of American claims to support the freedom of all colonial peoples to decide their own future."²¹

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 ended America's appeasement policy, formally bringing the United States into the Allied War against Japan on the Pacific front. Koreans in America unanimously welcomed America's formal entry into the war, hopeful that U.S. involvement would help them achieve the long-awaited independence of their homeland. They joined in the domestic war mobilization with gusto, their patriotic displays and declarations offered as proof of their commitment to the goal of Allied victory not only as Koreans eager to see a Japanese defeat, but as patriotic Americans seeking to advance U.S. democratic ideals and influence abroad.²² As the San Francisco-based *New Korea* newspaper noted in response to news of the bombing, the community's task now was to "convince and show our fellow American citizens that although we are Koreans by descent, we are first and last true loyal

disillusionment of colonial peoples. For more on the March First movement and the other events of 1919, see Erez Manela, *Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). For more on the U.S. and its ambivalent relationship with anti-colonial nationalist movements in Asia, see David Ryan and Victor Pungong, eds., *The United States and Decolonization: Power and Freedom* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), especially the introduction.

²¹ *New Korea*, June 13, 1937.

²² Among other things, Koreans in Hawaii and California bought war bonds in sums disproportionate to their community's modest size and formed civilian "Tiger Brigades" made up of Korean aliens to demonstrate their martial spirit and military commitment to the war despite their ineligibility to serve formally in the U.S. army. Choy, 173-4.

American[s] in our ways of living, thinking and ideals.”²³ In Hawaii, where Korean loyalties came under greatest scrutiny by the military government that took control of the islands following the attack, Korean community leaders issued proclamations along similar lines. As historian Lili M. Kim has argued, by using the language of “American democracy, Korean Americans framed their “devotion to Korean independence as an extension of American democratic ideals, and themselves as products of American democracy.”²⁴

But Koreans in America often found that their contributions were unwelcome.²⁵ Their physical resemblance to the Japanese made them easy targets of racial violence carried out in the name of patriotism. The anti-Japanese backlash evoked by Pearl Harbor placed Korean Americans in an awkward position, as citizens and aliens alike suffered harassment and even physical harm at the hands of their fellow Americans. A second-generation Korean American, Mary Paik Lee described the constant danger she and her family members faced during the World War II years, including stories of Korean American friends arbitrarily stopped on the highway by authorities, dragged out of their cars, and beaten.²⁶ The problem of anti-Japanese vigilantes became so pronounced that some Koreans on the West Coast and in Hawaii wore “I am Korean” badges.²⁷ In tragic

²³ “Our Stand,” *The New Korea*, December 11, 1941.

²⁴ Lili Kim, “In Pursuit of Imperfect Justice: The Predicament of Koreans and Korean Americans on the Homefront during World War II” (PhD diss., University of Rochester, 2001), 174, 176, 188-189.

²⁵ Mistaken identity, classification issues, and vigilante violence were all part of what Lili Kim has described as Korean Americans’ “wartime predicament.” Lili M. Kim, *Resisting the Orientalization of the Enemy: Korean Americans, World War II, and the Transnational Struggle for Justice on the Homefront* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, forthcoming).

²⁶ Mary Paik Lee, *Quiet Odyssey: A Pioneer Korean Woman in America* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990). For more on the everyday experiences of Koreans during World War II see Lili Kim, “In Pursuit of Imperfect Justice,” Chapter 3.

episodes of mistaken identity, Korean Americans became targets of violence carried out in the name of an American allegiance to which they likewise subscribed.

Wartime debates over Koreans' legal classification reflected the difficulty Korea's colonial status posed for U.S. officials. Because Korea was a Japanese colony, War Department officials initially grouped Koreans on the home front with Japanese as "enemy aliens" under the 1940 Registration Act. Extensive lobbying and repeated petitions from Haan and other outraged community representatives eventually persuaded federal officials to re-classify Koreans as non-hostile in January 1942.²⁸ While Korean American leaders commended the U.S. government for correcting its error, this small victory by no means resolved the identity issue. Confusion would persist for the duration of the war, undermining Koreans' professions of loyalty and allegiance to the U.S. cause.

The revival of the Korean independence movement in America after 1940 compounded the official ambivalence. Emboldened by the anti-colonial language of the Atlantic Charter, Koreans were one of several migrant groups to renew their activism on behalf of oppressed homelands in the wake of the Pearl Harbor attack. In early 1942, nine Korean organizations came together to form the United Korean Committee (UKC) as a coalition that spoke for the Korean community as a whole. The UKC's goals were

²⁷ The appearance of *Time* magazine's informational piece, "How to Tell a Jap" speaks to the severity of the issue, though it focused on Chinese. "How to Tell a Jap," *Time*, 21 December 1941, 33. Historian Lili Kim has documented some of the myriad ways that Koreans in Hawaii and California attempted to differentiate themselves from not only their Japanese colonizers but the Japanese Americans around them. Lili M. Kim, "In Pursuit of Imperfect Justice," Chapter 6. Confronted with the problem of Japanese internment, Kim argued that Koreans in the U.S. made the morally problematic choice to support the unjust policy, contributing to their own racialization with the Japanese enemy to their own detriment.

²⁸ Koreans' status took longer to resolve in Hawaii, where Military Governor General Robert Richardson, Jr. continued staunchly to oppose any change in policy. See Lili M. Kim, "How Koreans Repealed Their 'Enemy Alien' Status: Korean Americans' Identity, Culture, and National Pride in Wartime Hawai'i," in *From the Land of Hibiscus: Koreans in Hawai'i, 1903-1950*, ed. Yong-ho Ch'oe (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007).

twofold: Washington's support for an independent Korea, and its formal recognition of the Korean Provisional Government based in Chungking as Korea's representative governing body. But Koreans' fanatical engagement with independence activities posed a dilemma for Washington officials, who tended to view such diasporic activism on behalf of a homeland as inconsistent with full-fledged loyalty to the United States, whether the homeland was Asian or European.²⁹

In a memorandum on diasporic activism issued immediately after the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, U.S. State Department officials underscored the importance of unequivocal loyalty to the American war effort, noting that the "first concern of the United States must always be the unity of the country." The department understood that Americans might be "sympathetic to the national aspirations of their country of racial origin." Nevertheless, it drew a sharp distinction between the responsibilities of U.S. citizens and of aliens living in America during a time of war. Specifically, the State Department expressed its disapproval of "any attempt to enlist the support of American citizens of like racial background on the theory that they are 'fellow nationals.'" Specifically, it reasserted its opposition to "any activities designed to divide the allegiance of any group of American residents between the United States and any foreign government, in existence or prospect."³⁰ The demands of war, it concluded, required that Americans' loyalty be to the United States first.

²⁹ Lili Kim, "In Pursuit of Imperfect Justice," 188-189.

³⁰ "Policy Regarding 'Free Movements' in the United States," *Department of State Bulletin* 5 (December 13, 1941): 519-520. The memorandum was primarily directed at exiled European political figures, and only secondarily at smaller Asian colonial populations like Koreans and Indians in the United States. See Lorraine Lees, "National Security and Ethnicity: Contrasting Views during World War II," *Diplomatic History* 11:2 (May 2007), 118.

Korean Americans attempted to negotiate these wartime demands in various ways. As historian Lili Kim has described, community leaders consciously adopted the language of Americanism to frame their commitment to Korean independence as an “extension of their appreciation for American democracy and freedom.”³¹ But this approach did little to further the cause of repeal. U.S. officials continued to view Korean American professions of patriotism and dedication to the American war effort with suspicion, as expedient and superficial instruments in the desire for Korean independence. Non-Korean observers in Hawaii and California fed these doubts. In the words of one Hawaii resident quoted in a March 1942 government report, “As long as helping America will help Korea, [Koreans] will do what they can.”³² An advisor to the Public Morale Section, a civilian organization in Hawaii interested in race relations, was more blunt. In a letter to the Hawaii territorial government sent right after Pearl Harbor, he described how Koreans were “taking advantage of the present emergency to harp on the desire for independence.” And yet, he continued, “We do not want Korean-Americans to act as Koreans. We want them to act as Americans and to be sympathetic with all peoples and nations which are under enemy domination. If American-Koreans are to segregate themselves as Koreans instead of aligning themselves with Americans, a problem of rift in solidarity toward a common goal will arise.”³³ In short, American patriotism in wartime left no room for dual commitments or identities.

³¹ Lili Kim, "The Limits of Americanism and Democracy: Korean Americans, Transnational Allegiance, and the Question of Loyalty on the Homefront During World War II," *Amerasia Journal* 29:3 (2003–2004), 87.

³² Quoted in *Ibid.*, 85.

³³ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 86.

Entwining Korean Immigration and Independence

Two developments in 1943 set the stage for the formal introduction in Congress of the Farrington bill, or Korean Immigration and Naturalization Bill (KINB). The 1943 campaign for Chinese exclusion repeal prompted similar demands from members of the Korean American community for commensurate gains, just as it had for Indians. In their appeals, Koreans explicitly positioned themselves in relation to their Chinese counterparts. The second development was the Cairo Declaration, whereby the United States, Great Britain, and China jointly pledged to support Korea's independence after its liberation from Japan "in due course." Announced in November 1943, the international statement was intended to address widespread uncertainty regarding the Allied powers' intentions for Korea once Japan was defeated and the peninsula was free of colonial rule. In practice, however, the Declaration complicated more than it clarified, and these complications would undercut the progress of the KINB for years to come.

* * * * *

Writing in April 1943, one month before the House Committee hearings on proposals to repeal Chinese exclusion were slated to begin, Kilsoo Haan asked Reps. Warren Magnuson and Martin Kennedy to amend their legislation for Chinese gains to name Koreans the co-beneficiaries of immigration quotas and citizenship eligibility.³⁴ To make his case, he adopted the logic of triangulated identity, invoking Koreans' solidarity with China on the one hand and their enmity with Japan on the other. Korean nationalist leaders had a long history of emphasizing their homeland's similarity with China to bolster Korea's significance by association. Even before America formally entered the

³⁴ Haan to Warren Magnuson and Martin Kennedy, April 3, 1943, Box 1, Folder 33, Kilsoo Haan papers, UC-Santa Cruz (UCSC), Santa Cruz, CA.

Pacific War, Korean community newspapers regularly carried images of Korean soldiers training with the Chinese National Army as visual proofs of Sino-Korean military unity against Japan.³⁵ In an editorial published in the Los Angeles-based Korean community newspaper *New Korea*, Korean businessman in Hawaii Ilhan New used similar reasoning. In New's words, it was not the size of the immigration quotas granted that mattered so much as the necessity that policy treat Koreans and Chinese "equitably." The recognition of Koreans along with Chinese, he maintained, would have "great bearing on future international relations."³⁶ At the same time, Koreans played on the torrent of anti-Japanese sentiment unleashed by the Pearl Harbor attack in order to shore up their own inclusion on the American home front.³⁷ In one of his appeals, Haan cited Koreans' centuries of conflict with Japan as its "number one enemy" to argue that their suffering at the hands of Japanese imperialists had earned them the same rights under U.S. immigration policy as Chinese.

As a colonial people, however, Koreans had a status more similar to Indians than to Chinese or Japanese. Like their Indian American counterparts, Korean American community leaders explicitly connected their legislative appeals to the longer-standing struggle for their homeland's independence. India League of America members had described U.S. legislation for Indian rights as a symbolic boon to the goal of Indian

³⁵ One such photograph, which appeared in a 1941 issue of a San Francisco-based Korean immigrant newspaper, was captioned accordingly, "Brethren of the Same Fate." Korean troops in China began receiving aid from the Chinese Nationalist Government following the Marco Polo incident in 1937 and continued to receive assistance throughout the war. *Korean Independence*, May 24, 1941.

³⁶ Ilhan New, "Four and One-Half Koreans," *New Korea*, October 21, 1943.

³⁷ Lili Kim, "The Pursuit of Imperfect Justice: The Predicament of Koreans and Korean Americans on the Homefront during World War II" (PhD diss., University of Rochester, 2001). Chinese Americans made similar efforts. See K. Scott Wong, *Americans First: Chinese Americans and the Second World War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 81-85, 124.

independence; similarly, Kilsoo Haan and other Korean American activists framed Korean rights in America as supporting Korea's cause by bringing prestige to Koreans as a sovereign and independent people on the international stage. On October 22, the day after the Magnuson bill passed in the House of Representatives, Kilsoo pled for a Korean amendment. His appeal, addressed to long-time ally and U.S. Senator Guy Gillette (D-IA), contended that in light of the "uncertain situation of Korea's future status," a Korean immigration measure promised to secure Asian goodwill and cement Koreans' allegiance to the Allied cause. Good intentions and words could only go so far; ultimately, the failure of U.S. and British officials to provide "tangible assurance" of Korea's independence after the war imperiled American interests in Asia by undermining the spirit of the Atlantic Charter.³⁸ The granting of Korean legislative rights, Haan maintained, would offer valuable reassurance for Koreans wary of America's intentions toward their homeland.

Haan's appeal for an amendment failed, but Senator Gillette used the Senate floor debate over the Magnuson bill as an opportunity both to prime the stage for a Korean effort and to raise the issue of Korean independence before an official audience. His November 1943 speech marked an early instance of a repeal campaign serving as a platform for Asian American lobbyists to express their support for anti-colonial movements in Asia. In what was likely feigned curiosity, Gillette asked for clarification on whether the Chinese bill would extend to the Korean people, whom he described as not only "closely related to the Chinese but "probably originally from the same stock." In response to the speaker's objection that Koreans were under Japanese rule, Gillette

³⁸ Haan to Senator Guy Gillette, October 21, 1943, Box 1, Folder 33, Kilsoo Haan papers, University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC), Santa Cruz, CA.

conceded that this was the case. But he made a point to identify the Korean Provisional Government (KPG) based in China as the true representative of the Korean people in exile. Andrews concluded by expressing his hope for the restoration of Koreans' freedom, a sentiment that Gillette hastened to echo.³⁹ Gillette's speech represents a concrete example of how the Chinese campaign set the stage for the Korean efforts that followed. Haan acknowledged as much in a December 1943 note thanking Gillette for his remarks establishing the "foundation for future action."⁴⁰

The Cairo Declaration was issued a few days later to quell uncertainty regarding Allied plans for Korea after the war. However, the phrase 'in due course' fueled speculation that the Allied powers' intended to set up a trusteeship in Korea. In a letter to Gillette responding to the news, Haan expressed the ambivalence of many Korean American observers to the pledge's language. On the one hand, Haan expressed gratitude for the recognition of Koreans' suffering under years of Japanese "enslavement."⁴¹ At the same time, he cautioned that the use of "half measures," stalling tactics, and other methods of potentially "teasing the Koreans" was "against the best interests of the U.N." as fodder for "Japanese propagandists" to cast doubt on the Allied Powers' intentions. To spare as many lives as possible, Haan contended, the United States and other powers should "not hesitate to let the Koreans in Korea, Japan, Manchuria, and occupied China know that after victory Korea will be given complete and full independence."⁴² Behind

³⁹ *Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts*, 78th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 89 (November 26, 1943): S 9992-9993.

⁴⁰ Haan to Gillette, November 23, 1943, Box 1, Folder 30, Haan papers, UCSC, Santa Cruz, CA.

⁴¹ The actual text of the Cairo Declaration reads: "Japan will also be expelled from all other territories which she has taken by violence and greed. The aforesaid three great powers, mindful of the enslavement of the people of Korea, are determined that in due course Korea shall become free and independent."

the scenes, high-level assessments of the Korean situation told a different story. Soviet leader Josef Stalin estimated that at least a 40-year tutelage period would be necessary to prepare Koreans for self-government, a sentiment echoed by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill.⁴³ Under no circumstances did any Allied power, including the United States, describe immediate independence for Korea as viable.

Reactions within the Korean American community were mixed. Claiming to speak for all Korean Americans, Jacob Dunn of the United Korean Committee (UKC) issued a statement accepting the “in due course” qualification as a necessary step toward Korean independence. He defended the restriction as pragmatic and even beneficial in light of Korea’s history of subjugation and organizational weakness under Japanese colonial rule, and urged his fellow Koreans to see the clause “not [as] an impediment but rather an encouragement after thirty-three years of national servitude.” Dunn concluded by asserting Koreans’ determination to achieve self-government under America’s “counsel and guidance.”⁴⁴ Not everyone was inclined to agree. Writers for left-wing *Korean Independence* newspaper in Los Angeles likewise expressed “profound gratitude” to the three Allied leaders for reaffirming Korea’s future independence.⁴⁵ But they also

⁴² Mindful as always of his own reputation within official circles, Haan also petitioned Gillette, in his capacity as a member of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, to publicize the SKPL’s successful espionage schemes against the Japanese enemy. He cited the group’s decade-long success in “placing 189,000 anti-Jap Koreans in strategic war plants”; from this strategic vantage point, they provided the SKPL network, in turn, with inside intelligence on Japanese mobilization plans. In this way, Haan made attempts to leverage the Senator’s long-time support for himself and the SKPL into an endorsement that would raise his profile and standing within Washington circles – presumably above that of his rival Rhee and the other entities that were actively claiming to represent Korea by the beginning of 1944. Haan to Gillette, December 2, 1943, Box 1, Folder 30, Haan papers, UCSC, Santa Cruz, CA.

⁴³ According to the 1944 British report, nothing in Koreans’ history suggested a capacity “favorable to the establishment of a democratic form of government.” Timothy Savage, “The American Response to the Korean Independence Movement, 1910-1945,” *Korean Studies* 20-21 (1996): 217-219.

⁴⁴ J. Kyuang Dunn, “In Due Course,” *Korean National Herald Pacific Weekly*, December 29, 1943.

noted their misgivings. In the words of one skeptic, the Cairo Declaration “arouses the inevitable suspicion that perhaps, after all, the independence of Korea will conform only to the pattern of the postwar arrangement of big powers,” and in so doing, it “places a great question mark upon the Allies’ basic concept of the freedom and equality of men and nations.”⁴⁶

Launching the KINB Campaign, 1944-1945

The formal campaign for a Korean immigration and naturalization bill (KINB) began in earnest in 1944. Two lawmakers with ties to the Korean community, Joseph Farrington (R-HI), territorial delegate from Hawaii, and Minnesota Congressman Walter Judd (R-MN) introduced the first measures to the House in June 1944. Like the Magnuson bill passed the previous year, the Judd and Farrington bills proposed to make Koreans eligible for U.S. citizenship and to grant Korea an annual immigration quota of 100, upon its independence from Japan. The legislation was consistent with Judd’s long-term goal to end exclusion for all Asian groups. As an elected official from Hawaii, Farrington was one of the few lawmakers with a political interest in courting second-generation Korean American voters.⁴⁷ Moreover, Farrington had personal relationships with local Korean community leaders, at whose urging he introduced the measure to Congress.

⁴⁵ “In Due Course,” *Korean Independence*, December 8, 1943.

⁴⁶ Peter Hyun, “How Far Is ‘In Due Course?’” *Korean Independence*, March 1, 1944.

⁴⁷ In 1940, there were 6,851 persons of Korean descent in the territory of Hawaii. They made up only 0.016% of the total population but their concentration in a handful of districts made them a significant factor in some local elections. *1940 Census* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1940).

Based on the logic that their best chance of success lay in emulating the Chinese campaign's tactics, proponents of the KINB adapted the war-centered arguments of the Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion to build an analogous case for Korean gains. In a June 1944 telegram, President Joon Tai Whang of the Hawaii Korean University Club went so far as to parrot the language of President Roosevelt's endorsement of the Magnuson bill months earlier. He maintained that a successful Korean measure would boost military morale in Asia by cutting off the "tail of Japanese propaganda" and otherwise "quicken Allied victory on the Pacific front."⁴⁸ Farrington used similar language in his office press releases and official statements, explaining his decision to sponsor the measure in terms of U.S. geostrategic and wartime imperatives in the Pacific.

KINB advocates could only take these arguments so far, however. Key differences between China and Korea undercut their case. Relative to the central role played by Chinese troops, who bore the brunt of Allied losses on the Pacific front, Korea's value as a military ally against its Japanese colonial master was weak at best. The Japanese prohibition against firearm ownership precluded any real potential for a Korean uprising on the peninsula to help the Allied cause.⁴⁹ There was also the basic difference of where each country sat within America's hierarchy of geopolitical priorities in Asia. As Japan's power rose, the U.S. responded by seeking ways to elevate China's international status from a semicolonial state to one of the world's "Four Policemen," a

⁴⁸ Assorted letters to Joseph Farrington, Jr., Farrington papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, Hawaii; Riggs, 57, 79, 104-107. Whang, quoted in *New Korea*, December 4, 1943.

⁴⁹ The scarcity of American resources led officials like U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Kermit Roosevelt, Jr. to argue that priority should be given to China, which could, in turn, allocate some of its aid to Korean military units under Chinese command. For a more comprehensive discussion of Korea's military value to the Pacific front, see Savage, 206, 209, 215.

measure Roosevelt described as the only means of achieving balance of power in the region. Washington policymakers had no similarly compelling reason to court Koreans' goodwill. As a small power with few natural resources and minimal American presence consisting largely of missionaries, Korea was a secondary concern; U.S. officials only considered Korea's importance occasionally, and then only in relation to its powerful neighbors China and Japan.⁵⁰

Americans' consciousness of Japan and China had influenced the Chinese cause for repeal; Americans' ignorance of Korea made the Korean campaign more difficult. As one journalist noted in the wake of Pearl Harbor, "[a]bout the only people who know Koreans in the U.S. are other Koreans."⁵¹ Consequently, neither the independence nor the KINB campaigns ever commanded the popularity or media attention of the Chinese exclusion repeal campaign, and the staunchest supporters of the KINB remained Koreans themselves.⁵² Not surprisingly, a disproportionate number of the endorsements for the Farrington and Judd bills came from Korean community organizations in Hawaii, where a majority of Koreans lived. These included the Hawaii Korean Christian Church, the Korean Women's Relief Society, the *Dongjihwe*, the Korean American Council of Hawaii, the Korean Mission Board, the UKC, the Korean Civic Club, and the Korean Delta Fraternity and Sorority of Honolulu. This geographical and ethnic concentration of

⁵⁰ According to historian Timothy Savage, the "one constant" of America's Korea policy over the first half of the twentieth century was the "tendency to subordinate its Korean policy to other foreign policy concerns." In the context of World War II, these larger issues were U.S. interests in Korea's regional neighbors: China and Japan. Savage, 189.

⁵¹ "Aliens: Japanese Obsession," *Time*, February 2, 1942.

⁵² As in the Chinese repeal campaign, missionaries formed a significant force for legislative passage in the KINB campaigns. As some of the only Americans with firsthand experience in Korea and East Asia more generally, former missionaries like George McCune came to fill an intelligence gap as advisors to the OSS, U.S. military, and other intelligence agencies during the 1940s.

support gave the KINB little political clout; not only were Koreans a negligible political force, but Hawaii's territorial status meant that its residents and representatives, KINB sponsor Farrington included, had no voting power on the federal level.⁵³ While several mainstays from the Chinese and Indian campaign lent their names to the KINB cause – Congressional co-sponsor Rep. Walter Judd (R-MN) and Pearl Buck were the most prominent – their support for Korean gains was ultimately derivative, motivated by their desire for general Asian immigration reform rather than a specific commitment to Korea.

The anti-colonial argument was Koreans' best hope. Recognizing this, supporters of the KINB focused their appeals on the importance of Korea's imminent liberation from Japanese control. In an editorial titled "Why Korea Should Be Put on a Quota Basis along with China," Hawaii Korean community leader Henry Chung explained how the legal recognition of Koreans by the U.S. government could advance the cause of Korean independence.⁵⁴ His editorial resonated closely with the logic used by India League of America activists in their concurrent bid for gains. For the U.S. government formally to grant Koreans immigration and naturalization rights was, indirectly, to have the most powerful nation in the world recognize Korea as an independent and sovereign power distinct from Japan. Consequently, he suggested, the KINB's potential to advance the longer-standing independence cause should not be underestimated. The KINB's first sponsor and Hawaii delegate to Congress Joseph Farrington articulated a similar argument in a 1944 press release, noting how "friends of Korean freedom" welcomed

⁵³ Richard Kim discusses the implications of this "clientalist" model of politics for Korean American nationalist mobilization in *The Quest for Statehood: Korean Immigrant Nationalism and U.S. Sovereignty, 1905-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁵⁴ The trope of America as Korea's guardian and liberator had a long and prominent place in U.S.-Korea relations. Henry Chung, "Why Korea Should Be Put on a Quota Basis along with China," [undated], Box 1, Folder 17, Farrington papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, HI.

“favorable action on this legislation” as an “assurance” of American support for the Korean “fight to throw off the yoke of Japan and reestablish Korea as a free country.” He concluded his appeal by reiterating the bill’s promise to “inspire the people of Korea to continue resistance to the cruel aggression of the Japanese.”⁵⁵

But even as Korea’s colonial dilemma created the potential for political leverage, its status as a Japanese colony led to problems as well. For as long as the war continued, Korean American advocates found they could not escape Koreans’ internationally recognized identity as Japanese subjects, with all the suspicion it engendered. A February 1945 report by the American Legion’s Americanism Committee spoke to Koreans’ colonial dilemma with particular force. Citing the “thousands of Korean men” married to Japanese women, the authors expressed concern that the intimacy of the ties forged between Koreans and their Japanese colonizers over thirty years of colonial rule bound Koreans’ first allegiance to Japan and the Axis powers rather than to the United States and the Allies.⁵⁶ They were especially vehement in their opposition to the passage of a Korean immigration bill; so long as Korea was technically under Japanese rule, they protested, allowing “Koreans [in]to the United States . . . would be [like] admitting Japanese” – a completely unacceptable proposal when Japanese troops were slaughtering American troops on the Pacific battle front. This second objection reflected a misunderstanding of when the immigration quota would take effect – after Korea’s liberation, not immediately – but it nonetheless attested to how Korea’s colonial ties to

⁵⁵ Press Release, Joseph Farrington, June 2, 1944, Farrington papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, HI.

⁵⁶ H.L. Chaillaux, Director of the National Americanism Commission of the American Legion, to Francis Sullivan, Executive Director of the National Legislative Committee, American Legion, February 5, 1945, Joseph Farrington, Jr. papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Japan undercut efforts to rally broader popular support for any Korea-related cause. In government circles, any sense of being soft on Japan was political anathema. So long as Korea remained a part of the Japanese Empire, many Congressional lawmakers refused to review, much less take action on, a Korean immigration bill.⁵⁷

As a colony of America's wartime enemy Japan, at first glance, Korea's colonial dilemma seemed more straightforward than that of India, which British Prime Minister and key American ally Winston Churchill had already declared his unwillingness to relinquish.⁵⁸ The question of a formal U.S. statement of support for Korean independence, however, raised a distinct set of issues that international proclamations like the Cairo Declaration left unresolved. One ongoing subject of debate was whether the U.S. should formally recognize the Korean Provisional Government (KPG) based in China as Korea's legitimate governing body in exile. U.S. officials, in discussion with the Chinese Nationalist Government, vacillated on the question throughout World War II. In the end, they remained true to America's general policy of not recognizing governments in exile. American missionaries who had spent time on the peninsula also convinced them that the Korean exile movement, centered around the KPG in China, was virtually

⁵⁷ Around the time the first round of bills was introduced in mid-1944, Immigration and Naturalization Service official and frequent advisor to Congressional Immigration Committees, Edward Shaughnessy penned a note to Farrington: "Just to remind you that the drafting of this measure in no way commits us. It is entirely yours. We will, of course, make a regular report on the bill if and when called upon." Edward Shaughnessy to Joseph Farrington, Jr., May 31, 1944, Farrington papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, Hawaii.

⁵⁸ For more on the dilemma created by Churchill's intransigence on India (and the British Empire, more generally) for Washington, see Gary Hess, *America Encounters India, 1941-1947* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971) and Sarah Ellen Graham, "American Propaganda, the Anglo-American Alliance, and the 'Delicate Question' of Indian Self-Determination," *Diplomatic History* 33 (2009): 223-259. U.S. government reports reflected connections between India and Korea in policymakers' minds. In April 1942, U.S. Secretary of State Sumner Welles told Roosevelt that, had the Cripps mission to India been successful, he would have recommended a formal White House statement in support of Korean independence. As it was, the failure of negotiations between the British imperial government and Indian National Congress foreclosed such a move. Savage, 212.

unknown to Koreans in Korea, in spite of claims by Rhee and other U.S.-based Koreans to the contrary.⁵⁹

Reports of disunity within the U.S.-based Korean independence movement only added to Washington's distrust of the Korean American community. Based on his well known record of corruption and powermongering, Syngman Rhee remained the most divisive figure, but Haan proved troublesome in his own right.⁶⁰ Dissension within the Korean American community grew sufficiently serious that U.S. officials including Senator Guy Gillette of Iowa intervened to act as intermediaries promoting cooperation among the warring factions.⁶¹ By 1943, infighting within the Korean American community had become so widely known that U.S. military officials in Hawaii concluded that the "existing intra-Korean friction, jealousy and political maneuvering ma[d]e it impossible for Americans to use Koreans in the war with any degree of safety."⁶² By the following year, four different offices in Washington, DC claimed to speak for Koreans worldwide. One was led by Syngman Rhee acting on behalf of the China-based KPG, one by Kilsoo Haan for the Sino-Korean People's League, and one each by the Korean National Association based in Hawaii and the UKC umbrella group.⁶³ Against this

⁵⁹ Savage, 214.

⁶⁰ For more on Rhee's early career and the circumstances leading to his 1925 impeachment by the Korean Provisional Government in exile, see Richard Kim, *Quest for Statehood*, Chapter 4.

⁶¹ In a letter to UKC secretary J. Kyuang Dunn, Gillette vouched for the "sincerity and dependability" of Kilsoo Haan based on his years of collaboration with the Korean Hawaiian lobbyist. Gillette to Dunn, December 2, 1942, Box 2, Folder 1, Kilsoo Haan papers, UCSC, Santa Cruz, CA.

⁶² Memo by Robert Kinney of U.S. Military Intelligence Service to Chief of the Japan Branch, June 9, 1943, RG 165, Box 2266, Folder 1, NARA II, College Park, MD.

⁶³ For more on factionalism within the Korean American community during World War II, see Richard Kim, *Quest for Statehood*, Chapter 7, and Kingsley Lyu, "Korean Nationalist Activities in Hawaii and the Continental United States, 1900-1945, Part II: 1919-1945," *Amerasia* 4:2 (1977): 53-100.

backdrop of disarray within the movement, a lengthy endorsement sent by KPG Foreign Minister T. Joso Wang, calling for the KINB as a “first step” toward the restoration of the 1882 Korean-American Treaty of Amity, registered as little more than a rhetorical gesture from an exilic government that Washington refused to recognize.⁶⁴

Following the defeat of the 1944 measures, African American Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. (NY-D) and Hawaii’s Joseph Farrington in the House, and Claude Pepper (R-FL) in the Senate introduced a second set of Korean immigration and naturalization bills.⁶⁵ Powell supported the legislation on principle, out of his support for racial equality. In early 1943, he had introduced one of the first measures for comprehensive Asian exclusion repeal, which the House Immigration Committee quickly tabled. Pepper became familiar with the Korean independence issue as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and came to sponsor the KINB in that way.⁶⁶ In a statement accompanying the Senate bill, Pepper explicitly linked the Korean independence and immigration causes, noting his desire to recognize Koreans in light of their unparalleled suffering under the “Japanese yoke” and their cooperation with the Allies in a “magnificent fight against Japanese militarism.”⁶⁷

⁶⁴ By referring to the 1882 diplomatic agreement between the U.S. and Korea, Wang positioned the KPG as the legitimate successor to the Chosen regime that signed it. As the first treaty Korea ever made with a Western power, the 1882 Treaty of Peace, Amity, Commerce and Navigation became an important symbol and theme frequently invoked by Korean nationalists seeking Washington’s support against the Japanese. Text of radiogram from T. Joso Wang of KPG to Farrington, July 8, 1944, Farrington papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, HI.

⁶⁵ H.R. 1901 was introduced on January 31, 1945; a companion bill, S. 730, was introduced to the Senate on March 12, 1945.

⁶⁶ See Chapter 1.

⁶⁷ Pepper to Haan, March 14, 1945, Farrington papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, HI.

In this second effort, the United Korean Committee (UKC) chapter in Hawaii spearheaded lobbying for the KINB under the leadership of UKC and Honolulu-KNA leader Jacob Dunn. Born in Korea, Dunn had immigrated to Hawaii as a young child. Like Kilsoo Haan, Dunn was educated on the U.S. mainland, conversant in both English and Korean, and well versed in the American political process. Dunn began by calling upon “leading Koreans in Washington” to coordinate a mobilization plan for the KINB. Taking its cue from the highly successful Chinese campaign’s Citizens Committee, the effort would coordinate campaign efforts under a central KINB “advisory committee” of white Americans. Unlike the all-white Citizens Committee, the 25-member KINB council reserved three slots for Americans of Korean ancestry. The structure reflected both the founders’ desire to retain some level of community control over the campaign, and a concession to the greater difficulty Korean Americans faced in recruiting white Americans to the obscure Korean cause.⁶⁸

The KINB received support from many of the figures who had featured prominently in the Chinese and Indian repeal campaigns. The C.I.O. labor union had broken with the AFL to endorse the Magnuson bill in 1943, citing the injustice of America’s discriminatory immigration laws; its endorsement of the KINB in early 1945 followed in the same vein. A conference of 150 West Coast Jewish organizations also expressed approval of the measure as a “welcome step toward racial equality in America.”⁶⁹ The elder statesman, Syngman Rhee, remained active in reaching out to the American missionary and religious community, successfully soliciting support from local

⁶⁸ J. Kuang Dunn of United Korean Committee in America, March 17, 1945, Farrington papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, HI.

⁶⁹ Marine Simpson, Los Angeles, to Joseph Farrington, Jr., March 1945, Farrington papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, Hawaii.

presbyteries and church leaders.⁷⁰ Protestant groups including the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the Synods of California and Nevada of the Presbyterian Church, and individual churches across the United States likewise endorsed the bill. Humanitarian organizations like the Chicago-based Protective Immigrants' Rights League also offered their assistance for the cause.

In the meantime, Korean American activists focused on securing an international pledge promising Korea's immediate independence upon war's end.⁷¹ The end of the war in Europe in May 1945 added urgency; the unconditional German surrender shifted all eyes to Asia and the remaining conflict with Japan. A *de facto* Korean delegation consisting of Kilsoo Haan, Henry Chung, and the elder statesman Syngman Rhee attended the San Francisco Conference in the spring of 1945 in an unofficial capacity to present Korea's case for international recognition before the nascent United Nations organization. A formal petition undersigned by the KPG in Chungking spelled out their two main demands. In light of Korea's "strategic importance" as the "bridge to the Asiatic mainland" and the "sacrifices Korea ha[d] made in the cause of human freedom," it read, the Korean Provisional Government at Chungking requested Korea's admission to the United Nations and formal recognition of the provisional body as the sole "agency"

⁷⁰ For example, in a May 1945 letter to Reverend Bonham of Rockford, IL, Rhee thanked the presbytery for supporting the KINB. Looking ahead to the war's imminent end and Korea's imminent liberation, Rhee underscored how much the measure meant to "Koreans at home to have an opportunity to come to this country and have all the facilities to prepare themselves for their prospective positions at home." His implication was clear: the measure would allow Koreans to come to the U.S. temporarily for educational training and then return home to Korea, where they could use what they had learned for the benefit of their new nation. Most Koreans would not stay in the U.S. permanently. The exception would be those Koreans already in the U.S., many of whose children had "gone along with the American soldiers to the battlefield" and even "given their lives for the cause of democracy." Speaking the language of what Gary Gerstle has called "martial citizenship," he contended that rewarding Koreans' sacrifice with greater rights would be "only just and fair." Rhee to Bonham, May 17, 1945, Box 1, Folder 17, Farrington papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, HI.

⁷¹ Also known as the United Nations Conference on International Organization (UNCIO).

through which the Allied powers would subsequently deal with the Koreans.⁷² In a scene all too reminiscent of the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, however, the Korean delegation found its pleas ignored and left San Francisco with no greater clarity on their homeland's future.

The Celler bill for Indian rights received a boost from the Allies' heightened focus on the Pacific front, where India served as an important military base. The progress of the Indian immigration campaign became a rallying point for KINB advocates, who saw Indians' colonial plight as analogous to their own. U.S. State Department officials formally recommended the KINB as an indirect statement of American support for Korea's future independence. Invoking the Cairo Declaration, Acting Secretary of State Joseph Grew cited the KINB's promise to provide "evidence of the friendly interest of the United States in the emergence of a free and independent Korea" as a compelling rationale for Congress to pass the measure. He also noted the bill's promise to "give further encouragement to Koreans in this country and elsewhere" in the Allied war effort against Japan.⁷³ The letter came just weeks after the Celler bill benefiting Indians had received a favorable report by the House Immigration Committee. As he had previously done with the Chinese bill, Haan seized upon official support for the Celler measure to push for similar gains for Koreans. Quoting from Roosevelt's March 1945 endorsement of the Indian bill as an anti-colonial measure, he called on Truman to do the same for the KINB.⁷⁴

⁷² "Korean Memorial to the United Nations Conference on International Organization," Tjo Sowang, KPG Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chungking, China, April 25, 1945, Farrington papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, HI.

⁷³ Joseph Grew to Samuel Dickstein, July 2, 1945, Farrington Papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, HI.

But problems with the analogy became increasingly apparent as Korea and India's paths toward independence diverged. The Allied powers had a general consensus that Korea would require some form of trusteeship following the war.⁷⁵ But as late as a week before Japan's August 15th surrender, it was unclear what this would actually look like in practice.⁷⁶ In contrast, by the summer of 1945, the question of Indian independence had been more or less resolved, settled in the minds of U.S. policymakers as just a matter of time. The election of Clement Atlee, who replaced staunch imperialist Winston Churchill as British Prime Minister, accelerated the decolonization process. After the deadlock of the Simla Conference in June 1945, negotiations over British withdrawal from India were revived that fall. Assured of India's imminent independence, U.S. lawmakers overwhelmingly voted to pass the Luce-Celler bill that October. Nothing was so clear in the case of Korea, which followed a more circuitous trajectory toward independence after World War II's end.

The KINB Campaign in the Postwar Years

In the years after World War II, the KINB campaign came under the shadow of a faltering U.S. Military Government in Korea. The final weeks of the World War II had found the Allied powers almost completely unprepared to govern the peninsula. Records later released from the Yalta and Potsdam conferences reveal several brief but inconclusive discussions among the Allied powers over the peninsula's future. U.S. policymakers raced to define the terms of the postwar occupation ahead of the Soviet

⁷⁴ Haan to Truman, September 13, 1945, Farrington Papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, HI.

⁷⁵ Savage, 215-216.

⁷⁶ Savage, 220-221, especially fn. 164.

forces already landed there. No concrete plans emerged until August 10th, five days before the Japanese surrender, when plans emerged based on the proposal created a single military planner in the U.S. War Department Operations Division in a frantic ten-hour work session. The proposal outlined basic terms to divide the Korean peninsula at the 38th parallel under a joint Allied occupation but left open-ended a host of more specific questions.⁷⁷ In a climate of escalating Soviet-American tensions, the many ambiguities left by these postwar plans set the stage for the instability and turmoil that followed.

While Koreans living on the peninsula bore the brunt of the consequences, Korean Americans experienced the effects of the Allies' hasty postwar planning in other ways. The KINB was one casualty. Endorsements for the legislation slowed considerably after the war's end. In July 1945, Farrington had informed the bill's supporters that House Immigration Committee chairman Rep. Dickstein was planning to schedule a hearing on the measure for that fall. Upon news of Japan's August 14th surrender, however, the hearing was postponed indefinitely. Until the peace agreement clarified Korea's postwar status, committee lawmakers had agreed, no serious thought should be given to Koreans' status under U.S. immigration and naturalization laws.⁷⁸ Disappointed but not surprised, KINB supporters turned their attention to pressing questions about Korea's future. Key among these was what the Allied powers meant by their pledge to give Korea its freedom and independence "in due course."

⁷⁷ His name was Colonel Charles H. Bonesteel, and he served as Chief of the Policy Section. The initial proposal did not even definitively specify whether the occupation would be shared among two, three, or four Allied powers. For more on this episode, see James I. Matray, "Captive of the Cold War: The Decision to Divide Korea at the 38th Parallel," *Pacific Historical Review* 50 (May 1981): 145-168.

⁷⁸ *Congressional Record*, 79th Cong., 1st sess., 1945, 379-381.

By August 1945, Washington's primary objective in Korea was simple: to prevent the Soviet Union from exercising sole control over the peninsula. After Roosevelt's sudden death the previous spring, Truman's confrontational approach to Moscow fueled growing antagonism and mutual suspicion between the two standing superpowers. Tensions grew over the summer of 1945. As the end of the war approached, U.S. officials increasingly questioned whether Moscow would prove cooperative after the war. The consensus, based on Soviet actions toward Poland and eastern Europe, was that it would not.⁷⁹ Washington's growing imperative to counter Soviet influence in Korea underwrote the State Department's decision to send Syngman Rhee back to the peninsula in October as the top pick of U.S. military and diplomatic officials to lead the United States of America's Military Government In Korea (USAMGIK).⁸⁰ In October 1945, Rhee arrived in Seoul to great fanfare, his position shored up by his arrival weeks ahead of his competitors and by the military backing of U.S. officials.

The departure of Rhee, who for many years was the Korean community's most vocal advocate of cooperation with Washington, changed the face of postwar Korean America. Organizations that had previously favored accommodation with U.S. policies now rejected them outright. Just over a month after American forces took control in Korea, the UKC openly condemned the U.S. occupation government and its incompetent policies as undermining America's "world leadership in the eyes of millions of Asiatic

⁷⁹ John Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 199.

⁸⁰ One of the only Korean leaders known to most U.S. officials, Rhee was also one of the two Koreans (along with Kim Ku) recommended by Chiang Kaishek's government to help lead the interim regime of the AMG-governed southern part of the peninsula.

peoples.”⁸¹ Korean American leaders accused Washington policymakers of treating Korea as an instrument to assure its domination over Moscow, callously disregarding the country’s desire for self-governance.⁸² Haan was among the most vocal critics, denouncing Allied plans for a long-term trusteeship as a “violation of the spirit of the Cairo Declaration.” He warned U.S. General Douglas MacArthur, the “vast majority of Koreans [would] consider [trusteeship] as a diplomatic sell-out of Korea to Soviet-Red Chinese power and sphere of influence.”⁸³ Haan declared Koreans deserved a “New Deal for Korea,” establishing a “free nation with neither political strings nor an economic dog collar adorning the [country’s] neck.” Such an action by the United States would show “millions of subjugated Orientals in Asia” that America believed in the freedom and self-determination it had long professed.⁸⁴ More concerned with counteracting Soviet and Chinese threats in the region, U.S. policymakers disregarded Haan’s warnings.

The growing praise of Koreans in both Korea and the United States for the Soviet occupation regime concerned Washington more than Haan’s statements. As American prestige eroded over the first year of the occupation, people-pleasing Soviet policies in the north won many Korean admirers on the peninsula and across the diaspora.⁸⁵ U.S.

⁸¹ *New Korea*, September 28, 1945.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Haan to General MacArthur, September 29, 1945, Box 1, Folder 31, Haan papers, UCSC, Santa Cruz, CA.

⁸⁴ Haan, “A New Deal for Korea,” August 29, 1945, Box 2, Folder 14, Haan papers, UCSC, Santa Cruz, CA.

⁸⁵ Immediately after the Japanese surrender, Koreans praised all their Allied liberators, and lauded the U.S. and President Roosevelt in particular for their key part in the Allied victory. Claiming to speak on behalf of Koreans everywhere, one Korean American newspaper editorialist hailed former U. S. president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, as the “great friend and leader of common peoples . . . whose lofty ideals of Democracy,

news correspondent in Korea Gordon Walker confirmed the shift in a report issued in the *Christian Monitor* shortly after New Year's Day 1946, in which General MacArthur declared Korea not yet ready for independence. "Whereas the Koreans hailed the United States as liberators when Japan surrendered," he wrote, "this feeling has undergone a considerable revision." "[D]ozens of Korean leaders evince suspicion over the American intent in Korea."⁸⁶ By contrast, General Chistjakoff, commander of the Russian forces in North Korea, repeatedly affirmed the U.S.S.R.'s full commitment to Korean independence. Koreans, including Haan, praised the Soviet occupation forces for immediately disbanding Japanese troops, returning all property usurped by the Japanese to private Korean ownership, and establishing a system of popularly elected People's Committees to assume official roles in local government.⁸⁷ Writing to Soviet Ambassador Andrei Gromkyo in October 1945, Haan thanked the Soviets for their "democratic policy," and above all, for their "understanding of Koreans' aspirations for a free and an independent Korea."⁸⁸ On June 12, 1946, an editorial in the California-based *Korean Independence* praised the Soviet regime and accused American forces of transforming southern Korea into the "worst example of American democracy."⁸⁹

vision and struggle have paved the way for the creation of an enduring world peace structure." A New Era Wakes Before our Eyes," *Korean Independence*, August 19, 1945, p. 1.

⁸⁶ Gordon Walker, "Korean Experiment Challenges American Statesmanship in Asia," *Christian Science Monitor*, January 3, 1946.

⁸⁷ "Private Ownership Recognized for Koreans Under Russian Occupation: Order and Peace being Maintained under People's Political Committees," *Mai Il Shin Moon*, a Korean language paper in Seoul, Korea, September 8, 1945; translated and reprinted in *Korean Independence*, October 31, 1945.

⁸⁸ Haan to Soviet Ambassador Andrei Gromyko, October 9, 1945, Box 3, Folder 6, Kilsoo Haan papers, UCSC. The John Birch Society of southern California later seized upon this letter as an example of Haan's Communist sympathies and subversive activities.

⁸⁹ "Root of Korean Political Cancer," *Korean Independence*, June 12, 1946.

The surge in pro-Soviet sentiment crystallized a consensus within the U.S. policymaking community that, if left to govern themselves, Koreans would certainly elect a popular government friendly to Moscow rather than one that leaned toward Washington. Fears of growing Soviet influence abroad, in turn, underwrote the expansion of the national security state at home.⁹⁰ At the Moscow Conference in December 1945, U.S. and Soviet occupation officials had agreed to three preliminary goals: (1) the creation of a unified interim government over all of Korea to prepare the peninsula for self-government, (2) the formation of a joint Soviet-American Commission to oversee it, and (3) the establishment of a four-power trusteeship (under the United States, the Soviet Union, China, and Great Britain) of up to five years as a necessary prerequisite to Korea's independence. But efforts to create an interim government with broad support from Korean political parties and social organizations met with intransigence and deadlock from both sides, leading to the breakdown of formal negotiations between American and Soviet occupation forces by May 1946.

Within the context of an increasingly repressive political climate, their critiques brought Korean Americans under greater scrutiny and surveillance by the FBI, INS, and other intelligence officials looking to identify and rout out subversives in the United States. Over the next few years, more than a dozen Korean Americans would face harrassment, detention, and threatened deportation for their alleged Communist sympathies.⁹¹ Undeterred, proponents of the KINB actively modified their appeals to reflect America's changing security interests in the peninsula. Having received news that

⁹⁰ U.S. State Department official George Kennan did not explicitly spell out the containment policy until 1946, but the idea predated the official term.

⁹¹ See Chapter 5.

the House Immigration Committee would move on behalf of the Koreans, co-sponsor Farrington began soliciting Korean community leaders in the fall of 1945 to appear as witnesses at the future hearing.⁹² KINB advocates like Haan also pressed forward. Rather than sidestep the problem of deteriorating U.S.-Korea relations after the war, Haan explicitly reframed campaign arguments for the KINB to reflect occupation-related concerns. The following March Senator Richard Russell, chairman of the Judiciary Committee in charge of immigration matters, named a subcommittee to consider the measure.⁹³ In a letter to one of the appointed members, Haan asked him to give the bill “humane and just consideration,” invoking the rights Congress had previously given China. Invoking the political turmoil Korea under the U.S. military government and conditions on the ground in Asia more generally, Haan contended that America could recover lost ground by passing the bill in a time of “political confusion.”⁹⁴ An endorsement from one of the USAMGIK’s top commanders echoed these sentiments. The Hawaii-based KNA quoted from a statement by Major General Archer Lerch, the American military governor of Korea, in which he confirmed his belief that the KINB would have a “tremendous effect in cementing Korean-American relations,” both “salvaging” U.S. prestige and “checking the growth of Soviet support” among the Korean people.⁹⁵

⁹² Farrington to Henry DeYoung, October 20, 1945, Farrington papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, HI. Young suggested asking Dr. Philip Jaisohn to speak at a future hearing.

⁹³ According to Haan, the subcommittee comprised James Eastland (Miss) as chairman, and Senators Clyde Hoey of North Carolina and William Knowland of California as members. Haan to Robert Lamb, Senate Judiciary Committee, March 19, 1946, Box 1, Folder 30, Haan papers, UCSC, Santa Cruz, CA.

⁹⁴ Haan to Senator William F. Knowland, March 19, 1946, Box 1, Folder 30, Farrington papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, HI.

The promised House committee hearing for KINB never materialized, but when President Truman signed the Celler bill for Indian immigration and naturalization into law on July 2, 1946, Farrington declared the inevitability of a Korean measure. The Act's symbolic timing – two days before the Philippines formally became independent from the United States and two days before the American Independence Day celebration – suggested U.S. sensitivity to the symbolic nature of immigration policy. However, the steady progress of the Philippines and India toward postwar independence contrasted sharply with growing uncertainty about Korea's future.

Developments over 1946 made the formalization of the division between South Korea and North Korea increasingly likely. In June, U.S.-supported leader Syngman Rhee began publicly calling for the establishment of a separate government in the south.⁹⁶ In July, meetings between the Soviets and Americans stalled over the question of how to end the joint occupation. Anti-American sentiment in the South turned violent that fall when more than 100,000 Korean workers struck, and attacks broke out against U.S. and South Korean troops stationed throughout the countryside. Left-wing forces led by the Korean Communist Party responded by announcing their rejection of the U.S. military government as a legitimate entity and declaring a new policy of direct action. Popular uprisings across the South cemented the deadlock between Korean political factions, setting the stage for the final dissolution of the Joint Commission the following year.

⁹⁵ Lerch's 1946 endorsement was reprinted in Korean Immigration and Naturalization Committee, "Brief in Support of S. 152 and H.R. 860 (Superseded by H.R. 2932)," Summer 1947, Joseph Farrington papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, Hawaii.

⁹⁶ Rhee argued that it was the only recourse available to force the Soviets to withdraw from the north and reunite the peninsula under an anti-Communist government. This proclamation became known as the Chongup declaration. USAMGIK officials quickly intervened to temper Rhee's words, but his bluster reflected a growing unwillingness to compromise with groups further left along the political spectrum. For more on this episode, see Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), Chapter 7, especially at 249-252.

The KINB lobby persisted. In 1947, Korean activists from Hawaii and Los Angeles moved the campaign to Washington, DC, where they joined other Asian and African American lobbyists as regular fixtures on Capitol Hill. The division of the Korean peninsula into separate Soviet- and U.S.-friendly states was a far cry from their original vision for Korean independence. Proponents of the KINB thus found themselves in a double bind, as U.S. officials began to consider all Korean frustration with Washington as pro-Soviet. The peninsula's circuitous path to national sovereignty continued to impact the KINB's legislative progress. The pattern would continue with the crystallization of Cold War tensions and the formal emergence of two Koreas in 1948.

Part III

The Cold War Campaigns: Bringing Asian Exclusion Repeal into the Story of Cold War Civil Rights, 1947-1952

In 1947, the President's Committee on Civil Rights, appointed by Truman the previous year, issued a report outlining how the U.S. government might strengthen and better protect the rights of minority communities in America. Unlike any official document written before it, *To Secure These Rights* condemned injustices facing Asian Americans and other groups, extending the agenda of civil rights beyond the purview of black Americans. Among its proposals, the Committee called for the restructuring of naturalization laws to eliminate restrictions based on "race, color, or national origin." In a related discussion of U.S. immigration policy, the report lamented the use of differences between groups as "justification for discrimination."¹ The Committee maintained that civil rights reforms were necessary on multiple grounds – moral and economic as well as international. On this third point, it articulated the need for reform to advance America's international interests and to ensure its "survival in a threatening world."²

The United States is not so strong that it can afford to ignore what the world thinks of us or our record. . . . Discrimination against, or mistreatment of, any racial, religious or national group in the United States is not only seen as our internal problem. The dignity of a country, a continent, or even a major portion of the world's population, may be outraged by it. A relatively few individuals here may be identified with millions of people elsewhere, and the way in which they are treated may have world-wide repercussions . . .³

¹ U.S. President's Committee on Civil Rights, *To Secure These Rights* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947), 13-14.

² A full list of the Committee's recommendations can be found in *To Secure These Rights*, 151-175.

³ *To Secure These Rights*, 147-148.

The report singled Asian Americans out as one such group. Although “citizens of Oriental descent” numbered only “in the hundreds of thousands” within the United States, the report argued that their poor treatment had potential to turn “hundreds of millions” of their Asian “counterparts overseas” against America. The Committee identified U.S. exclusion laws barring persons of Asian descent from both immigration and citizenship eligibility on racial grounds as a key source of Asian resentment against America.⁴

During the early Cold War, Japanese and Korean Americans, the two main communities still without rights, seized upon arguments to lobby for legislation ending Asian exclusion as a whole. Against the backdrop of US military occupations in Japan and southern Korea after World War II, Asian American activists and their allies framed repeal as a low-cost way for the U.S. to demonstrate goodwill and rehabilitate its international image as a racial democracy where all persons could be welcomed and incorporated into the nation regardless of race or ethnic background. By tying the issue of repeal to America’s containment goals in Asia, they sought to define repeal as a critical component of America’s Cold War battle to win Asian hearts and minds in the fight against Soviet Communism.

The strategy worked – to a point. Congress enacted the McCarran-Walter bill in 1952. Passed at the height of the Korean War on the global stage and the rise of Senator Joseph McCarthy on the domestic front, the 1952 legislation was a hodgepodge of liberal and restrictive elements. On the one hand, it formally ended America’s policy of Asian exclusion by striking down racial restrictions to U.S. citizenship and opening America to small numbers of immigrants from Asia. Even as it did so, however, the law strengthened

⁴ *To Secure These Rights*, 147-148.

the power of the federal government to deport and denaturalize suspected subversives. Moreover, its national security provisions would serve as the legal basis for some of the most repressive state practices associated with McCarthyism (the Second Red Scare) in the United States.

Part III considers Japanese and Korean Americans' engagement with the postwar repeal movement to illustrate the paradox of Asian Americans' use of anticommunism and internationalism as strategies for reform. Chapter 4 examines how the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) capitalized on America's Cold War interests in Japan to lobby for passage of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act. As the most prominent Asian American supporter of the highly controversial measure, the JACL demonstrated the political viability of Asian American anticommunism as a Cold War strategy. The JACL campaign further reflects how Asian Americans' singular history of legal exclusion and racial alienage in the U.S. resulted in distinct goals and strategies for redress. During the Cold War, Japanese American activists and their allies did not simply borrow from the language of black civil rights to advance their cause. Rather, they conceptualized a more expansive understanding of what "civil rights" meant for Asian Americans, redefining the boundaries to include the rights of non-citizens, namely their first-generation Japanese American parents. In the success of the JACL's Washington-based campaign, one can see how the Cold War, in the words of historian Mary Dudziak, "gave rise to new opportunities for those who could exploit anticommunist anxieties, while yet remaining within the bounds of acceptable 'Americanism.'"⁵

⁵ Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 15.

By contrast, postwar developments in Korea – specifically, the emergence of two separate states in 1948 and the outbreak of civil war on the peninsula after 1950 – rendered the status of Korean Americans in early Cold War America ambivalent at best. Chapter 5 traces the campaigns launched by two Korean American organizations for naturalization rights during the early Cold War years. Shifting the focus from policymaking to enforcement, it also considers the ramifications of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act's deportation provisions on Korean American leftists living in Los Angeles. The deportation cases of Korean-born radicals suggest how, in practice, ties to an Asian homeland (real or perceived) could undermine Asian Americans' claims to Americanness as readily as they advanced them. Taken together, the experiences of Japanese and Korean Americans in the early Cold War years illuminate the double-edged nature of Asian American internationalism as a political strategy during a time of unprecedented U.S. military intervention in Asia.

Chapter 4

Reconceptualizing Civil Rights: The Japanese American Citizens League and the Judd Bill

In July 1946, the national leaders of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) gathered at their annual convention in Denver to discuss the organization's mission after the closing of the internment camps. The state-led evacuation of Japanese Americans during World War II had taken a heavy toll, leaving whole communities uprooted and scrambling to rebuild their lives. The JACL faced its own uphill battle, having entered the postwar years widely reviled by immigrant (*Issei*) and second-generation (*Nisei*) Japanese Americans alike for its decision to cooperate with the U.S. government's internment of West Coast Japanese American communities after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor.¹ In the words of one community critic, the JACL could not be trusted, having clearly demonstrated its willingness to "sacrifice members of their national group to their own selfish interest."² Less than a year after the war's end, community researcher Tom Sasaki noted the utter failure of JACL efforts to attract new members among disillusioned Japanese Americans more inclined to denounce the League than to join it.³

With the JACL's popularity and reputation at a record low, League leaders brainstormed ways they might rehabilitate the organization's sullied reputation to attract new recruits from among the Nikkei (Japanese American) community's second-

¹ *Issei* refers to first-generation Japanese immigrants, and *Nisei* to second-generation, U.S.-born Japanese Americans.

² Quoted in a 1942 War Relocation Authority report, Paul Spickard, "The *Nisei* Assume Power: The Japanese American Citizens League, 1941-1942," *Pacific Historical Review* 52:2 (1983), 169.

³ Scott Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 193-194.

generation U.S. citizens.⁴ One of the best ways, they decided, was to win legal gains for the community that would persuade Japanese Americans both of the JACL's good intentions and of its effectiveness as a national representative for the Nikkei community. Dr. Thomas Yatabe, one of the JACL's founders and its first president, specifically called for a revival of the campaign to secure American citizenship for *Issei*, or first-generation Japanese immigrants. Nothing would repair the reputation of the League more effectively, he argued, than to provide "concrete evidence" of its ability to win for the elderly generation their long-desired goal of U.S. citizenship.⁵ The naturalization plank formed the centerpiece of the National Program of Action the JACL national board adopted at the 1946 convention, a key part of the League's goal of promoting racial equity in U.S. immigration and naturalization law. To assist the effort, the board created the Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) to act as the League's national lobbying arm in Washington, DC, and appointed Mike Masaoka, the JACL's national secretary during World War II, to head the ADC's new office near Capitol Hill.

Over the next two years, Mike Masaoka led the ADC to a string of legislative victories that earned him the moniker of "Washington's Most Successful Lobbyist."⁶ The key to the JACL's postwar success was its strategy of martial patriotism, or in the words of one scholar, its efforts to "construct Japanese Americans as loyal, patriotic members of

⁴ From its creation in 1930, the JACL practiced a policy of restricting membership to U.S. citizens and promoted the Americanization of *Nisei* in order to secure full acceptance in American society.

⁵ Dr. Thomas Yatabe, quoted in Ellen D. Wu, "Race and Asian American Citizenship: From World War II to the Movement," (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2006), 351-352; Bill Hosokawa, *JACL: In Quest of Justice* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1982), 196.

⁶ Alfred Steinberg, "Washington's Most Successful Lobbyist," *Reader's Digest*, May 1949, 125-129. The piece was condensed from a longer article that originally appeared in the April 1949 issue of the national Catholic magazine, *The Sign*.

the nation.”⁷ The JACL had effectively used the strategy before World War II to secure citizenship eligibility for Asian veterans of the First World War with the Nye-Lea Act, passed by Congress in 1935, using arguments that Japanese veterans had purchased the right to citizenship with their very blood.⁸ During World War II and after, the JACL redeployed the logic of martial patriotism to great effect, launching aggressive public relations campaigns intended to represent Japanese Americans as loyal patriots deserving of U.S. citizenship. Their appeals, which focused on both Japanese American soldiers’ bodily sacrifices and their rights as American citizens, successfully persuaded U.S. lawmakers and officials to make several of the JACL’s legislative goals a reality. In 1946, the U.S. Congress issued a formal apology for internment. Two years later, it passed the Wartime Evacuation Claims Act, the federal government’s first attempt to compensate the losses suffered by Japanese internees during the war. The JACL’s efforts also helped enact an amendment to the War Brides Act that allowed Japanese military brides to enter the United States as exceptions to the exclusion laws. In 1948, the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Oyama v. California* set the stage for the overturning of California’s Alien Land Laws on constitutional grounds.⁹ The theme of the JACL’s tenth annual convention in 1948, “The Japanese American Comeback,” trumpeted the ADC’s early record of success.

⁷ This is the definition used by historian Ellen Wu. For a longer discussion, see Wu, “Race and Asian American Citizenship: From World War II to the Movement,” Chapter 5. Also see Lucy E. Salyer, “Baptism by *Fire*: Race, Military Service, and U.S. Citizenship Policy, 1918–1935,” *Journal of American History* 91:3 (2004): 848. For more on martial citizenship, see Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 9.

⁸ This campaign is covered in Lucy Salyer, “Baptism by *Fire*: Race, Military Service, and U.S. Citizenship Policy, 1918–1935,” *Journal of American History* 91:3 (2004): 847-876.

⁹ Wu, “Race and Asian American Citizenship,” 385-386.

The JACL's goal of racial equity in immigration and naturalization law proved harder to achieve. In 1947, former China missionary and long-time supporter of Asian immigration reform Rep. Walter Judd (R-MN) introduced to Congress a measure, which came to be known as the Judd bill, that proposed to eliminate all racial restrictions to U.S. citizenship and to replace the "Asiatic Barred Zone" of the 1917 Immigration Act with the "Asia-Pacific Triangle," a geographical designation that encompassed all of Asia. Under the proposed plan, all countries and colonies that fell within the Triangle would receive annual quotas of approximately 100, but as with the Chinese and Indian quotas, these would be based on race (country of ancestral origin) rather than nationality (actual country of birth).¹⁰ While the naturalization provisions received wide support, during a time when a majority of Americans favored maintaining or reducing the number of immigrants entering the United States, appeals to martial patriotism alone proved insufficient to persuade reluctant lawmakers to support the bill's Asian immigration quotas. At the same time, Congressional conservatives and restrictionists seized upon what doubts remained over Japanese American loyalties and other stall tactics to block the Judd bill from progressing.

This chapter traces the JACL's role in the postwar campaign for Asian exclusion repeal, from the introduction of the Judd bill in 1947 through the bill's incorporation into the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act. The contentiousness of the yearlong McCarran-Walter debate, coinciding with the height of McCarthyism and the Korean War, has caused scholars to overlook or dismiss the earlier campaign for the Judd bill as a prelude to the main event. A longer view of the JACL's efforts broadens our understanding of postwar

¹⁰ Robert A. Divine, *American Immigration Policy, 1924-1952* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957).

racial reform in the United States as fundamentally imbricated with American Cold War projects in Japan and Korea. During a time marked by Communist victory in China and the outbreak of war in Korea, the discussion illuminates how Cold War developments in Asia both accelerated and narrowed the terms of legislative reform. A lobbying strategy centered around America's project to contain communism in Asia ultimately proved the key to passing Asian exclusion repeal. It was no coincidence that the Judd bill's provisions abolishing race-based restrictions to Asian immigration and naturalization were only enacted after their incorporation into the largely draconian McCarran-Walter omnibus bill. Change was hard-won, and immigration and naturalization gains for Asians continued disproportionately to reflect America's own geopolitical interests in Asia.

No figure was more important to the JACL's Judd campaign than Mike Masaoka, who was widely recognized by U.S. and Japanese officials alike as one of the "central" forces contributing to the ultimate success of repeal.¹¹ Between 1947 and 1952, Masaoka became synonymous with the cause of repeal as the JACL's Washington representative and the most visible *Nisei* lobbyist on Capitol Hill. Masaoka epitomized the "alien citizen," a U.S. citizen by birth who nevertheless remained perpetually foreign, or "alien in the eyes of the nation."¹² Throughout his tenure in Washington, observers frequently regarded him as an unofficial spokesman for Japan, notwithstanding his lack of Japanese language ability and his own self-identification as American. His experience demonstrates how Asian Americans' racialization as extensions of Asia – in Masaoka's case, Japan – gave rise to a particular dynamic of internationalism that distinguished their

¹¹ For example, see Richard Akagi to JACL chapter presidents and National Board [marked confidential], JACL-ADC Final Report on Passage of the McCarran-Walter Act, July 17, 1952, Box 42, Folder 10, Japanese American National Library (JANL), San Francisco, CA.

¹² Ngai, 8.

campaigns for civil rights from those of African Americans and other communities of color in the U.S. Geopolitics operated as an especially powerful strategy for Asian American lobbyists due to their widespread racialization as unofficial spokespersons for Asia.¹³ Using Masaoka as a case study, this chapter interrogates the paradox at the heart of postwar repeal: namely, that the same racial formation of Asians as “perpetual foreigners” that underwrote their historical exclusion as “aliens ineligible to [U.S.] citizenship” now served to legitimize and amplify, albeit selectively, the influence of Asian American lobbyists in early Cold War Washington. Japanese Americans proved particularly compelling voices for repeal during a time when Japan formed the linchpin of Washington’s containment project in East Asia.

By tracing the JACL’s postwar campaign, the chapter further charts points of convergence and negotiation between the postwar campaigns for Asian exclusion repeal and African American civil rights, two efforts rarely considered in tandem. In launching a national campaign for their cause, Masaoka and other JACL leaders joined an already crowded field of racial and ethnic lobbyists vying for lawmakers’ support on Capitol Hill. Focusing on the Judd campaign as a site of negotiation between multiple civil rights struggles – or as one scholar called them, “color lines” – this chapter speaks to the limits of inter-ethnic and inter-racial cooperation during the early Cold War years. The highly circumscribed terms on which the JACL ultimately achieved its legislative goals in the form of the McCarran-Walter Act demonstrates how racial reform in the early Cold War

¹³ As one scholar has described the contrast, African Americans were historically denigrated as “inferior” while Asian Americans were racialized as “foreign” or “alien.” The quest for full citizenship thus took on different valences for the two groups. Angelo Ancheta, *Race, Rights, and the Asian American Experience* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998).

remained very much a zero-sum game, in which gains for one group invariably came at the expense of another.

Japanese Exclusion and the JACL

The JACL brought mixed credentials to the Judd campaign. Founded in 1929 as a second-generation organization, the League exerted little influence within the community until World War II, when the mass arrest and detainment of powerful *Issei* community leaders by U.S. government officials following Pearl Harbor paved the way for the League to seize unprecedented influence as the officially recognized mouthpiece of Japanese America.¹⁴ JACL leaders filled the power vacuum left by the older generation, inviting the support of U.S. government officials with their declarations of 100% Americanism and professed goal to Americanize the *Nisei* through assimilation and model citizenship. The organization's policy restricting membership to U.S. citizens bolstered its claims to American-ness, which ensured that only *Nisei* and white Americans could join the League, while *Issei* remained ineligible. Their acceptance by the U.S. government notwithstanding, challenges from within the Japanese American community beset the JACL and its leadership. During the war, individuals known to be sympathetic to the League were targets of harassment and even violence at several detention camps.¹⁵ Little had changed by the war's end, and the JACL entered the postwar period as, at once, one of the most reviled organizations among Japanese

¹⁴ On the eve of America's entry into World War II, approximately 127,000 Japanese Americans lived on the U.S. mainland. Of these, roughly 60% were *Nisei*, or second-generation Japanese Americans who had been born in the United States (and were therefore U.S. citizens by birth), and 40% were *Issei*, or first-generation Japanese immigrants or non-citizens. 1940 Census figures taken from Roger Daniels, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1850* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 156.

¹⁵ Spickard, "*Nisei* Assume Power," 169-171.

Americans yet also the one officially recognized by the U.S. government as the voice of the Japanese American community.

The JACL followed in a longer tradition of activism to overturn laws barring Japanese from immigrating to and becoming citizens of the United States on racial grounds. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, American religious and business leaders launched various private efforts to obtain an annual immigration quota for Japan, but deteriorating relations between Washington and Tokyo proved decisive. While government officials on both sides considered the exclusion issue significant, neither was willing to take concrete action to redress it. Japanese Foreign ministry officials wanted to avoid interfering in U.S. domestic affairs, while the U.S. State Department wanted to avoid overstep into the domain of the legislative branch. Congress squelched a brief attempt by the JACL's Mike Masaoka to raise the issue during the wartime Congressional hearings on Chinese exclusion repeal.¹⁶ Eager to claim the protections of U.S. citizenship, Japanese immigrants turned to the U.S. courts for relief in the years after World War I. But their efforts, too, hit an impasse with the *Ozawa v. U.S.* (1922) decision, in which the Supreme Court declared persons of Japanese descent aliens racially ineligible to U.S. citizenship. The ruling hit Japanese immigrant farmers living along the West Coast hard by leaving them vulnerable to state-level alien land laws that barred "aliens ineligible to citizenship" from owning or leasing agricultural land. The wartime evacuation further undermined their already tenuous position, underscoring the powerlessness of first-generation *Issei* while exposing the second-class nature of the

¹⁶ Fred W. Riggs, *Pressures On Congress: A Study of the Repeal of Chinese Exclusion* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1950).

birthright citizenship held by their American-born children during a time of national crisis.¹⁷

Japanese American prospects improved dramatically after 1945 with the reshuffling of U.S. alliances and priorities in Asia. As Japan replaced China as America's favored Asian ally, Japanese Americans, too, supplanted Chinese Americans as a focus of approbation by Washington officials and media outlets. In the years after Japan's surrender ended World War II, a U.S.-led Allied occupation government sought to reconstruct a defeated Japan into a bastion of democracy; under American oversight, Japan drafted and ratified a new constitution, and passed a series of reforms to remake Japan in America's own image.¹⁸ By 1947 rising Cold War tensions led the Allied occupation government led by U.S. General Douglas MacArthur to abandon its original program of demilitarization and democratization in favor of rearming and strengthening Japan as America's prize Asian ally.¹⁹ The ouster of Chiang Kaishek's Nationalist government by Mao Zedong and his Chinese Communist forces in late 1949 completed Japan's transformation into America's chief anticommunist ally and bulwark against Soviet influence in the Far East. And all the more after June 1950, when Cold War tensions erupted in violence on the Korean peninsula and Japan became the regional base of defense for U.S. and United Nations joint military operations. Recognizing the close correlation between U.S. geopolitical interests in Asia and the status of Asian groups in

¹⁷ Mae Ngai has called this second-class citizenship "alien citizenship." Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 8, 81.

¹⁸ See John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000).

¹⁹ Many scholars refer to this period between 1947 and 1950 as the "reverse course," when U.S. policy makers shifted their main goals in Japan from political reform to economic recovery and security.

America, JACL leaders would increasingly cite Japan's centrality to U.S. security interests in Cold War Asia to bolster their calls for repeal.

Mechanics of the Judd Campaign

The JACL-ADC organizational structure closely resembled that of the Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion, the catalytic pressure group responsible for Chinese exclusion repeal during World War II. From the beginning, leaders of the JACL-ADC sought to draw lessons from the successes and failures of the earlier repeal campaigns. Upon opening a Washington, DC, office, one of the first things they did was to undertake a comprehensive study of the Chinese, Filipino, and Indian campaigns in search of best strategies and other "clues as to what ought to be done."²⁰ In early 1947, the ADC helped create a national citizens' organization called the Committee for Equality on Naturalization (CEN). Like the Citizens Committee, the CEN was restricted to prominent white Americans; as Masaoka explained, this was intended to give the impression that a "non-Japanese organ of distinguished Americans" was behind the push for repeal, rather than Asian Americans themselves.²¹ CEN board members included several veterans of the Chinese and Indian efforts, who campaigned for the Judd bill as a logical extension of their work for repeal. They included publisher Richard Walsh, ACLU president Roger Baldwin, novelist Pearl Buck, and Read Lewis of the Common Council for American Unity, an immigrant aid group. JACL affiliates Edward Ennis, who served as the chairman, and John McCloy, both of whom had worked closely with the

²⁰ Progress Report #1, January 18, 1947, Box 64, Folder 9, Mike Masaoka papers, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

²¹ Ibid.

League during the wartime evacuation, rounded out the CEN leadership. Throughout the postwar campaign, the ADC worked closely with the CEN to lobby the Judd bill through Congress.²² Similar to the Citizens Committee whose leadership drove the success of Chinese exclusion repeal, the CEN promoted the perception that white Americans were spearheading the fight for repeal. In practice, however, both the CEN and the JACL's Anti-Discrimination Committee worked under the aegis of the JACL's national board based in California.

Two figures were especially central to the Judd campaign. Minnesota Congressman and veteran of the Chinese and Indian immigration campaigns, Walter Judd, served as the legislation's main sponsor and chief spokesman on Capitol Hill. Between July 1947 and 1949, Rep. Judd sponsored multiple bills whose provisions proposed formally to end Asian exclusion.²³ Testifying before his Congressional peers, Judd repeatedly underscored the measure's role in creating formal equality for Asians, despite the fact that it did not increase Asian immigration in any meaningful numerical sense. Supporters argued that the Judd bill's narrow provisions responded to polled

²² The CEN was jointly funded by the JACL and the ACLU. The JACL provided the majority of the CEN's initial seed money (\$5,000), while Roger Baldwin of the ACLU pledged the remaining amount (\$1000).

²³ Territorial Delegate to Congress from Hawaii, Joseph Farrington introduced the first two broad-based repeal bills to the House (H.R. 7128 in July 1946, H.R. 857 in January 1947) at the request of the JACL-ADC. But by May 1947, Mike Masaoka noted that the delegate – preoccupied with the fight for Hawaiian statehood – could not be counted on to “carry the ball or provide the necessary leadership” for the campaign. As a voting member of the House, Judd was also a preferable sponsor to Farrington, whose position as a territorial delegate did not entitle him to a vote. ADC office memo, May 10, 1947, Box 5, Folder 4, Mike Masaoka papers, Salt Lake City, Utah. Vito Marcantonio (D-NY), then of the American Labor Party, introduced a similar bill (H.R. 1425) to remove the racial barriers against naturalization. But the JACL-ADC did not associate itself with this legislation in order to avoid the taint of Marcantonio's radical reputation. According to Masaoka, Marcantonio's bill was “not solicited, nor welcome, since he is persona non grata to both parties. As little publicity and attention should be given to this bill as possible.” Progress Report #4, Feb 9, 1947, Box 64, Folder 9, Mike Masaoka papers, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

American opinion in favor of maintaining or reducing the number of immigrants entering the United States.²⁴

*Mike Masaoka, “Washington’s Most Successful Lobbyist”*²⁵

Mike Masaoka, the JACL’s Washington representative and head of the JACL’s ADC, emerged as another major spokesman for repeal. Few individuals experienced more keenly the vagaries of Japanese Americans’ rapid postwar transformation from “inscrutable Japs” and “enemy aliens” to sympathetic victims and wartime heroes. Born in 1915, Masaoka was only twenty-five years old when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and the mass evacuation and internment of Japanese Americans began along the West Coast. As national spokesman for the JACL during the war, he bore the burden of association with the organization’s decision to cooperate with the War Relocation Authority in carrying out evacuation and internment. Japanese Americans also knew him as a major force behind the government’s controversial decision to draft *Nisei* into the U.S. military from within the detention camps. While viewed with skepticism by many Japanese Americans, Masaoka had a strong circle of support in Washington as a recognized spokesman for the Japanese American community. He benefited early on from the help of his mentor, Senator Elbert Thomas (R-UT), a former Mormon missionary to Japan and Masaoka’s former professor at the University of Utah. As he

²⁴ Taken from a 1946 Gallup poll, in Tichenor, *Dividing Lines*, 182.

²⁵ The title is taken from an article profiling Masaoka in *Reader’s Digest*. Alfred Steinberg, “Washington’s Most Successful Lobbyist,” *Reader’s Digest* (May 1949), 125-129. The piece was condensed from a longer article that originally appeared in the April 1949 issue of the national Catholic magazine, *The Sign*.

neared retirement, Thomas introduced Masaoka to several influential colleagues on Capitol Hill, including powerful Nevada Senator Pat McCarran.²⁶

As the JACL's chief representative in Washington, Masaoka proved an effective spokesman with a novel style of "personal lobbying" and eloquent speeches before Congress that one media observer described as rhetorical "gems of clarity, logic, and delivery." In 1949, the same writer declared Masaoka "Washington's Most Successful Lobbyist" for his unmatched record of legislative success.²⁷ Stories circulated of the JACL lobbyist's dogged perseverance and remarkable success in winning even the most reluctant lawmakers to his side. Unable to secure an appointment with Rep. John Robison of Kentucky, a powerful member of the House Judiciary Committee, Masaoka reportedly followed the lawmaker to the bathroom. According to JACL writer Bill Hosokawa, the result was that Robison soon became a "staunch supporter" of the JACL.²⁸

Supporters like Robison seemed unaware that Mike "Messiah" Masaoka, a native of Fresno, California, was a native-born U.S. citizen. From the start, Masaoka's Japanese heritage indelibly framed his reception in Washington. His experiences exemplified what historian Mae Ngai has described as the lot of "alien citizens," those who lived in America legally and possessed the legal rights of citizenship but who nevertheless

²⁶ Masaoka's mentor, Senator Elbert Thomas of Utah remained deeply interested in Japan and greater East Asia throughout his academic and Congressional career as a U.S. Senator representing Utah from 1933 to 1951. For more on Elbert D. Thomas and Japan, see Hayashi Yoshikatsu, "Elbert D. Thomas in the Context of U.S.-Japanese Relations," *Nanzan Review of American Studies* 29 (2007): 125-130.

²⁷ Alfred Steinberg, "Washington's Most Successful Lobbyist," *Reader's Digest*, May 1949, 125, 128. The piece was condensed from a longer article that originally appeared in the April 1949 issue of the national Catholic magazine, *The Sign*.

²⁸ Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1969).

“remain[ed] alien in the eyes of the nation.”²⁹ Observers’ descriptions betrayed this presumptive foreignness. Reporting on one of his first Congressional appearances after the war, ACLU staff member Mary Alice Baldinger declared Masaoka the “hit of the daylong proceedings.” According to Baldinger, news that a “Jap was making a good impression” had spread through the House offices, attracting a crowd to the Congressional gallery until the “room was jammed full.” Masaoka’s enthusiastic reception had so worried Harry Hayden, Jr. of the American Legion that he rushed over to request a last-minute opportunity for the organization to respond in kind.³⁰ At other times, the racial overtones were less overt. Upon hearing Masaoka testify at a Congressional hearing on deportation, one lawmaker exclaimed, “By God, that *little fellow* really was giving us a lecture on the meaning of democracy.” Suggesting how mindsets could change, the same speaker added that after seeing Masaoka speak, he “began to see the Japanese Americans for the first time, as people just like anyone else.”³¹ For at least one Washington observer, then, Masaoka’s testimony evoked mixed feelings. It humanized him and other Japanese Americans, even as it reinforced the apparent irony and sheer spectacle of a Japanese face preaching about the virtues of democracy to an audience of white American officials.

Japan was central to U.S. Cold War interests in the region at the time. As a prized American ally, Japan commanded official attention, and Congress valued special

²⁹ Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 8.

³⁰ Mary Alice Baldinger of ACLU to JACL National Headquarters, March 20, 1947, reprinted in JACL HQ memo, April 18, 1947, Box 16, Folder 12, Japanese American National Library (JANL), San Francisco, CA.

³¹ Bill Hosokawa, “MASAOKA: Nisei of the Year,” *Pacific Citizen*, December 23, 1950, 7.

knowledge of Japan. In this way, presumptive ties to Japan bolstered the legitimacy of Masaoka and others. Moreover, at a time when Japanese Americans made up less than 1% of the U.S. population and most lawmakers had never seen an Asian American firsthand, novelty was power. As Masaoka himself acknowledged, his distinctive ethno-racial heritage caused him to stand out in a way that could, at times, work in his favor.

In that era there were no *Nisei* members of Congress to open doors for me. Japanese Americans were virtually unknown on the Hill; I was the first *Nisei* [second-generation Japanese American] that many of the legislators had ever seen, and I must have been something of a curiosity. But that was all right if being a curiosity helped the cause.³²

As Masaoka also recognized, the challenge remained of how to parlay that novelty into political influence. While his perceived Japanese heritage might initially persuade others to listen to him, it also pigeonholed him in ways that constrained the power of his witness. And ultimately, for individual Japanese American lobbyists like Masaoka, any attempt to claim greater legal rights in America by playing on their foreign-ness ultimately risked being counter-productive. Though it might bolster their message in the short-term, on the whole the approach reinforced rather than undercut the perception that Japanese Americans could never be fully American but would always be considered Japanese first.³³

As someone who for all intents and purposes had known nothing but America over the course of his entire life, Masaoka's experiences as a Washington lobbyist illustrated with force the indelible power of the "perpetual foreigner" idea to frame how

³² Mike Masaoka and Bill Hosokawa, *They Call Me Moses Masaoka: An American Saga* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1987), 203.

³³ For more on what scholars refer to as the "perpetual foreigner syndrome," see Frank H. Wu, *Yellow: Race in America Beyond Black and White* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 86, 92; Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996).

others perceived him despite the actual circumstances of his birth and early life. Born in Fresno, California and raised in Utah, Masaoka had never traveled to Japan, did not speak the Japanese language, and openly disavowed any meaningful knowledge of Japanese culture or history.³⁴ To the contrary, he spoke English fluently and, having been educated in the States, was familiar with the American political process. As a JACL leader, for years he explicitly claimed to speak for the interests of Japanese *Americans*, not Japanese. Yet Washington never accepted Masaoka as fully American. Indeed, despite his many attempts to assert his American-ness and even, at times, to distance himself from Tokyo, Masaoka found himself repeatedly playing the role of an unofficial spokesperson for Japan and its Japanese people. In his memoirs, Masaoka reflected upon his experiences with the perpetual foreigner idea at work. “For reasons I have never been able to fathom,” he wrote, “Japanese Americans are expected to know everything there is about Japan.” In response to the many U.S. officials who solicited his opinion on foreign policy matters related to Japan, he continued to insist that he had “no special insights into Japanese politics or the Japanese mind nor access to any source of information they didn’t have.” So strong were others’ presumptions of his native expertise that they continued to ask him despite his protestations.³⁵

Not simply an individual problem, Masaoka’s experiences in Washington mirrored on a smaller scale the dilemma the JACL faced during the same period. Despite

³⁴ According to Masaoka, it was this “nonsense that makes it difficult for Japanese Americans to be accepted as, for want of a better expression, full-fledged Americans” and a “stereotyped view that persists to this day even though these Americans may be several generations removed from Japan.” Masaoka, *They Call Me Moses Masaoka*, 239-240.

³⁵ In his autobiography, Masaoka began the chapter on the San Francisco Treaty of 1951 with the statement: “Although I had never been to the land of my ancestry, did not speak its language, and knew almost nothing of its culture, Japan persistently has intruded on my life for better or worse.” Masaoka, *They Call Me Moses Masaoka*, 239.

being a group that ostensibly spoke for Japanese *Americans*, after the war, JACL leaders found themselves more frequently thrust into the role of liaison between Washington and Tokyo. While the League had readily embraced a level of dualism in the years before World War II, when the U.S. and Japan went to war, the League had consciously adopted a policy of “100% Americanism” to stave off any suspicions about its loyalties. With Japan’s subsequent defeat and metamorphosis into a U.S. ally after the war, the JACL’s need to prove its allegiance lessened. This paved the way for a more sweeping reevaluation of the League’s position on U.S.-Japan relations and international affairs, although this would not happen until the passage of the McCarran-Walter Act in 1952 resolved the immigration and naturalization issues.³⁶

The JACL-ADC Campaign

As a self-described Japanese *American* organization, the JACL was in many ways an unlikely choice to spearhead the cause of repeal by invoking America’s interests in Asia. Before adopting the language of Cold War geopolitics to make the case for repeal, Masaoka and the JACL’s Anti-Discrimination Committee established a reputation for legislative success using the language of martial patriotism, or entitlement on the basis of Japanese Americans’ military service and sacrifices in World War II. The early Judd campaign exemplifies the efforts of the JACL to frame the Judd bill as a civil rights measure. As part of this strategy, JACL supporters advocated for *Issei* citizenship as derivative of the rights of Japanese American citizens, most notably of U.S.-born *Nisei* soldiers whose wartime sacrifices had established their loyalty to America beyond a doubt. In line with this argument, the martial patriotism and bodily sacrifices of U.S.-

³⁶ For more on this debate, see Ellen Wu, “Race and Asian American Citizenship,” 392-413.

born Japanese Americans not only entitled them to legal rights but had also earned their parents, and the older generation more generally, the right to U.S. citizenship. The logic of the early Judd campaign toward *Issei* naturalization thus reflected Japanese Americans' growing recognition that immigrant rights were connected to citizens' rights, inasmuch as *Issei* citizenship was a Japanese American, and not simply a Japanese issue.³⁷

As scholars have shown, the JACL-ADC's strategy of "martial patriotism" – that is, its efforts to present Japanese Americans as "loyal, patriotic members of the nation" – was the key to its immediate postwar success.³⁸ Military service and sacrifice were historically one of the most effective grounds for expanding the racial boundaries of American citizenship to include otherwise ineligible veterans who had purchased their right to citizenship with blood.³⁹ Indeed, the JACL had successfully used the strategy before World War II to secure citizenship eligibility for Asian veterans of the First World War with the Nye-Lea Act, passed by Congress in 1935.⁴⁰ Using this strategy, the JACL-ADC won a string of legislative victories over its first two years that cemented its reputation as an effective voice for *Nikkei* rights. In 1946, Congress issued a formal apology for internment. The Wartime Evacuation Claims Act, marking the federal government's first attempt to compensate the losses suffered by Japanese internees

³⁷ The author thanks historian Cindy Cheng for this point. Cindy I-Fen Cheng, *Citizens of Asian America: Race and the Image of Cold War Democracy* (New York: New York University Press, 2013).

³⁸ This is the definition used by historian Ellen Wu. For a longer discussion, see Wu, "Race and Asian American Citizenship: From World War II to the Movement," Chapter 5.

³⁹ Lucy E. Salyer. "Baptism by *Fire*: Race, Military Service, and U.S. Citizenship Policy, 1918–1935," *Journal of American History* 91:3 (2004): 848. For more on martial citizenship, see Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 9.

⁴⁰ This campaign is covered in Salyer, "Baptism by Fire," 847-876.

during the war, followed two years later. In response to wide-scale pressure, Congress passed an amendment to the War Brides Act in 1947 that allowed Japanese military brides to enter the United States outside of existing restrictions. One year later, the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Oyama v. California* (1948) set the stage for the repeal of the California's Alien Land Laws several years later.⁴¹ All told, the JACL-ADC's early record of lobbying success led League advisor Robert Cullum to call 1948 the year of the "Japanese American come-back."⁴²

Through statements offered at official hearings and printed in the JACL newspaper, the *Pacific Citizen*, JACL leaders attempted to redeploy the logic of martial patriotism to win Congressional passage of the Judd bill and thereby meet their goal of securing citizenship rights for all *Issei*. Rather than appeal to the military service of elderly *Issei* themselves – all of whom were well above the enlistment age by the time World War II began – JACL representatives sought to leverage the more recent military service of *Nisei* soldiers to increase official support for the Judd bill's provisions granting *Issei* eligibility for U.S. citizenship. Accordingly, JACL National Director Masao Satow specifically called upon families who had lost *Nisei* soldiers to write their Congressional representatives urging them to vote for the legislation.⁴³ In line with this logic, the bodily sacrifice of U.S.-born Japanese Americans not only entitled them to legal rights but had earned their parents, and *Issei* more generally, the right to U.S. citizenship as well. By bringing the military sacrifices of *Nisei* to bear on the rights of their parents and parents'

⁴¹ Wu, "Race and Asian American Citizenship," 385-386.

⁴² Robert M. Cullum, "Japanese American Audit-1948," *Common Ground* 8-9 (Winter 1949), 88. The phrase was borrowed from the theme of the JACL's tenth biennial national convention (1948), held in Salt Lake City.

⁴³ Cited in Wu, "Race and American Citizenship," 371.

generation, U.S.-born JACL spokespersons thus articulated a connection between immigrant rights and citizen rights. Arguing that *Issei* naturalization eligibility was derivative of *Nisei*'s rights as U.S. citizens, in turn, served their effort to frame the Judd bill as a matter of Japanese Americans' civil rights.

A special 1948 Christmas edition of the JACL newspaper *Pacific Citizen* typified the League's strategic effort to engender public support and awareness of the elderly *Issei* generation's plight as "aliens ineligible to citizenship." Titled "These Are Our Parents," the headline's use of the possessive "our" suggested the role that JACL leaders in the postwar years assumed as advocates supplicating on behalf of the immigrant generation. In a feature piece called "They Pierced the Silken Curtain," editor Larry Tajiri described the earliest Japanese arrivals to America, the discrimination they faced, and the courage they had demonstrated to rise above their mistreatment. In "These Are the *Issei*," CEN chairman Robert Cullum humanized the older generation with vignettes and individual profiles of Japanese immigrants, whom he hailed as pioneers "of the stuff that brought America out of the wilderness."⁴⁴ The publication closed with "Our Next Great Goal," in which Mike Masaoka notably described a law granting naturalization eligibility to *Issei* as the long-cherished "dream of Japanese and Japanese Americans" alike.⁴⁵ Reports from different regions of the country charting *Issei* citizenship drives and the filing of naturalization papers by a growing number of first-generation Japanese Americans evinced the desire and intention of *Issei* to become U.S. citizens.⁴⁶ Using the *Pacific Citizen* as a forum, the JACL's postwar campaign for *Issei* naturalization thus defined the

⁴⁴ *Pacific Citizen*, December 25, 1948.

⁴⁵ *Pacific Citizen*, December 25, 1948, emphasis added.

⁴⁶ For example, "San Jose *Issei* Apply for First Citizenship Papers," *Pacific Citizen*, July 12, 1947.

issue as one that concerned the Japanese American community as a whole, and not the elderly generation alone.

Masaoka proved an especially able practitioner of the revived martial strategy, regularly drawing on his own family's losses to amplify the power of his message. In addition to being the first *Nisei* formally to enlist in what later became the highly decorated 442nd Regimental Combat Team, Masaoka lost a brother in the war, while another brother's leg injury left him unable to walk. Speaking before official audiences, he repeatedly invoked his own family's wartime sacrifices to decry the injustice of exclusionary statutes that prevented his long-suffering mother and other deserving Japanese elders from realizing their desire for American citizenship. Masaoka powerfully described the patriotism and courage demonstrated by *Nisei* soldiers who had volunteered to fight for America "from behind barbed wire" during World War II.⁴⁷ He cited estimates by one U.S. intelligence officer asserting that the military service of Japanese American troops in the Pacific had "shortened the war by months and saved thousands of American casualties." In his telling, the "Japanese people in the U.S. were the only people in its history ever . . . asked to go bankrupt voluntarily and then go to jail." Yet they endured internment because they "believed fundamentally in the American way."⁴⁸ Speaking before the House Judiciary Committee in 1948, Masaoka described *Nisei* soldiers and their parents as having equal claims to American justice.

. . . here you had a great number of American soldiers of Japanese ancestry who so believed in America . . . that even though they were incarcerated in virtual prisons they saw behind and beyond the barbed-wire fences. . . beyond the

⁴⁷ *Go for Broke* actor Van Johnson, quoted in Naoko Shibusawa, *America's Geisha Ally: Reimagining the Japanese Enemy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006). 269.

⁴⁸ U.S. House Judiciary Committee, *Providing for Equality under Naturalization and Immigration Laws*, 80th Cong., 2nd sess., 1948, 116-118.

watchtowers manned by armed MPs [military police]; they saw America, just and fair-minded, willing to give them and their parents a decent break.⁴⁹

Using such appeals, the JACL secured the support of restrictionist lawmakers who nevertheless acknowledged the valuable military contributions of *Nisei* soldiers during a time when a growing number of U.S. officials, including former California governor Earl Warren and former Los Angeles mayor Fletcher Bowron, were expressing public remorse over the injustice of Japanese Americans' wartime internment.

Statements by JACL representatives valorizing the figure of the *Nisei* citizen-soldier convinced more than one reluctant Congressional lawmaker to support the Judd bill. Representative Ed Gossett of Texas (D-TX) agreed to meet with Masaoka after hearing of the 442nd Regimental Combat team's sacrifice on the European front. A long-time Texan, Gossett claimed to have been personally persuaded by the *Nisei* troop's daring rescue of the Lost Battalion, a group of U.S. soldiers from Texas trapped behind enemy lines in France. He was not alone. Together with Gossett, a majority of House lawmakers voted to pass the Judd bill in March 1949 only to have it stall in the Senate. The measure languished under the Judiciary Committee's powerful chairman Pat McCarran and his restrictionist allies, mainly Southern Democrats and conservative Republicans. Thus, even as they experienced success in other arenas, JACL-ADC leaders found their efforts to lobby the Judd bill ineffective against the opposition of this "conservative coalition" in Congress.⁵⁰ Thwarted, Masaoka and the JACL-ADC soon

⁴⁹ *Providing for Equality under Naturalization and Immigration Laws*, 117-118.

⁵⁰ Political scientist Daniel Tichenor has credited a "conservative coalition" of Southern Democrats and conservative Republicans for stalling meaningful immigration reform well into the 1960s. This bloc was also responsible for inhibiting Congressional action on black civil rights during the same period. Daniel Tichenor, *Dividing Lines: The Politics of Immigration Control in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 177.

turned to Cold War geopolitical logic and rhetoric to salvage their case, but before doing so, they explored the possibility of collective action, and the forging of partnerships across ethnic and racial lines.

“There Are No Islands Anymore”: The Judd Bill and the Challenges of Cooperation

The JACL recognized early on the promise of banding with other groups to strengthen their own lobbying power. As a general immigration and naturalization measure that applied widely across Asian groups, the Judd bill was fundamentally different from the piecemeal bills of previous campaigns. For the first time, more than one Asian American group stood to benefit from its provisions. In theory, then, the Judd bill offered a common goal around which a coalition of groups could join forces and rally. In a similar vein, the JACL, led by Mike Masaoka, embraced the multiracial vision of the President’s Committee on Civil Rights’ 1947 report *To Secure These Rights*, seizing upon its discussions as a platform through and upon which to appeal for Japanese American rights and redress. But coalition was not easy. Precedents for interracial and inter-ethnic cooperation were few. Long-standing historical antagonisms between groups also proved difficult to overcome, limiting what partnerships could actually materialize in practice.⁵¹ In the restrictive political climate of the Cold War, competition, not cooperation, remained the norm on the national stage. The efforts of various officials to add riders and amendments to the Judd legislation in order to narrow its impact complicated matters. The effect of this was to turn the Judd bill increasingly into a point of contention, not unity, between Japanese Americans and other groups.

⁵¹ For a state-level study, see Mark Brilliant, *The Color of America Has Changed: How Racial Diversity Shaped Civil Rights Reform in California, 1941-1978* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

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Amity had not characterized interactions between Asian immigrant groups in the United States or Asian Americans and other groups in the years before World War II, and little changed in the years after the war ended.⁵² What did change after 1945 was the scale in which Washington officials talked about the race problem and civil rights in America. Like no document before it, *To Secure These Rights* (1947) outlined a multiracial agenda of American civil rights that addressed injustices facing Asian Americans and other groups beyond the purview of black Americans alone. At his own request, the JACL's Mike Masaoka served the President's Committee as a consultant on Japanese American affairs in the writing of the final report, and he had unmistakable influence. Along with calls for anti-lynching and desegregation measures for black Americans, it notably contained recommendations relevant to Asian American groups, including a government review of wartime evacuation and detention policies, the creation of a body to process internees' claims of loss, and the restructuring of naturalization laws to eliminate restrictions based on "race, color, or national origin."⁵³ In a section devoted to immigration the report singled out as "one disadvantage" of America's otherwise laudable "diversity" the fact that differences between groups – namely, racial and ethnic distinctions – were "too often . . . seized upon as justification for discrimination."⁵⁴ The

⁵² See, for example, Eiichiro Azuma, "Racial Struggle, Immigrant Nationalism & Ethnic Minority: Japanese & Filipinos in the California Delta, 1930-1941," *Pacific Historical Review* 67 (1998), 198-199; Joan S. Wang, "The Double Burdens of Immigrant Nationalism: The Relationship between Chinese and Japanese in the American West, 1880s-1920s," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 27:2 (Winter 2008): 28-58. On economic competition between Japanese and other Asian American groups, see Charlotte Brooks, "The War on Grant Avenue: Business Competition and Ethnic Rivalry in San Francisco's Chinatown, 1937-1942," *Journal of Urban History* 37:3 (May 2011): 311-330.

⁵³ A full list of the Committee's recommendations can be found in *To Secure These Rights*, 151-175.

report's expansive vision of civil rights offered an unprecedented basis for collaboration across ethnic and racial lines – at least in theory – although the challenges of implementation soon complicated the forging of partnerships in practice.

Spurred by the broad-based nature of the Judd bill, Masaoka and other JACL-ADC leaders reached out to representatives of the Korean, Burmese, and Indonesian communities early on in the hope of increasing the campaign's overall chance of success. As the next-largest beneficiary of the Judd bill's immigration and naturalization provisions, Korean Americans became a special target of the League's collaborative efforts. Masaoka and Robert Cullum of CEN, the JACL's all-white pro-naturalization affiliate group, set their sights on an ethnic lobby group called the Korean Immigration and Naturalization Committee (KINC).⁵⁵ Koreans from Hawaii had founded the KINC after World War II to revive the wartime effort for a Korean immigration and naturalization bill. By all indications, it was in the KINC's best interest to partner with the JACL-ADC to lobby for passage of the Judd bill. Not only did the broader legislation's "Asia-Pacific Triangle" encompass Korea and the gains of the narrower Farrington bill for Korean rights.⁵⁶ Basic name recognition, connections, and exposure made the JACL-ADC and CEN better positioned than the Hawaii-based KINC to command the ear of lawmakers on Capitol Hill.⁵⁷ The KINC was, by contrast, a small and

⁵⁴ *To Secure These Rights*, 13-14.

⁵⁵ The KINC is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

⁵⁶ The piecemeal bills for Korean immigration and naturalization bill (KINB) introduced by Hawaii territorial delegate Joseph Farrington in 1947 and 1948 were modified versions of the legislation discussed in Chapter 3.

⁵⁷ Compared to the JACL, which was formed in 1930, Chinese American community organizations like the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) and Chinese American Citizens Association

newly formed group with few official connections. Its Washington, DC, office, which opened around the same as that of the ADC in January 1947, consisted of just one man, Hawaii-born Walter Jung. What it lacked in dedicated office staff, however, the KINC claimed to make up for in abundant financial resources. According to internal ADC reports, in 1947 the Korean group enjoyed an estimated budget “totaling more than ten times” that of the ADC.⁵⁸ The KINC’s deep pockets attracted Masaoka and his cash-strapped colleagues, for whom funding remained a constant concern and source of struggle with California-based first-generation donors.

Unfortunately for the JACL representatives, history was not on their side. In the words of one scholar, “animosity rather than amity” was the “common mode” for relations between Asian immigrant groups in California and the western United States before World War II, and Japanese Americans and other groups who took umbrage at the superior attitudes of *Issei* community leaders had particularly acrimonious relations.⁵⁹ Indeed, it was telling that when Japan was finally brought under exclusion in 1924, *Issei* leaders in the United States protested not only on the grounds Japanese did not merit such restrictions; they specifically denounced the law’s suggestion that Japanese ranked on the same low level as those other excluded Asian peoples whom they believed to be their inferiors.⁶⁰ In line with Azuma’s observation that “local race relations paralleled the

(CACA) had been around much longer, but they were often mistrusted by U.S. government officials because of their suspected ties to illegal Chinese immigration practices like the paper son system.

⁵⁸ Masaoka to Gongoro Nakamura of CEN, May 3, 1947, Box 18, Folder 33: Walter Resolution, JANL, San Francisco, CA.

⁵⁹ To be sure, there were notable examples of cooperation on a local level, but these were the exception and not the rule. Eiichiro Azuma, "Racial Struggle, Immigrant Nationalism & Ethnic Minority: Japanese & Filipinos in the California Delta, 1930-1941," *Pacific Historical Review* 67 (1998), 198-199.

power relations of nation states,” Japanese expansionism in the Pacific after 1930 polarized Asian American sentiment against Japanese in an American immigrant context as well.⁶¹ In the late 1930s, Chinese merchants in San Francisco Chinatown organized a boycott of their Japanese American competitors on the grounds that they represented “Tokyo’s agents.”⁶² Inter-group relations grew even more strained after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941. As anti-Japanese sentiment peaked in the U.S., Chinese, Koreans, Filipino Americans and others readily joined in the public vilification of Japanese, hoping to bolster their own claims to American patriotism and national belonging, even if at Japanese Americans’ expense.⁶³

Japan’s 1910 colonization of Korea and thirty-five years of colonial rule over the peninsula made relations between Korean and Japanese American communities especially contentious. Through the 1930s and 1940s, Korean American community leaders had made anti-Japanese rhetoric the hallmark of their independence and immigration-related activism. Kilsoo Haan, for example, regularly touted Koreans as the “number-one enemy of the Japanese” and as such, the people best qualified to fight them.⁶⁴ Indeed, Haan’s patriotic campaigns during World War II targeted Mike Masaoka and the JACL. In a February 1942 meeting with FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, the Korean Hawaiian activist singled out the Japanese American representative as an

⁶⁰ Yuji Ichioka, *The Issei: The World of First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1924* (New York: Free Press, 1988), 250.

⁶¹ Azuma, “Racial Struggle,” 198.

⁶² Brooks, “War on Grant Avenue,” 323.

⁶³ See Chapters 1 and 3.

⁶⁴ For more on the U.S. Korean community’s role in the Korean Independence Movement, see Richard S. Kim, *The Quest for Statehood: Korean Immigrant Nationalism and U.S. Sovereignty, 1905-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

undercover spy and denounced the JACL as spies and puppets for Tokyo.⁶⁵ Haan's anti-Japanese tirades persisted after the war, but in the aftermath of internment and a climate of growing sympathy for Japanese Americans, his warnings of a Japanese threat found few supporters. In the postwar years Haan had a diminished role in the KINC.

Eager to avoid misunderstanding, Masaoka arranged for a non-Japanese – in this case, white American CEN board member Robert Cullum – to contact the KINC's executive secretary Jhung about the prospect of joining forces. Writing in July 1947, Cullum urged Jhung that the time was "ripe" for an "inclusive bill" and that a "united strategy" of "effective coordination" among the JACL's ADC, the ACLU, and other "interested groups" would lead to collective success. Repeating Jhung's previous intimations that the KINC might be interested in making a "substantial donation" to the Judd campaign, Cullum assured him that any such contribution would be "well spent."⁶⁶ Jhung responded a few days later with a promise that the KINC would give serious thought to the proposal. Cullum's involvement was strategic for another reason. Namely, it avoided any awkwardness around Jhung's attempt to hire Masaoka away from the JACL earlier that spring. Masaoka had cited his personal commitment to the Japanese American community to decline the offer of more money, but he was quick to make use of the offer in his fundraising appeals to the Nikkei community. If the KINC, a Korean group which represented fewer than five thousand Korean Americans in the United States, could raise so much money from within the community, he insisted, why should the JACL – representing more than ten times that number of Japanese Americans – have

⁶⁵ J. Edgar Hoover to Kilsoo Haan, February 4, 1942, Kilsoo Haan papers, UCSC, Santa Cruz, CA.

⁶⁶ Robert Cullum to Walter Jhung, August 4, 1947, Box 18, Folder 33, JANL, San Francisco, CA.

such a difficult time doing the same? “If the *Issei* are sincere in their desires for citizenship,” they “should be willing to ‘pay’ for it” as their Korean counterparts were doing.⁶⁷ In this way, the ever-resourceful Masaoka tried to play off the KINC’s deep pockets as leverage to needle the JACL-ADC’s California-based donors for additional funds. However, money would continue to be a source of struggle throughout the campaign.

Although the KINC would eventually decline to partner with the JACL, these episodes warrant further attention for the remarkable shift they suggest in Korean-Japanese American attitudes from the end of World War II to just two years later. Such an alliance would have been unthinkable just a few years earlier. Differences in generation and geography accounted for the change. As an organization of younger, and in many cases U.S. or Hawaii-born Koreans, the KINC emphasized justice for Koreans living in America over the welfare of Koreans in Korea. The Korean American groups’ roots in Hawaii also made a difference. Having grown up in close proximity with Japanese Americans, few younger Koreans in Hawaii shared their parents’ anti-Japanese sentiments. Indeed, even during World War II, a Hawaii sociologist found that second-generation Korean Americans in the islands generally did not share the overt anti-Japanese antagonism prevalent Koreans on the U.S. mainland.⁶⁸ Literature issued by the KINC reflected an inclusive mindset, with writers acknowledging the interests that they as Korean Americans shared with their Nikkei counterparts. In a 1947 brief to Congress, one KINC member went so far as to liken the historical injustices faced by Koreans in

⁶⁷ Masaoka to Gongoro Nakamura of CEN, May 3, 1947, Box 18, Folder 33: Walter Resolution, JANL, San Francisco, CA.

⁶⁸ Lauriel E. Eubank, “The Effects of the First Six Months of World War II on the Attitudes of Koreans and Filipinos toward the Japanese in Hawaii” (M.A. thesis, University of Hawaii, 1943).

the United States with the tragedy of *Nisei* soldiers liberating prisoners of war abroad while their parents were imprisoned in internment camps back in the United States.⁶⁹ No formal partnership between Japanese and Korean Americans materialized during this period, but the sentiment reflected in the statement suggested the possibility of future cooperation.

The JACL and Other Asian American Groups

Whereas the Judd bill created a situation that lent itself to a Japanese-Korean American partnership, it did precisely the opposite for Japanese Americans vis-à-vis Chinese and Filipino American groups. Between 1948 and 1949, State Department and Senate Judiciary Committee members introduced a series of amendments to the Judd bill intended to correct for long-standing loopholes in U.S. immigration law. Savvy observers decried their inclusion as an underhanded attempt to capitalize on the momentum for Asian exclusion repeal to carry out a larger restrictionist agenda. What prospects remained of cooperation across Asian American groups diminished with the rise of counter-lobbying efforts by Chinese and Filipino American activists, who took issue with amendments to the Judd bill that proposed to benefit Japanese Americans at the expense of their own hard-won gains. Chinese Americans had lobbied for years to secure a bill allowing the Chinese alien wives of U.S. residents to enter the country outside the usual numerical restrictions as non-quota immigrants.⁷⁰ Thus, when a

⁶⁹ Korean Immigration and Naturalization Committee, "Brief in Support of S. 152 and H.R. 860 (Superseded by H.R. 2932)," Summer 1947, Joseph Farrington Papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, Hawaii. For further discussion of Japanese internment and the experiences of Japanese Americans during the war, see Roger Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993).

⁷⁰ Under the War Brides Act (1946), 5,132 Chinese women entered the U.S.; another 2,317 women came under the Chinese Alien Wives of American Citizens Act, which remained in effect from 1947 to 1950.

proposed amendment to the Judd bill threatened to undo these gains, two of the Chinese American community's oldest and most established organizations – the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA, or Chinese Six Companies) and the Chinese American Citizens Alliance (CACA) – rallied a counter-effort demanding its removal.⁷¹ Filipino American community leaders reacted with similar indignation to amendments that threatened to undercut Filipinos' favored immigration status, which they insisted should be preserved in light of the Philippines' special history as a former American colony.⁷² Their protests highlighted the question that confronted JACL leaders: namely, when weighing the interests of one's own group versus those of a broader community, which would take precedence?

The ADC's response registered a wide gap between the organization's public rhetoric and members' privately held opinion. Publicly ADC leaders affirmed the concerns of their Chinese and Filipino American counterparts. At the spring 1949 Senate Judiciary committee hearing, Masaoka expanded upon Chinese Americans' demands, calling on Congress to extend the non-quota exemption to not only alien wives but alien husbands and children as well.⁷³ He did the same for Filipinos, insisting that they retain their special privileges. In private, however, the JACL lobbyist was decidedly less

Xiaojian Zhao, *Remaking Chinese America: Immigration, Family, and Community, 1940-1965* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 80.

⁷¹ The offending passage stipulated that alien wives of U.S. citizens would be counted as quota immigrants if they came from countries with an annual quota of 200 or less, in effect, reversing the gains of the 1946 law.

⁷² Candido Palting, an attorney based in Washington, spoke for Filipino American interests at the 1949 Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on proposed revisions to U.S. immigration and naturalization law.

⁷³ Walter Judd took a similar position, denouncing Section 3 as “unjust and unwise,” insofar as all such attempts to prevent family reunification left Asian alien men little choice other than bachelorhood, a “socially undesirable state.” Senate Committee on Judiciary, *Naturalization of Asian and Pacific Peoples, Volume 1: Hearings on H.R. 199, 81st Cong., 1st sess., 1949*, 16, 146.

sympathetic. In an internal ADC memorandum, he blamed Chinese Americans' own actions, namely their well-known "abuses" of the alien wives privilege for having prompted the Immigration and Naturalization Service to add the amendments in question; continuing the notorious "paper son system" of the Chinese exclusion era, INS officials suspected Chinese of trading in paper marriages to bring Chinese women into the United States under false pretenses.⁷⁴ Elsewhere Masaoka called on the JACL to keep its distance from Chinese American groups, for fear of becoming associated with their long record of "forgery . . . smuggling" and other unethical practices. The JACL could not "afford to get involved or mixed up" with Chinese Americans, he warned, "if we are to keep our own skirts clean."⁷⁵

With the addition of such amendments, the Judd campaign renewed attention to the question of "justifiable selfishness": that is, the extent to which the JACL should prioritize Japanese American interests versus its responsibilities to address discriminations suffered by black Americans and other nonwhite groups in America. While the removal of the provisions offensive to Chinese and Filipino Americans from the final version of the Judd bill passed by the House on March 1, 1949, simplified the issue for the JACL, the final bill included a similar amendment affecting the African

⁷⁴ A few years later, the U.S. Departments of State and Justice would initiate a formal Chinese Confession Program to end "paper immigration" whereby tens of thousands of Chinese illegally gained admission to the U.S. using falsified documents identifying them as the children of citizens born in the U.S. For more on the Chinese Confession Program, which began in 1956, see Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, Chapter 6.

⁷⁵ In fact, even after his formal term with the JACL had ended and he was a free agent, Masaoka refused multiple offers from the Chinese American Citizens Alliance (CACA) for his private freelance consulting and lobbying services on similar grounds. Mike Masaoka to Roy Nishikawa, September 16, 1957, Box 5, Folder 15, JANL, San Francisco, CA. For more on the history of the "paper son system," see Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003). For more on the problem of Chinese "marriage," see Xiaojian Zhao, *Remaking Chinese America: Immigration, Family, and Community, 1940-1965* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 80, and Meredith Oyey, "Allies, Enemies and Aliens: Migration and U.S.-Chinese relations, 1940-1965," (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2007).

American community. The JACL supported the bill in spite of the strong objections of black critics, who became more outspoken after 1948.⁷⁶

Reconciling Asian Exclusion Repeal with Black Civil Rights

Peaceful co-existence and, in activist circles, a general sense of solidarity had marked black-Japanese relations during the 1940s. The World War II years were a tumultuous time for both the black and Japanese American communities. Government evacuation and internment took an incalculable toll on Japanese Americans uprooted from sites across the West Coast, and many of the elderly first-generation *Issei* would never recover from the experience. Preoccupied with the issues facing the Japanese American community, the JACL took little active interest in black Americans' wartime calls for military desegregation and fair employment. Black organizations responded to Japanese internment with similar ambivalence. Reluctant to jeopardize their own civil rights agenda, which relied heavily on maintaining a favorable standing with U.S. authorities, most major African American organizations, formally took no position.⁷⁷ The NAACP alone issued what historian Cheryl Greenberg has described as the "most forceful" critique of internment of the time, but even it was "muted and . . . oblique."⁷⁸

⁷⁶ For the Chinese American community, one of the lasting consequences of this episode was that the CCBA and CACA subsequently retained regular lobbyists in Washington, DC. After 1950, the CCBA would later join the JACL as one of the only other major Asian American organizations to support the McCarran-Walter Act.

⁷⁷ Having launched the "double V" campaign against racism at home and fascism abroad, the NAACP joined A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin to threaten a March on Washington, which, in turn, persuaded President Roosevelt to create the Fair Employment Practices Committee, though powerful Southern Democrats in Congress prevented the government body from exercising any real power or lawmaking authority.

⁷⁸ Cheryl Greenberg, "Black and Jewish Responses to Japanese Internment," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 14:2 (Winter 1995): 3-37, quoted in Kurashige, *Shifting Grounds*, 105. As Scott Kurashige has

As anti-Japanese sentiment gave way to official approbation and sympathy for Japanese American victims after the war, both sides made at least rhetorical movements toward greater solidarity. Believing that it was in their interest to define civil rights in broader terms, many black community leaders supported Masaoka's efforts to define racial discrimination in America as an issue involving more than black Americans alone. Speaking after Masaoka at a Senate hearing on lynching in early 1948, NAACP chief counsel Charles Houston echoed the JACL spokesman in describing the "terror of lynching" as more than simply a "Negro problem" but one that "spread much wider" to affect other minority groups as well.⁷⁹ Along similar lines, he noted how "antipathy directed first against one minority group tends to generalize itself against all minority groups." Registering his sympathy for the Japanese American plight, in particular, Houston expressed his agreement with the arguments of Supreme Court Justice Black two days earlier in *Oyama v. California* denouncing the alien land laws in California as an "obstacle to the free accomplishment of [U.S.] policy in the international field."⁸⁰ Similar examples abounded in the years immediately after World War II, as the NAACP and other black community leaders came to recognize their interest in working with Japanese Americans, whose postwar standing benefited from widespread official remorse over their wartime internment.⁸¹

shown, responses were similarly mixed on the local level in Los Angeles. Also see Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans & U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 75. For a more positive assessment of the African American community's responses to Japanese internment, see Greg Robinson, *After Camp: Portraits in Midcentury Japanese American Life and Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), Chapter 8.

⁷⁹ Senate Committee on Judiciary, *Crime of Lynching*, 80th Cong., 2nd sess., 1948, 64-65, 74.

⁸⁰ The Supreme Court would not definitively declare the California alien land laws unconstitutional until *Sei Fujii v. California* (1952).

But tacit agreement on civil rights principles did not readily translate into agreement on the best strategies for advancing equality and justice for American minority groups.⁸² Fissures quickly became apparent, recalling a longer history of resentment and mutual suspicion between the two communities. In one notable episode, black civil rights leader Bayard Rustin charged *Nisei* with being “overly insular” and “almost totally lacking” in active concern for their fellow minority groups. The younger generation of Japanese Americans would not “come of age,” he contended, until they showed as much interest in the problems of other minorities as they now show in their own.”⁸³ Rustin’s public critique evoked a quick response from the JACL’s national president Saburo Kido, who took to the pages of the League newspaper, *Pacific Citizen*, to defend the League’s primary commitment to Japanese American causes. Like Rustin, Kido expressed his hope that justice would render special racial-ethnic organizations like the JACL obsolete. But so long as problems like evacuation claims and citizenship eligibility that specifically affected the Japanese American community went unresolved, the League must “take leadership” in addressing them.⁸⁴

Rustin’s critique of Japanese American insularity and self-interest was not new. Well before the 1940s, black leaders had complained about Japanese American “clannishness” and the hindrance it posed to their own integration efforts. Similar critiques followed after World War II. Amidst media attention to Japanese American

⁸¹ Greenberg, “Black and Jewish Responses to Internment,” 19-20.

⁸² For more on this idea, see Mark Brilliant, *The Color of America Has Changed: How Racial Diversity Shaped Civil Rights Reform in California, 1941-1978* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), Introduction.

⁸³ Bayard Rustin, quoted in Saburo Kido, “Answer to Bayard Rustin,” *Pacific Citizen*, July 19, 1947, 5.

⁸⁴ Saburo Kido, “Answer to Bayard Rustin,” *Pacific Citizen*, July 19, 1947, 5.

resettlement, Rustin's remarks replayed on a national level common criticisms voiced by local African Americans in cities with significant numbers of both groups. Editorialists in the black newspaper *Los Angeles Tribune*, for instance, openly blamed Japanese Americans' "indifference" for the failure of local efforts to form multi-racial coalitions to work toward a broader civil rights agenda.⁸⁵ Local black leaders in both Los Angeles and Chicago also complained about Japanese Americans' poor treatment of their "black patrons and neighbors" despite the "loyalty" that local African Americans had shown Japanese business-owners as regular customers and their "best friends," having "stood up" and "spoken out" on their behalf during the war.⁸⁶

Several JACL affiliates echoed these concerns. In late 1947, JACL advisor and Utah anthropology professor Elmer Smith published a public challenge and rebuke of *Nisei* in the *Pacific Citizen* titled "Civil Liberties – for me!" Smith took to task those *Nisei* storeowners who mistreated black, Mexican, and Filipino patrons in their own neighborhoods even as they claimed to support black civil rights. He argued that the time had come for Japanese Americans to put aside their "evacuation complex" and "cooperate with other community groups" for the "welfare of the total community."⁸⁷ Local JACL leaders like Chicago chapter president, Mari Sabusawa, concurred. Speaking at a roundtable at the JACL's annual convention the following year, Sabusawa called on the JACL to censure those *Nisei* known to practice discrimination against other minorities. Sabusawa had worked with local African American leaders as an active

⁸⁵ Kurashige, 176-177. Also see Brilliant, *The Color of America Has Changed: How Racial Diversity Shaped Civil Rights Reform in California, 1941-1978* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁸⁶ Kurashige, 173. Such claims were only partially true. See Greenberg, "Black and Jewish Responses," 19-20.

⁸⁷ Elmer Smith, "Challenge to Nisei: Civil Liberties – for Me!" *Pacific Citizen*, December 20, 1947, 43.

member of the NAACP's Chicago branch. But even she agreed with Kido and a consensus of the roundtable's participants that while the JACL should take an active interest in the plight of other oppressed minority groups, it should not do so at the expense of Japanese Americans' own interests as a community.⁸⁸

An amendment added to the Judd bill by State Department officials in early 1949 put the JACL to the test. The "empire quota," as it came to be known, proposed a numerical ceiling of 100 per year on migration from "colonies and other dependent areas."⁸⁹ The perceived intent of the colonial quota amendment to discriminate against blacks from the Caribbean galvanized a wide range of black American organizations and community leaders.⁹⁰ They minced no words, condemning the proposed colonial quota as racist. A.A. Austin of the United Caribbean American Council of New York charged U.S. State Department officials with devising new strategies aimed at "discouraging and deterring peoples of African descent from entering the United States."⁹¹ He and other opponents were quick to note the provision's disproportionate application to British, French, and Dutch Caribbean colonies with majority black populations. Jamaica, which sent roughly 1,000 black migrants to the United States annually through the 1940s, would

⁸⁸ 10th JACL National Conference Minutes, September 7, 1948 report, Box 35, Folder 26, 74, JANL, San Francisco, CA.

⁸⁹ The provision in question, Section 12(c), read: "Provided, That not more than one hundred persons born in any one colony or other dependent area shall be chargeable to the quota of its governing country in any one year . . ."

⁹⁰ This was not the first attempt by Congress to curtail black immigration to the U.S. In 1915, the U.S. Senate passed an amendment barring "all members of the African or black race" from entering the country. The NAACP successfully lobbied for the bill's defeat in the House of Representatives. For one of the few treatments of the NAACP and the immigration debates, see Jake C. Miller, "The NAACP and Global Human Rights," *Western Journal of Black Studies* 26:1 (Spring 2002), 22-28.

⁹¹ Senate Committee on Judiciary, *Naturalization of Asian and Pacific Peoples, Volume 2: Hearings on H.R. 199, 81st Cong., 1st sess., 1949*, 203.

be among the most heavily impacted. Harlem Congressman Adam Clayton Powell Jr., who led the opposition in Congress, bluntly denouncing the amendment as “discrimination of the very rankest type.”⁹²

Black critics were especially rankled by the notion that gains for one racial minority group had to come at the expense of another. During a time of liberalization of U.S. immigration policy toward European and Asian peoples, new discriminations should not target people of African descent. Writing in a March 1949 NAACP press release, Thurgood Marshall noted a “grim irony” in that the “House evidently believes that each step forward must be accompanied by a step backward.”⁹³ Lawyer Charles Houston editorialized to similar effect in his syndicated newspaper column “Our Civil Rights”; while affirming his support for Japanese American rights, he denounced the proposed colonial quota as a “dirty sleeper” designed to target “colored peoples in the British Empire.” The last thing we want to do is “exchange a yellow discrimination for a black one,” he protested. “We want to eradicate both.”⁹⁴

Houston’s lament underscored an important reality key to understanding the broader political context in which the Judd campaign took place. In late 1940s Washington, American minority groups competed for Congressional attention and support. As a relative latecomer vying against much more established civil right forces, the Judd lobby was at a distinct disadvantage in the race. Recognizing this and yet

⁹² *Naturalization of Asian and Pacific Peoples, Volume 2*, 244.

⁹³ NAACP Press release, March 3, 1949, Box 33, Folder 22, RG 18, National Council of Churches papers, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

⁹⁴ Charles Houston, “Our Civil Rights” [syndicated column], February 23, 1949, *Afro-American, St Louis American, Minneapolis Spokesman, Kansas City Call*, Box 33, Folder 22, RG 18, National Council of Churches papers, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

anxious to avoid direct conflict with the more established African American and Jewish civil rights community, Masaoka sought a truce. In late 1948, he met with national African American and Jewish community leaders based in New York. At his request, they agreed not to block or hinder progress on the Judd bill, though they would maintain their respective emphases on other civil rights matters. Masaoka was appeased. A policy of non-interference, he concluded, was “all we can ask for.”⁹⁵

The détente proved increasingly difficult to maintain over time. Though Masaoka lamented the “awkward position” of the ADC, he would not apologize for the JACL’s unwavering commitment to Japanese American rights. “Certainly, we do not want either rights or privileges taken away from other minority groups,” he insisted. “But, at the same time, we do believe that there should be equality in naturalization and immigration law,” such that “other sections, if necessary, should be sacrificed in order to gain the greater principle.” To this end, objections by other groups should “not be permitted to cloud or confuse the issues.”⁹⁶ As with their position in the Chinese case, in public JACL leaders and affiliates continued to voice support for the concerns expressed by black critics. But their objections to the bill’s targeting of the black community ultimately did not stop them from pushing for its passage, even after the House approved it in March 1949 with the colonial quota intact.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Progress Report #2, December 12, 1948, Box 64, Folder 9, Mike Masaoka papers, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

⁹⁶ Progress Report #5, March 31, 1949, Box 64, Folder 11, Mike Masaoka papers, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

⁹⁷ As was the fate of many African American civil rights bills introduced during the same period, the Judd bill was stymied in the Senate. Through the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Senate was the real testing ground, or in the words of one historian, the “graveyard of civil rights bills” where powerful Southern

Even after the Judd bill was no longer in contention, JACL observers continued to debate the issue of Japanese Americans' responsibility to their fellow African Americans. Collaboration between JACL chapter leaders and black community activists in local sites like Chicago in campaigning for fair employment, as well as providing practical help in the areas of job placement and housing assistance, had grown in the postwar years. Seeing this led some members to caution that the League was associating too closely with African Americans, to its own detriment. Others defended the partnerships. Larry Tajiri, editor of the JACL organ *Pacific Citizen*, called on Japanese Americans to do more on behalf of other groups, arguing that the time had come for Japanese Americans to seek justice on behalf of other oppressed groups. He explained his position in an April 1951 column.

[T]he JACL has been admonished by obviously well-meaning people, both *Nisei* and non-*Nisei*, not to become involved in other racial issues, particularly those concerning Negroes. The theory is that the *Nisei*, now that the war crisis is over, will be treated as honorary Aryans as long as they do not align themselves with groups which are still subject to discrimination. This is a sort of social isolationism that is no more logical than isolationism as a matter of national policy. There are no islands anymore, whether for racial minorities or for nations.⁹⁸

He argued that blacks' welfare connected integrally to Japanese Americans'. Going it alone was no longer a viable option, Tajiri protested, and the JACL did so at the risk of alienating the very groups who should be their friends. But Tajiri was a minority voice within the JACL.⁹⁹ Well after the Judd bill's immigration and naturalization provisions were incorporated into the highly controversial McCarran-Walter omnibus measure,

Democrats easily blocked legislation they opposed by filibuster or in committee. Steven Lawson, ed., introduction, *To Secure These Rights*, 32.

⁹⁸ Larry Tajiri, "Nisei USA: Practice and Preachment," *Pacific Citizen*, April 14, 1951, 2.

⁹⁹ For more on Tajiri, see Greg Robinson, ed. *Pacific Citizens: Larry and Guyo Tajiri and Japanese American Journalism in the World War II Era* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2012).

JACL leaders continued to insist on their importance to the Japanese American community, notwithstanding the fact that their support brought them into direct conflict with many of the same groups Tajiri pointed to as natural allies.¹⁰⁰

To Secure These Rights: Articulating the Framework of Cold War Civil Rights

Writing to the JACL's national headquarters in early 1948, Masaoka explained that "developments in the field of world politics and American foreign policy" had persuaded him and a consensus of ADC leaders and its affiliates that the campaign would do better to "shift . . . emphasis [on HR 5004] from that of naturalization and domestic influence to immigration and its impact on the world situation, particularly as it affects the struggle against the spread of communism." While he personally claimed to dislike such rhetorical pandering, with "time running out on us and with so many other matters of interest to the Congress," he warned that the JACL program would be "lost in the legislative rush to do something about Russia" unless it "stress[ed] this angle."¹⁰¹

Recognizing the need for anticommunist legitimacy, members of the JACL's Washington, DC, office took special care to distance themselves from any suspicion of

¹⁰⁰ Any appraisal of the legacy of Masaoka and the JACL on American civil rights needs to account for the organization's many dimensions and acknowledge the degree of prejudice against Asians that the JACL regularly faced. By any measure, the organization's work with the War Relocation Authority during World War II to facilitate evacuation and suppress protest within the internment camps can be seen as a betrayal of the community. Yet, the JACL, represented by Masaoka before the President's Committee on Civil Rights, was one of the main national groups to draw attention to the plight of Japanese Americans attempting to reintegrate into U.S. society after World War II. And in 1963, Masaoka participated, along with and several dozen other JACL members, in Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. In so doing, Masaoka and the JACL became some of the most concrete links connecting the Asian American and African American civil rights movements of the post-World War II years. While supporting the McCarran-Walter Act betrayed these connections as well, in the immediate postwar years, the JACL laid the initial groundwork for continuing partnership against racism in the decades to come.

¹⁰¹ Masaoka to JACL Headquarters, March 19, 1948, Box 2, Folder 14, Mike Masaoka papers, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Communist taint or ties, lest official observers accuse the organization of “infiltration” by “Nisei or non-Nisei communists and fellow travelers.”¹⁰²

Masaoka’s argument echoed the “international” argument for civil rights reform outlined in the President’s Committee on Civil Rights’ 1947 report *To Secure These Rights*. According to the committee, improving America’s domestic record on race was critical to shoring up the United States’ international image as a democratic power in the world. “*The United States is not so strong,*” it had concluded, that Americans could afford to “*ignore what the world thinks of us or our record.*” To the extent that U.S. national security was “inextricably tied to the security and well-being of all people and all countries,” America’s “domestic civil rights shortcomings” were not merely an American concern but instead posed a “serious obstacle” to America’s international interests – in particular, its desire to contain the further spread of Moscow’s global influence.¹⁰³

Discrimination against, or mistreatment of, any racial, religious or national group in the United States is not only seen as our internal problem. The dignity of a country, a continent, or even a major portion of the world's population, may be outraged by it. A relatively few individuals here may be identified with millions of people elsewhere, and the way in which they are treated may have world-wide repercussions . . .¹⁰⁴

Asian Americans were one such group. Reflecting Asia’s postwar importance to America’s Cold War containment project, the authors stressed that although citizens of Oriental descent” numbered only “in the hundreds of thousands” within the United

¹⁰² Known Japanese American Communist Karl Yoneda was a particular concern. When Yoneda stopped by the Washington, DC office to offer his support for repeal, for example, Masaoka specifically asked him to refrain from expressing public support lest his Communist Party ties stain the bill as subversive or otherwise Communist-inspired. ADC memorandum, May 10 and May 31, 1947, Box 5, Folder 4, Mike Masaoka papers, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

¹⁰³ *To Secure These Rights*, 147-148, emphasis in original.

¹⁰⁴ *To Secure These Rights*, 147-148.

States, their poor treatment had implications to turn “hundreds of millions” of their Asian “counterparts overseas” against America.¹⁰⁵ Asian Americans stood to benefit the most from the logic of Cold War geopolitics entwining American domestic racial policies with U.S. interests abroad; unlike European immigration activists, they were a small and politically negligible group in the United States with few votes.¹⁰⁶ By tying the domestic to the foreign, the President’s Committee on Civil Rights exponentially increased the stakes of repeal, elevating it from a niche minority issue to a critical component of America’s Cold War battle to win Asian hearts and minds away from Soviet Communism.

Even as NAACP activists strategically adopted the language of anti-Communism to argue for the necessity of civil rights reform, official advocates of Asian exclusion repeal did the same, couching their calls for repeal within the context of U.S. Cold War imperatives in Asia and the decolonizing world. Speaking before the House Judiciary Committee in 1948, former U.S. Ambassador to Japan Joseph Grew underscored the gravity of the postwar moment, a “time of great movement . . . of realignment and choosing of friends” when newly independent nations like Burma were deciding whether their loyalties would lie with the United States or the Soviet Union. During such a period

¹⁰⁵ This is consistent with Mae Ngai’s observation that modifications to Asian immigration policy were conceived with Asian, not Asian American, audiences in mind, while the opposite was often true for policies affecting European groups. Mae Ngai, “The Unlovely Residue of Outworn Prejudices: The Hart-Celler Act and the Politics of Immigration Reform, 1945-1965,” in Michael Kazin and Joseph McCartin, eds., *Americanism: New Perspectives on the History of an Ideal* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 117-118.

¹⁰⁶ *To Secure These Rights*, 147-148. Japanese and other Asian Americans were very different from the “ethnic whites” of the New Deal Coalition, whom, as historians Oscar Handlin and Mae Ngai have observed, based their calls for immigration reform on their newfound political power; in their case, immigration policy arguably became a proxy for a group’s domestic status in the U.S. Mae Ngai, “The Unlovely Residue of Outworn Prejudices: The Hart-Celler Act and the Politics of Immigration Reform, 1945-1965,” in Michael Kazin and Joseph McCartin, eds., *Americanism: New Perspectives on the History of an Ideal* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 117-118.

of nationalist ferment, “everywhere there is receptivity to new ideas.”¹⁰⁷ Under such conditions, Grew argued, U.S. relations with Asian powers could “never be expected to become entirely sound” unless lawmakers acted to “eliminate the humiliation inflicted by [U.S.] exclusion laws.”¹⁰⁸ The bill’s sponsor Rep. Walter Judd concurred, underscoring the power of his immigration and naturalization measure to “win the people of the Far East to our side in our contest with Soviet Russia.”¹⁰⁹

From early in the campaign, non-Japanese supporters seized upon the Judd bill’s special connection to Japan, in particular. Under the Judd bill’s terms, the island nation stood to receive the largest annual immigration quota of 185 (most other powers were given 100 slots), while as the largest Asian American group still barred from U.S. citizenship, Japanese aliens constituted more than 97 percent of the persons the bill would make eligible to naturalize.¹¹⁰ The bill’s disproportionate benefit to Japan worked in its favor during a time when the island nation had become the centerpiece of American containment policy in the Far East. Departing from the more generalized Cold War language used by proponents of black civil rights measures, Grew contended that Japan “warrant[ed] particular attention” during a time when its “new leadership . . . [was] emerging under [American] tutelage.” Invoking negative lessons learned from the 1924 Japanese Exclusion clause, he argued that the “ending of exclusion now would provide

¹⁰⁷ U.S. House Judiciary Committee, *Providing for Equality under Naturalization and Immigration Laws*, 80th Cong., 2nd sess., 1948, 43.

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Robert M. Cullum, “End of Oriental Exclusion?” *Far Eastern Survey* 17:21 (November 3, 1948), 249; see U.S. House Judiciary Committee, *Providing for Equality under Naturalization and Immigration Laws*, 80th Cong., 2nd sess., 1948.

¹⁰⁹ *Providing for Equality under Naturalization and Immigration Laws*, 35.

¹¹⁰ Japanese aliens made up 97% of the 87,942 persons classified in the 1940 census as “ineligible to citizenship.” Quoted in Robert Cullum, “End of Oriental Exclusion,” *Far Eastern Survey* 17:21 (Nov. 3, 1948), 248.

concrete proof of American good faith at a time when it is most important that new leadership be oriented in [the United States'] direction.”¹¹¹ Others went further, seeking to enlist Occupation officials from the U.S.-led SCAP government in Japan directly in the effort. Within weeks of the Judd bill’s first introduction to Congress in July 1947, Rep. Bertrand Gearhart of California (D-CA) wrote to General Douglas MacArthur of the Allied occupation government asking his endorsement for legislation to overturn the Oriental exclusion laws in the United States. Like Grew, he emphasized the benefit to American relations with Japan. Through the act of giving Japanese “equal treatment with the Chinese, Filipinos, and Hindus,” Gearhart argued, the U.S. Congress would strengthen both the formal U.S.-Japan alliance and increase America’s prestige among Japanese.¹¹² MacArthur, for his part, declined to comment on the bill in line with his personal policy of not speaking out on political matters. Although unsuccessful, Rep. Gearhart’s attempt to enlist MacArthur reflected a clear understanding of how U.S. immigration laws were relevant to international diplomacy.

While Masaoka and other JACL spokesmen initially resisted using arguments that cited geopolitics, they eventually relented as it became clear that martial patriotism would not suffice and that Cold War imperatives offered the most persuasive grounds for repeal. A comparison of JACL statements between 1947 and 1951 reveals a clear shift in the JACL’s strategy from domestic to foreign policy and geopolitical arguments as a prime focus. Speaking at a March 1948 hearing on the Judd bill before the House Judiciary

¹¹¹ Quoted in Robert M. Cullum, “End of Oriental Exclusion?” *Far Eastern Survey* 17:21 (November 3, 1948), 249.

¹¹² Congressman Bertrand Gearhart (R-CA), quoted in Yukiko Koshiro, *Trans-Pacific Racisms and the U.S. Occupation of Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 34-36, fn 44.

Committee, Masaoka, representing the JACL, sidestepped foreign policy matters altogether. Claiming to know little about the immigration provisions of the measure, he instead focused his lengthy statement on describing Japanese Americans' wartime loyalty and the many sacrifices of life, property, and dignity that demanded redress in the form of citizenship eligibility for the older generation.¹¹³ This was consistent with the JACL's tendency early in the campaign to focus almost exclusively on the issue of *Issei* citizenship and avoid addressing foreign policy issues which, according to representatives like Masaoka, fell outside of the ethnic American organization's purview.¹¹⁴ The real shift came in 1951, after the Judd bill's provisions were incorporated into the omnibus immigration legislation introduced to the 82nd Congress by Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Pat McCarran (D-NV) and Rep. Francis Walter (D-PA) of Pennsylvania – both staunch anticommunists. By then, two key events had dramatically changed the situation in East Asia. The first was the Communists' victory in China, leading to the emergence of a Red China under Mao Zedong. The second was the outbreak of war on the Korean peninsula, a conflict in which Chinese Communist forces joined the North Korean regime in a takeover attempt of South Korea, guarded by South Korean, U.S. and U.N. troops. Speaking at the height of the Korean War overseas and the furor of McCarthyite politics at home, Masaoka, the original author of the JACL's Japanese American Creed, became a master of articulately recapitulating the Cold War language and logic appeals offered by Grew and other official supporters of repeal years earlier.

¹¹³ U.S. House Judiciary Committee, *Providing for Equality under Naturalization and Immigration Laws: Hearings on H.R. 199*, 80th Cong., 2nd sess., 1948, 118.

¹¹⁴ JACL leaders recognized the need to include both immigration and naturalization provisions in the Judd bill, however, noting how because of the "aliens ineligible to citizenship" clause present in the 1924 Immigration Act, it was impossible to modify policy in one area without affecting the other.

A written and oral statement presented to a joint Congressional hearing on the revision of U.S. Immigration, Naturalization, and Nationality Laws by Mike Masaoka, speaking as a representative of the JACL-ADC, exemplified the organization's wholehearted embrace of Cold War arguments. The JACL spokesman echoed other witnesses' calls for Congressional passage of the McCarran-Walter omnibus bill as a "far-reaching and beneficial" means to advance "U.S. foreign policy in the Far East." He explicitly invoked the Korean War and the approaching San Francisco Conference ending the U.S. occupation of Japan to justify the extension of gains to Koreans and Japanese, in particular. It was a critical moment in U.S. relations with Asian powers, he warned, as America was "meeting the Communist enemy in battle in Korea," building up Japan as "our bulwark of democracy in the Orient," and "aiding our friends in southeastern Asia with guns and money in order to stop the Communist menace." And yet, he noted the irony in that the "very aliens that we are now discriminating against under our laws are the very aliens that we are looking to for support and help in the present crisis in the Far East."¹¹⁵ Recapitulating arguments made by Former Ambassador to Japan Joseph Grew and U.S. State Department officials at previous hearings, he lamented that for such groups – Japanese, Koreans, and Southeast Asian peoples – the preferential treatment Congress had given Chinese, Indians, and Filipinos but continued to deny them "accentuated" the original stigma of exclusion.¹¹⁶ Like Grew and Judd before him, the

¹¹⁵ U.S. Joint Subcommittees of the Committees on the Judiciary, *Revision of Immigration, Naturalization, and Nationality Laws: Hearings on S. 716, H.R. 2379, and H.R. 2816*, 82nd Cong., 1st sess., 1951, 49, 50, 69.

¹¹⁶ *Revision of Immigration, Naturalization, and Nationality Laws*, 1951, 50. W. Walton Butterworth of the State Department's Far Eastern Affairs office made this argument at House Judiciary Committee hearings in 1948 when he argued that in terms of repeal, "[e]ach admission of an additional state...emphasizes the discrimination and no doubt the resentment of the states left outside the pale." Former Ambassador to Japan Joseph Grew likewise pointed to how granting privileges to one group and not another "accentuated" the

JACL spokesman emphasized the ramifications of the legislation for America's relationship with its newly reconstructed Cold War ally, Japan. He warned that another failure to act by U.S. lawmakers risked pushing the Japanese people squarely into the Soviet Communist camp.

The people of Japan know that the Eightieth and Eighty-first Congresses failed to take conclusive action on legislation of this nature. If this Congress repeats this failure, Japan may fall prey to the Communists, especially in that transitional period following the signing of the peace treaty . . . There may yet be time to buy victory in the Orient, and the price may be this simple piece of legislation that demonstrates the sincerity of our protestations as to the brotherhood of man.¹¹⁷

Particularly notable were the dual grounds on which Masaoka purported to make this statement. On the one hand, he professed special insight into the Japanese psyche as a "member of the Japanese race" who understood "how the people of Japanese ancestry feel about America and her democratic ways." At the same time, he spoke as an "American realizing how we need the ninety-odd-million Japanese in Japan to serve as our friends and bulwark in the coming trying days."¹¹⁸ This suggestion of duality, which had been largely absent from JACL statements since before Pearl Harbor, was even more remarkable for contradicting Masaoka's several appeals to an unequivocal American identity in the same speech. The overall effect was schizophrenic, with Masaoka alternately embracing and explicitly disavowing his Japanese heritage.¹¹⁹

"stigma placed upon those who remain ineligible." U.S. House Judiciary Committee, *Providing for Equality under Naturalization and Immigration Laws: Hearings on H.R. 5004*, 80th Cong., 2nd sess., 1948, 36-37, 43.

¹¹⁷ *Revision of Immigration, Naturalization, and Nationality Laws*, 1951, 66.

¹¹⁸ *Revision of Immigration, Naturalization, and Nationality Laws*, 1951, 74.

¹¹⁹ In a throwback to the JACL's wartime mantra of 100% Americanism, Masaoka at one point claimed to speak "not as a person of Japanese ancestry but as an American" when he echoed calls by Rep. Judd of the omnibus bill's boon to America's "fight against communism." He contradicted himself later in the same statement when he claimed special insight on account of his Japanese "ancestry" into what the bill

Masaoka's multiple assertions of 100% Americanism reflected JACL leaders' long-held policy of emphasizing the League's undivided loyalty and patriotism to the United States. But the explicit appeal to a Japanese background was novel. Before 1951, JACL leaders rarely boasted about their Japanese heritage, which they saw as a liability. Certainly, this had been the case during World War II when, eager to dispel assumptions of disloyalty, JACL leaders lauded their American identity in cherished, unequivocal terms. By the early 1950s, it was arguably advantageous to claim an understanding of the Asiatic mind as expertise that was indispensable to America's own future security in the world. Never before had Japanese identity been conferred such a strategic advantage, and Masaoka and other JACL spokespersons seized upon politically expedient language when and to the extent that it helped their cause. Masaoka, speaking for the JACL, alternately invoked and distanced himself from a given identity – American or Japanese – depending on the situation and which better suited the argument he was trying to make. Masaoka's rhetoric not only charted a specific shift in the Judd campaign's strategy. It also signaled the beginning of a broader transformation in the JACL's stance toward Japan and its relationship with Japanese America, which would come to greater fruition after 1952.¹²⁰ For the purposes of the Judd lobby, it reflected the JACL's growing recognition of how the Cold War calculus of the American containment project in Asia had transformed an

personally signified to the "Asiatic peoples who are now excluded." *Revision of Immigration, Naturalization, and Nationality Laws*, 1951, 66.

¹²⁰ There were other indications that Masaoka's turn to Japan was not merely rhetorical or strategic. It would appear that as his contacts with Japanese officials increased, so did his willingness to see Japanese and Japanese American interests as mutually related. In a fall 1951 letter to *Issei* supporters in California, he conveyed a message of thanks from the Japanese Prime Minister along with his own lauding all that *Issei* had given "in the way of improving the welfare of the Japanese in this country." "I know that the Japanese people in Japan are grateful for what you are doing here," he wrote, "for by doing so, you are making persons of the Japanese race more acceptable to their fellow Americans. Such a statement linking the status of Japanese in America with Japanese audiences would have been unheard of just a few years earlier. Mike Masaoka to K. Koda, September 11, 1951, Box 4, Folder 1, JACL papers, JANL, San Francisco, CA.

association with Japan from a liability to be overcome to a potential tool strengthening the grounds upon which Japanese Americans could claim legal rights.

The End of Formal Exclusion: The JACL and the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952

The Judd bill successfully passed the U.S. House twice only to languish in the Senate, until Rep. Francis Walter (D-PA) and Senator Pat McCarran (D-NV) picked up its immigration and naturalization provisions for Asia and incorporated them into an omnibus immigration bill in 1951. As historian David Reimers has noted, the sponsors included Judd's proposals in the omnibus measure for strategic reasons. They hoped the "liberal tinge" and popularity of the Judd bill's immigration and naturalization proposals would offset the measure's more controversial national security provisions and thereby make the overall bill more "palatable" to a bipartisan audience.¹²¹ The strategy worked. Despite widespread opposition – as well as a presidential veto by the Truman White House – the McCarran-Walter Act received sufficient votes to pass Congress not once, but also a second time to override the veto. Judd, a Republican, remarkably stepped aside to allow Francis Walter, a Pennsylvania Democrat, to take credit for the legislation, at the request of Democratic House Speaker Sam Rayburn, who wanted his party to get credit for the legislation.¹²²

The JACL knowingly invited the ire of many minority and progressive groups when it redirected its efforts for the Judd bill to lobby for the Congressional passage of

¹²¹ David Reimers, *Still the Golden Door: The Third World Comes to America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 16-20.

¹²² According to JACL historian Bill Hosokawa, Judd's willingness to forego recognition for his part in passing the measure testified to his commitment to the cause. After almost a decade of laboring for repeal, Judd was more concerned with ensuring the legislation passed than he was with who claimed the credit for it. Hosokawa, *JACL: In Quest of Justice*, 295-296.

the McCarran-Walter omnibus measure, which today remains one of the most contested pieces of U.S. legislation ever enacted.¹²³ Mike Masaoka, representing the JACL, quickly emerged as the McCarran-Walter campaign's most prominent Asian American defender and a rare dissenting voice among the legislation's many outspoken minority critics. For the JACL, pragmatism remained the byword. In a spring 1952 *New York Times* letter to the editor, Masaoka described the Walter-McCarran bills as "important and necessary reform measures . . . in keeping with [America's] intelligent self-interest." Charges of racism notwithstanding, he insisted that the bill's "Asia-Pacific Triangle" formula represented a "long step forward . . . from absolute exclusion." Reiterating the pragmatic approach of the JACL, he maintained that while the measure was by no means perfect, "[t]o scrap improvements on the grounds of their not being ideal would frustrate the achievement of any gains whatsoever."¹²⁴ In other words, he argued on behalf of the JACL, an imperfect bill was preferable to none at all.

Opposition to the McCarran omnibus measure was strong and wide-ranging. The NAACP took issue with the legislation for its retention of the Judd bill's discriminatory "colonial quota" restricting black migration from the Caribbean. Eastern and Southern European groups objected to the measure's retention of a national origins quota system that severely disadvantaged their ancestral homelands in favor of northern and western European counterparts. Representatives of the ACLU, along with other progressive and liberal groups, decried the bill's "repressive" national security clauses strengthening the

¹²³ Opinion among Asian American groups remains divided to this day. See, for example, Phil Tajitsu Nash, "Fifty Years Since McCarran-Walter," *Asian Week*, June 7, 2001.

¹²⁴ According to Masaoka, the bill reflected the "evolutionary nature" of legislative reform in a democracy. Mike Masaoka, "McCarran Bill Upheld," *New York Times*, April 27, 1952, E8.

power of the government to detain and deport suspected subversives and other “undesirables.”¹²⁵ Perhaps the most damning critique came from the White House, which vetoed the bill as soon as it passed both houses of Congress in June 1952. In his veto message, President Truman commended the omnibus bill’s elimination of racial barriers to immigration and U.S. citizenship but insisted that these provisions did not outweigh the bill’s “un-American” elements.

[T]his most desirable provision comes before me embedded in a mass of legislation which would perpetuate injustices of long standing against many other nations of the world, hamper the efforts we are making to rally the men of the east and west alike to the cause of freedom, and intensify the repressive and inhumane aspects of our immigration procedures.¹²⁶

Truman took special issue with the race-based nature of the Asian immigration quotas, calling it “invidious discrimination . . . without justification.” In the final analysis, the President concluded, the Act’s many “undesirable features” outweighed its “few improvements.” The “price is too high,” he wrote, and “in good conscience, I cannot agree to pay it.”¹²⁷

JACL leaders stood by their decision to support the 1952 omnibus measure and actively lobbied Congress to override the veto. Later asked to account for the JACL’s position, the JACL-ADC’s associate director Richard Akagi insisted that the goal of *Issei* naturalization had been too urgent for the League simply to wait for a less controversial

¹²⁵ For a systematic critique of the 1952 Act, see U.S. President's Commission on Immigration and Naturalization, *Whom Shall We Welcome* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953).

¹²⁶ Truman, quoted in William R. Tamayo, "Asian Americans and the McCarran-Walter Act," in *Asian Americans and Congress: A Documentary History*, ed. Hyung-chan Kim (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 348.

¹²⁷ Truman, quoted in Tamayo, 348-349. Writing in the JACL’s organizational history, JACL historian Bill Hosokawa claimed for the League an especially dramatic role in the final lobby to override Truman’s veto of the bill in the fall of 1952. Hosokawa described the events of the night before the Senate re-vote with some vividness, having been personally present. Hosokawa, *JACL: In Quest of Justice*, 296-297.

bill before taking action.¹²⁸ While “young people” might have had the choice to “stand on principle for another 10 to 15 years,” aging Issei “in the twilight of their lives” did not have that option; if the JACL had waited another “5 to 6 years,” the fight itself would have become “meaningless” for those who stood to benefit most.¹²⁹ In short, he concluded, the ends justified the means, even if the *Issei*’s gain had to come at another community’s expense and as part of a legislative package that was less than ideal.¹³⁰ The JACL’s outspoken support for the McCarran-Walter bill was significant, official supporters used it to deflect criticisms of the bill as racist. Walter Judd and Pat McCarran both cited the JACL’s endorsement – misleadingly, at times – as evidence of broad Asian American support for the measure.¹³¹

The JACL’s decision may have been controversial but it was not out of character. The League’s national leaders had exhibited similar resolve in a last-minute bid to pass

¹²⁸ Mike Masaoka, quoted in Hosokawa, *JACL: In Quest of Justice*, 294.

¹²⁹ Hearing this, one member of the President’s Commission on Immigration and Naturalization characterized the JACL position as one of “justifiable selfishness.” U.S. President’s Commission on Immigration and Naturalization, *Emigration and Immigration Law* [Hearings], Los Angeles, CA, October 1952, 1737.

¹³⁰ Mike Masaoka expressed a similar sentiment regarding his own involvement. Writing in his 1987 memoir, Masaoka described the “major role” he played in the passage of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act as the “most important achievement” of his life. In his telling, the legislation’s elimination of racial discrimination from immigration and naturalization law made it as important as the 1964 Civil Rights Act in that it asserted Asians’ entitlement to the American dream.” Along similar lines, he characterized the JACL’s choice to cooperate with the government’s wartime evacuation of Japanese Americans during World War II as the “most difficult decision” he had ever made. Addressing his many critics within the community, he affirmed the “injustice” of the government internment policy in its “capricious disregard of human rights.” Nevertheless, he noted that no entity had suggested “a viable, workable, and constructive alternative” to cooperating with evacuation. In so doing, he distanced the JACL from the evacuation, without directly apologizing for the JACL’s complicity. Masaoka, *They Call Me Moses Masaoka*, 363-5.

¹³¹ See Tamayo, “Asian Americans and the McCarran-Walter Act,” 363, fn 92, for a reference to what he alleged was Walter Judd’s “deliberate misrepresentation” that “no group of Asians . . . protested” the creation of the Asia-Pacific Triangle, 83rd Cong. Rec—Appendix, A217, January 19, 1953. The outreach efforts of the JACL’s associate national director, Samuel Ishikawa, successfully won the endorsements of three other Asian American organizations for the McCarran-Walter bill’s passage: the Chinese American Citizens Alliance (CACA), the Korean National Association, and the Filipino Federation of America. But these groups were the exception to what was otherwise blanket opposition to passage. Cheng, 238

the Walter Resolution, a Japanese and Korean naturalization bill, first introduced as a more attainable alternative to the Judd bill several years earlier in the Eighty-First Congress. The episode was instructive in several respects, not least as a harbinger of the McCarran-Walter campaign. The opposition of one lawmaker, Georgia Senator and Dixiecrat Richard Russell (D-GA), held the bill up, reaffirming the power of individual lawmakers in leadership singlehandedly to delay legislative progress on Asian immigration.¹³² At the same time, the JACL's dogged persistence in supporting the measure through in increasingly restrictive form – first, after it dropped Korean aliens from its citizenship provisions, and later, despite the security riders attached to it in the Senate – made clear the JACL's steadfast commitment to Japanese American interests above all, a lesson that the McCarran-Walter campaign would again confirm.

* * * * *

Though some criticized the JACL for its defense of the controversial bill, the organization ultimately got what it wanted: citizenship eligibility for *Issei*, and greater legitimacy and standing both within and outside the Japanese American community. As former JACL president Dr. Thomas Yatabe had predicted, the League's role in winning *Issei* the right to naturalize helped repair its sullied reputation among disillusioned community members. The JACL's membership rosters swelled from a nadir during World War II to unprecedented highs by the early 1950s. Changes in the League's membership policy that made non-citizens (including first-generation *Issei*) eligible to

¹³² Russell initially claimed to object to the bill because it gave treaty merchants the right to apply for naturalization, but Congressional observers agreed that his action was more likely rooted in his own personal opposition to civil rights and racial equality measures. Russell later relented and voiced his support for the naturalization measure in early 1950, but the Walter Resolution ultimately failed due to other obstacles, including a fall 1950 veto by Truman due to the national security riders eventually attached to it.

join for the first time contributed to the surge, as did a rush by newly naturalized *Issei* to support the organization that had made their citizenship possible.¹³³ Indeed, over the ten years following the passage of the McCarran-Walter Act in the fall of 1952, more than 60,000 first-generation Japanese Americans availed themselves of this hard-won right. The impact of Japan's newly won annual immigration quota was less dramatic, insofar as the vast majority of the 45,000 Japanese who immigrated to the United States between 1952 and 1960 did so as the spouses of U.S. military and thus outside of the annual quota provision.¹³⁴

Inasmuch as the McCarran-Walter Act served as a litmus test for a group's anticommunist credentials during a time of growing Cold War tensions, the JACL passed with flying colors. Outside the community, the JACL's support for the bill won it the support of its staunchly anticommunist sponsor, Nevada Senator Pat McCarran, whose seniority and chairmanship of the Senate Judiciary Committee made him a formidable force on Capitol Hill. Through its support for the bill, the League not only strengthened its relationships with some of the most powerful lawmakers on Capitol Hill. It also proved its loyalty to the state's anticommunist agenda, and in so doing reassured its position as the undisputed representative of the Nikkei community to the federal government, which one scholar described as a "far greater benefit than any attempts at

¹³³ Indeed, the *Issei*'s disproportionate role in funding the JACL's legislative efforts raised questions about the League's U.S. citizens-only membership policy as early as 1947. In August of that year, national staff officers of the League passed a unanimous recommendation that *Issei* be allowed full membership in light of their critical support for the JACL-ADC's legislative agenda. "JACL Staff Recommends Membership for Issei Group," *Pacific Citizen*, August 23, 1947.

¹³⁴ Of the 45,000 Japanese, 85.9% of them were female, and a majority of them were GI brides. Figures taken from Tamayo, "Asian Americans & the McCarran-Walter Act," 346.

liberalizing the immigration law.”¹³⁵ It was on these grounds that, even years after its passage, JACL historian Bill Hosokawa continued to claim the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act as the League’s “greatest legislative triumph” to date.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Wu, "Race and Asian American Citizenship: From World War II to the Movement." 392; Tamayo, "Asian Americans & the McCarran-Walter Act," 356.

¹³⁶ Hosokawa, *JACL: In Quest of Justice*, 293.

Chapter 5

Bridging Korea and Korean America: The Cold War Campaign for Korean Rights

As Cold War tensions crystallized after 1947, Koreans in the United States revived the wartime campaigns to secure the immigration and naturalization rights their Chinese and Indian peers had won. Two groups led the charge. Politically, they were polar opposites. Long-time Korean residents of Hawaii with close ties to Syngman Rhee founded the Washington, DC-based Korean Immigration and Naturalization Committee (KINC). KINC had the backing of mainline Korean American community groups, the United Korean Committee (UKC) and Korean National Association (KNA). The Korean American Committee for Wallace (KACW), an offshoot of the leftwing Korean National Revolutionary Party (KNRP) chapter in Los Angeles, occupied the other end of the political spectrum.

Concurrent campaigns launched by the KINC and KACW both linked their campaigns for Korean American rights to events in Korea. This chapter illuminates the relationship between Korean Americans' engagement with U.S. policy and practice in postwar Korea, and their struggles for rights in the United States. Each group enacted this relationship differently, reflecting their opposite visions of America's role in Korea's struggle for freedom. The first part of this chapter examines Korean Americans' changing relationship to the United States in response to the U.S.-Soviet joint occupation of Korea after World War II, the 1948 division of the Korean peninsula into two separate states, and, finally, the outbreak of civil war on the peninsula in 1950.¹

¹ Throughout the chapter, I alternate between "South Korea" and ROK, and "North Korea" and DPRK to refer to the two Korean states established in 1948.

Korean Americans generally wanted their homeland to become a unified, independent Korean nation-state governed by Koreans for Koreans. However, they disagreed about the role of the United States in making this dream a reality. While mainline groups like the KNA and UKC continued to look to Washington for support for unified Korean independence, the leftwing KNRP wanted Washington to get out of the way so Koreans could decide their own future.² Uninterested in obliging the U.S. government, KNRP members spent the postwar years critiquing American interventionism in Korea and racial discrimination in the United States as common expressions of American imperialism and white supremacy. They would pay for their critique under national security measures designed to rout out subversion and protect America from communist infiltration. Arrests, prolonged detentions, and formal deportation orders of Korean leftists intensified in the early 1950s, during the Korean War. Their experiences illustrate the costs of violating what legal scholar Richard Delgado has called the “implicit bargain” between minority groups and the U.S. government during the Cold War: “loyalty to America and hostility to communism . . . in return for civil rights gains.”³

The second part of this chapter considers the experiences of Korean American radicals under the McCarran (1950) and McCarran-Walter Acts (1952). While both the KINC and KACW went defunct before the McCarran-Walter campaign and were therefore not formally involved in its passage, affiliates of the California-based Wallace

² Richard S. Kim, *The Quest for Statehood: Korean Immigrant Nationalism and U.S. Sovereignty, 1905-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 160.

³ In this context, Delgado used the concept to explain the end of civil rights reforms for African Americans. Richard Delgado, “Explaining the Rise and Fall of African American Fortunes - Interest Convergence and Civil Rights Gains,” *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review* 37 (2002): 376.

group suffered the delayed consequences of their earlier activism. Their persecution by the U.S. anticommunist state validates historian Cindy Cheng's observation that civil rights reforms during the Cold War "worked together with the legal suppression of political dissent to establish the validity of the American political system" and "maintain the credibility of U.S. democracy."⁴ Several Korean deportees sought relief in an unlikely source: a loophole of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act that empowered the U.S. Attorney General to stay deportation in cases where removal was likely to subject the accused to physical persecution.⁵ In framing their legal defense around this clause, deportees indirectly highlighted the entwined nature of the U.S. and South Korean anticommunist projects and, with it, Washington's complicity in funding the increasingly authoritarian regime of leader Syngman Rhee. Their legal battles demonstrate the significance of the 1952 Act and its patchwork of liberal and repressive elements for Asian American communities during the early Cold War.

Korean Americans on the Eve of Formal Division

In 1947, two years into the joint U.S.-Soviet occupation of Korea, the Korean American community was more divided than ever. As described in Chapter 3, Korean Americans had split into two camps during World War II over the Allied powers' plans to oversee Korea's gradual transition to independence after the war. The moderate UKC and KNA, accepted the Cairo Declaration of a postwar occupation as necessary, while

⁴ Cindy Cheng, *Citizens of Asian America: Democracy and Race During the Cold War* (New York: New York University Press, 2013).

⁵ Eligibility included a residency requirement of seven years and proof of "good moral character for the preceding five years." 66 Stat. 212, 8 U.S.C. 1253(h) (1952).

critics in the leftwing KNRP opposed any delay of Korea's transition to sovereignty and self-rule. The gap separating the two camps widened after 1946 when the Los Angeles and Hawaii chapters of the KNRP moved to the extreme left amidst reports of American incompetence and political factionalism in the U.S.-occupied Korean zone.⁶ Writers in the KNRP publication, the *Korean Independence* newspaper [*Tongnip shinmun*], regularly denounced Rhee's regime while openly expressing their support for the Soviet occupation government and its Korean communist allies in the north.⁷ Indeed, they went further to embrace the promise of Communism itself. In a typical example, KNRP member Choon Ho Penn's November 1946 piece advocated for Communism as the "foundation of a true emancipation and independence for Korea."⁸ Even as the KNRP moved left, leaders in the mainline UKC and KNA continued to endorse the U.S. Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK). During the first year of American control over the southern zone of the peninsula, leaders of both groups returned to Seoul to assist the efforts of USAMGIK officials to form a coalition government uniting Korea's left and right-leaning political factions.

Debate within the Korean American community raged over the question of what shape Korean independence would and should take; after 1946 the division revolved

⁶ This mirrored the polarization of right- and left-wing political factions in Korea. See Eun-Sik Yang, "Korean Revolutionary Nationalism in America: Kim Kang and the Student Circle, 1937-1956," *California Sociologist* 13, no. 1-2 (1990).

⁷ Yang, 191-193.

⁸ U.S.-based Korean leftist Choon Ho Penn combined his advocacy of Communism with an implicit critique of American economy. "Only when Korea becomes a communistic Korea," he argued, would Korea "be immune from [the] economic exploitation of foreign monopoly capitalists." "Koreans Condemn AMG Scheme," *Korean Independence*, November 13, 1946. In an earlier piece, Penn had argued that "[o]nly when Korea becomes a communistic Korea" would it be able to achieve the "universal happiness of the entire Korean people" and safeguard the "Korean people against the "economic exploitation of foreign monopoly capitalists." *Korean Independence*, November 13, 1945.

around the figure of Syngman Rhee and what he came to represent: the creation of a separate South Korean state. A long-time resident of the United States, Rhee had been a polarizing figure in the U.S. Korean community even before he left America and returned to Seoul in October 1945. By the late 1940s, there were few Korean Americans who had not interacted with the elder statesman firsthand, and most held him in disrepute. Rhee had repeatedly refused to cooperate with community leaders in the past, and resentment lingered. U.S. officials did not necessarily like Rhee either, but his staunch anticommunism and the fact that his rivals seemed likely to ally Korea with the Soviet Union ensured him Washington's continued support.⁹ Rhee's crusade for the establishment of a separate South Korean state beginning in 1946 tested Washington's commitment, but ultimately resulted in its unwavering assistance.

Koreans as "Loyal Soldiers, Model Americans": The KINC's Campaign for Rights, 1947-1949

Historians have marked early 1947 as a turning point in America's Korea policy away from cooperation with Moscow and toward the unilateral creation of a separate anticommunist South Korean state. The previous year had ended with massive rebellion and strikes in four southern provinces, mostly over the unresolved land problem, as conservative political leaders blocked the redistribution of land to tenants that Soviets had successfully completed in the north. As U.S. occupation officials filled the ranks of a newly created South Korean interim government with conservative figures, Korean communists and leftwing leaders protested their marginalization by fomenting unrest and

⁹ Other potentials included Kim Koo, Yo Un-hyong, and Kim Kyu-sik. Each was ruled out, in turn, either due to untimely death or to a perceived willingness to work with pro-Soviet Korean factions.

violence across the U.S. zone. Government police responded with force, provoking further retaliation and thus perpetuating a longer cycle of violence.

Eager to safeguard his favored position with the USAMGIK, Syngman Rhee seized upon the disorder to launch a personal campaign calling for immediate self-government and independence in the American zone through the formal creation of a separate South Korean state. Through the last months of 1946, Rhee embarked on a one-man tour through Japan and the United States to raise support in official circles. He traveled first to Tokyo, where he met with Allied occupation commander, General Douglas MacArthur, in a highly publicized event. From there, he went to Washington, DC, where he alarmed White House and State Department officials with reports of Communism's spread throughout the peninsula, proposing the immediate creation of an anticommunist South Korean state as the only solution. Citing reports that the semi-chaos of American occupation had multiplied the number of Korean Communists on the peninsula, he decried the incompetence and inadequacy of the current U.S. military regime and even accused USAMGIK officials such as Governor General John Hodge of being secretly sympathetic to communism.¹⁰ Rhee's admonitions of a growing Korean Communist threat found receptive ears among Washington officials increasingly preoccupied with routing out communist elements both at home and abroad. Beginning in February 1947, Rhee publicly claimed to have secured Washington's official pledge to support a separate southern government. The premature claim led to the real pledge.

As Rhee made his rounds in Washington, U.S. Senator Claude Pepper (R-FL), Hawaii territorial delegate Farrington (R-HI), and New York Congressman Emanuel

¹⁰ For more on the contentious relationship between Rhee and Hodge, see James I. Matray, "Hodge Podge: American Occupation Policy in Korea, 1945-1948," *Korean Studies* 19 (1995).

Celler (D-NY) reintroduced Korean immigration and naturalization measures to both houses of the 80th Congress in early 1947.¹¹ Celler's involvement was especially encouraging to Korean Americans, rekindling their hopes for legislative success. As chairman of a newly organized and empowered House Judiciary Committee, which replaced the Immigration and Naturalization Committee under the Congressional Reorganization Act of 1947, the Brooklyn Democrat could presumably expedite the bill's passage through committee and onto the floor for a vote.¹² As soon became clear, however, the opposition of Celler's Democratic counterpart Pat McCarran, head of the Judiciary Committee in the Senate, offset Celler's advantage.¹³ McCarran, a restrictionist and anticommunist, would remain a barrier so long as he remained in charge of the committee overseeing immigration. Through the late 1940s and the 1950s, McCarran was one of the most powerful lawmakers on Capitol Hill. He singlehandedly delayed comprehensive immigration reform for a decade or more.¹⁴

A group of Korean American community leaders marked the revival of the KINB by organizing the Korean Immigration and Naturalization Committee (KINC) as a centralized lobbying vehicle to promote the bill's passage in the mold of the wartime Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion. Formed in January 1947, the KINC

¹¹ In the Senate, Pepper introduced S. 152 on January 10, 1947; Farrington introduced H.R. 860 to the House on January 13, 1947; it was later superseded by H.R. 2932, also introduced by Farrington on April 2, 1949. Celler sponsored H.R. 1237 on January 29, 1947.

¹² For more on Congressional reorganization, see Daniel Tichenor, *Dividing Lines: The Politics of Immigration Control in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 180-181.

¹³ Political scientist Daniel Tichenor has singled out the importance of "conservative committee barons" like McCarran to the preservation of the national origins system as a main feature of U.S. immigration policy through 1965. Tichenor, 217.

¹⁴ For more on McCarran's Congressional career, see Jerome Edwards, *Pat McCarran: Political Boss of Nevada* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1982), 147, quoted in Tamayo, 344.

shared several similarities with the Japanese American Citizens League's Anti-Discrimination Committee (JACL-ADC), which opened its Washington office around the same time.¹⁵ Like its Japanese American counterpart, the KINC received most of its funding from first-generation donors from within the community, but a younger, American-born spokesman led the group – in this case, Hawaii-born Walter Jhung – fluent in English and well versed in American politics. Formally the KINC's executive secretary, Jhung was the youngest of the group but had amassed quite a resumé by the time the KINC began. During World War II, he served as president of the Hawaii Korean Civic Association, a group comprising second-generation Korean Americans like himself whose stated purpose was to “foster good citizenship” and encourage eligible community members to vote.¹⁶ A self-described businessman, Jhung moved to southern California after World War II and founded the Korean Chamber of Commerce to promote “reciprocal commercial and cultural relations between Korea and the United States.”¹⁷ While eloquent and well-liked within Korean American circles, Jhung, however, never rivaled the JACL's Masaoka's rhetorical skill or political connections in Washington.

The KINC also emulated the JACL in its strategy of pushing for change through cooperation and accommodation with the U.S. government. The KINC's five founders and fourteen advisory board members each boasted long histories of activism and leadership within the Korean American community as part of mainline groups including

¹⁵ For further discussion of the two organization's relationship, see Chapter 4. The KINC lasted a little more than two years, through the duration of the 80th Congressional session (January 1947-January 1949).

¹⁶ The Hawaii Korean Civic Association also aimed to “cooperate in any worthwhile community projects and undertakings.” Walter Jhung, “Koreans and the New U.S. Immigration Quota,” *Korea Survey* 2:6 (June-July 1953), 6.

¹⁷ “Korean Chamber of Commerce in America Launches New Digest to Open Constructive Program,” *New Korea*, May 9, 1946.

the UKC, KNA, and Syngman Rhee's *Tongjihoe*. KINC co-chair Won Soon Lee and founding member J. Kyung Jacob Dunn were active in the UKC: Dunn as the organization's public relations chairman during World War II and its Washington representative after 1945, and Lee as its former chairman. Board member Ben Limb and KINC vice-chairman Henry Chung (DeYoung) belonged to the *Tongjihoe* or Korean Comrade Society originally founded by Rhee in the 1920s. As a group, the men had impeccable accommodationist credentials. Amidst growing criticism of the U.S. military government in Korea in media and government circles, they generally expressed support for America's aims in Seoul, restricting criticism to suggestions that would support Washington's agenda of containing Communism. Dunn and several other advisory board members had been part of Korean American delegations handpicked and dispatched by UKC and KNA chapters in California and Hawaii to advise the USAMGIK in Seoul during the first year of the occupation. The relationships they developed with USAMGIK officials in Seoul later benefited the KINC efforts, helping Committee members secure the endorsement of Major General Archer Lerch, the USAMGIK governor in Korea, who described the measure as a means to "cement" Korean-American relations.¹⁸

KINC's leadership had a close relationship with Syngman Rhee, who remained the centerpiece of Washington's anticommunist project in South Korea through the creation of the Republic of Korea (ROK) in 1948. A controversial figure within even mainstream Korean American circles, Rhee found unusually strong support from members of the KINC's leadership and advisory board, many of whom shared a close,

¹⁸ All the endorsements cited are reprinted in Korean Immigration and Naturalization Committee, "Brief in Support of S. 152 and H.R. 860 (Superseded by H.R. 2932)," Summer 1947, Joseph Farrington, Jr. papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, Hawaii.

long-standing relationship with the elder statesman, who was now based in Seoul. These close ties led to Rhee's award of official and unofficial positions in the ROK government to several of the men, including Jung himself. Though few sources document the postwar Korean American community, existing materials provide some basic information about the men and their associations with Rhee. Born in Korea, Ben Limb (*Im Pyong-jik*) was Rhee's long-time secretary and advisor, having followed Rhee from Korea to the United States and remained in his service while living in Hawaii. In 1947, he was based in Washington, DC lobbying Rhee's cause. He would return to Korea one year later to serve as the ROK's first foreign minister, a position he held until 1951.

Dr. Henry C. DeYoung (Chung)'s relationship with Rhee also pre-dated the 1919 Korean Congress held in Philadelphia, at which they both spoke in support of Korea's independence from Japanese colonial rule. Like Rhee, Chung had proven anticommunist credentials. In 1947, Chung, a Ph.D. graduate of American University, published *The Russians Came to Korea*, a harsh critique of Soviet occupation policies north of the 38th parallel after World War II.¹⁹ After 1948, Chung returned to Seoul where he remained one of Rhee's closest unofficial advisors and prepared many of the President's formal letters.²⁰ A businessman in New York City, Won Soon Lee, provided much of the financing for the KINC's activities, primarily from his personal bank account. Lee and his wife had been prominent leaders in Rhee's Korean Christian Church in Hawaii and the *Tongjihoe* before relocating to the mainland. American-born Walter Jung had the

¹⁹ Henry Chung, *The Russians Came to Korea* (1947). Other titles by Chung included *The Oriental Policy of the United States* (1919) and *The Case for Korea* (1921).

²⁰ This despite the fact that Rhee himself described Chung's Korean language skills as "inadequate." According to one expert on the first ROK government, Chung had been in America so long that he was only semi-fluent in the Korean language by the time he returned to Korea after the war. Cumings, *vol. II*, 231.

least personal history with Rhee, but by the early 1950s, even he had been enlisted to serve Rhee's ROK government as a special assistant to South Korean Prime Minister Paik Too-chin. This involvement led KINC leadership to support U.S. Korea policy, and Rhee personally, more strongly than did the overall Korean American community during this period.²¹

Just as the JACL had done, the KINC diverged from its community to appease the U.S. government, and the KINC borrowed conspicuously from JACL argumentation and strategy. Seeing the Japanese American group's early success, Jhung and several members of the KINC in Hawaii adapted several of its trademark arguments to fit their own case. Jhung had seen JACL-ADC representative Mike Masaoka speak at a Congressional hearing earlier that year and Masaoka's rhetorical skill and overwhelmingly positive reception from lawmakers impressed Jhung. A brief co-authored by the KINC's Walter Jhung and members of the Hawaii Korean Civic Association in the summer of 1947 included several examples of modified JACL arguments, exemplifying a dual strategy combining martial citizenship with geopolitical arguments to make the case for Korean rights. While minority groups had used many of the KINC's arguments, the writers of the brief expressed the influence of the JACL by explicitly comparing Korean Americans to their Japanese American counterparts at several points. Echoing the JACL's project to construct Japanese Americans as model citizens and patriotic soldiers, the brief enumerated Koreans' many contributions to

²¹ There remained a wide gap between public rhetoric and private opinion. Many members of mainline groups like the KNA and UKC claimed to support U.S. Korea policy in their public statements, but their private list of grievances against Washington's chosen leader was often long and angry. In reality, Rhee had few outright supporters even in U.S. government circles (State and War Department circles), and even fewer in Korean American ones.

America as both soldiers and civilians during World War II, and the many qualifications Koreans had to offer America as persons deserving of citizenship.

The thirty-seven-page KINC brief argued that Koreans made good Americans. Toward that end, they attempted to debunk the notion of Asian inassimilability to American society, enumerating the many ways that Koreans were well qualified for American life. Not simply defensive, Jhung and his co-authors suggested that individuals of Korean ancestry – both American-born and the recently immigrated – were *better* adapted to U.S. society than were many Euro-American citizens themselves. In doing so, they did not challenge dominant notions of American-ness so much as attempt to prove that Korean immigrants and U.S.-born citizens alike fit into an idealized mold of what an American should be. Identity, as they presented it, was an either/or proposition. Too Americanized to be Korean, they maintained that the U.S.-born generations were “in the fundamentals of Americanism no different from the child who was born in the deep South or the children of immigration parents who came over from Europe and settled in the New England States.” Like their American-born counterparts of European descent, they identified with a common set of American traditions and cultural practices: “movies . . . baseball, hot-dogs and popcorn, scouting, Sunday family auto-ride, soap-opera over the radio, juke-box music.” Unable to speak Korean and ill-informed in Korean customs, this younger generation would “never make good Korean[s].” While as non-whites, the brief acknowledged that Korean immigrants could never be “American biologically,” the Korean American writers nevertheless insisted that certain traits enabled them to “blend in”: key among these, their “moral straight[ness], “adequate educational background to

blend with the Western civilization,” and their ability to be “economically independent so as not to become a public charge.”²²

The brief also emphasized the Korean American community’s high rates of conversion to Protestant Christianity. Insofar as the religion was the one “most compatible with American values and morality,” the authors maintained that Koreans’ quick embrace of Christian practices and beliefs had enabled them to achieve a “quick and successful assimilation compared to other groups.” On these grounds, they recommended that Korean immigration be restricted to “those of the Christian faiths only.”²³ Here the KINC may have erred, as a pluralistic postwar Congress would have responded ambivalently. Even as it potentially bolstered support among white Protestant lawmakers, the argument threatened to offend the cause’s many strong Jewish advocates, a group that included House Judiciary Committee chairman Emanuel Celler (D-NY).²⁴

In the brief’s lengthiest section by far, the KINC authors presented a case more broadly appealing in Congress, advocating for Korean rights on the basis of the community’s wartime contributions. The rhetoric of bodily and military sacrifice closely echoed the JACL’s appeals to martial patriotism. Loyalty to America had come “almost naturally” for both U.S.-born and alien Koreans alike, the authors insisted, out of

²² This discussion taken from Korean Immigration and Naturalization Committee, “Brief in Support of S. 152 and H.R. 860 (Superseded by H.R. 2932),” Summer 1947, Joseph Farrington, Jr. papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, Hawaii.

²³ Ibid. The emphasis on religion is not surprising in light of Christianity’s centrality to the migration and historical experience of Koreans in America. For more on religion’s role, see David K. Yoo, *Contentious Spirits: Religion in Korean American History, 1903-1945* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), especially the Introduction.

²⁴ Throughout the longer movement, Jewish organizations remained some of the most committed advocates of Asian exclusion repeal, and of immigration reform, in general. The American Jewish Congress is one example.

gratitude for the “peace and asylum” America had granted them from Japanese oppression and their belief that Korea’s “future destiny rested in full cooperation with the United States.”²⁵ They cited high military enlistment rates within the Hawaii Korean community as proof of Korean Americans’ patriotism; over ten percent of all American-born Koreans in Hawaii and more than fourteen percent of the community in California had served in World War II, many with distinction. What these Korean American soldiers lacked in numbers, they made up for in patriotic service. Anecdotes described the courage and sacrifice of individual Korean American soldiers and immigrants alike. Although barred from military service by citizenship requirements, Korean aliens had served the war effort as civilian intelligence and as interpreters. Echoing entitlement appeals made by Masaoka and other JACL leaders, the authors argued that their record of loyalty to the United States had earned Korean aliens the right to American citizenship, and it was now America’s turn to reward faithful service.²⁶

In order to tap into official sympathy for Japanese Americans after World War II, Korean American authors of the brief endeavored to take the argument further for their own benefit. In a striking juxtaposition, they likened the injustice faced by Korean aliens to the irony of Japanese American soldiers liberating prisoners of war abroad while their parents lived in internment camps back home.²⁷ This association belies the strong anti-Japanese sentiment that historically characterized the Korean community in America.²⁸

²⁵ KINC, “Brief in Support of S. 152 and H.R. 860.”

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ See Roger Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993) for further discussion of Japanese internment and the experiences of Japanese Americans during the war.

One could argue that the analogy reflected a growing pan-Asian consciousness and recognition of shared injustice – nascent concepts which would later prompt Korean Americans toward a cooperative Asian American civil rights effort. More immediately, the KINC made the because of public sympathy for Japanese Americans after the war, stemming from recognition of the exceptional bravery on the European front of primarily *Nisei* military battalions the 442nd and 110th regimental combat teams – two of the most highly decorated military units in all of American history. Both divisions had included several Hawaii-born Korean Americans as commissioned officers, and the brief emphasized their role.²⁹

Such efforts notwithstanding, key differences between the Korean and Japanese American communities undermined the KINC’s attempt to replicate the JACL’s success. The first was the sheer discrepancy in size. By 1950, the Japanese American population exceeded 325,000 on the U.S. mainland and Hawaii, while Koreans numbered less than 10,000 overall.³⁰ Koreans’ concentration in Hawaii, a remote U.S. territory hundreds of miles from the nation’s political center in Washington, DC, also diluted their political

²⁸ Lauriel E. Eubank, “The Effects of the First Six Months of World War II on the Attitudes of Koreans and Filipinos toward the Japanese in Hawaii” (M.A. thesis, University of Hawaii, 1943). Eubank attributed this to two factors: first, to the fact that Korean Americans in Hawaii usually lived in close proximity to Japanese Americans, who made up most of the Asian American population there. Regular and close interaction presumably made extreme feelings harder to maintain; secondly, to the composition of the Korean American community in Hawaii, where the majority were American-born and therefore did not carry the same intense hatred against the Japanese as their parents’ generation; in the Los Angeles Korean American community, by contrast, Korean aliens dominated both the population and community leadership, leading to their being more outrightly antagonistic.

²⁹ This can be seen in Japanese American petitions for the War Claims Act of 1948, for example.

³⁰ Among Japanese Americans, 140,000 lived on the U.S. mainland and another 185,000 in Hawaii. *U.S. Census, 1950: Hawaii - Race and Hispanic Origin* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1950); *U.S. Census, 1950: Asian and Pacific Islander, for the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States: 1940 and 1950* (Washington: GPO, 1950), accessed May 8, 2013, <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0056/tabC-07.pdf>

influence. That the KINB's main Congressional sponsor was a House territorial delegate without formal voting privileges underscored the community's political impotence. Hawaii's perception as an exotic locale with little translatability to Midwest or East Coast cities further undercut the authors' repeated attempts to hold up Hawaii communities as exemplars of Koreans' assimilatory potential. In the eyes of many U.S. lawmakers at the time, Hawaii barely qualified as America.³¹ Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the Korean American community had no history of mass internment or comparable mistreatment to fortify their petitions for rights. As historian Naoko Shibusawa has argued, widespread official remorse over the injustice of wartime internment helped make postwar Congress receptive to the JACL's lobbying efforts.³² Koreans could not draw on as compelling a record of grievances, at least not based on their experiences in America.

Consequently, even as they expressed solidarity with their fellow Japanese Americans, the brief's KINC authors returned to the theme of Korean victimization and colonization under Japanese rule in Asia in an effort to win lawmakers' sympathies. They not only disparaged the Japanese who had colonized their homeland. They pointed to Washington's perpetuation of the injustice in making Japan's postwar reconstruction a greater priority than Korea's independence. The tone of the brief grew more antagonistic and even accusatory in its critical assessments of Washington's policy of prioritizing

³¹ On mainland American views of Hawaii, see Beth Bailey and David Farber, *The First Strange Place: Race and Sex in World War II Hawaii* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994). For a Cold War treatment, see Gretchen Heefner, "A Symbol of the New Frontier: Hawaiian. Statehood, Anti-Colonialism, and Winning the Cold War," *The Pacific Historical Review* 74, no. 4 (2005).

³² Naoko Shibusawa, *America's Geisha Ally: Reimagining the Japanese Enemy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

Japan over Korea so soon after the Pacific War.³³ The brief's narrative painted Korea's history as marked by episode after tragic episode of Washington's neglect of the peninsula in favor of China and Japan. Revisiting the geopolitical logic of the community's World War II appeals, the KINC combined accusation with appeal, recapitulating a list of Koreans' longer-standing grievances at how U.S. officials had turned a blind eye to Korean suffering under Japanese colonial rule.

While old mistakes might die hard, the brief's authors warned that Washington's policy of persistent neglect threatened to imperil American goals in Asia. Insofar as any "future Asiatic balance-of-power hinge[d] upon Korea and her people," they maintained, "stabilizing Korea [was] just as important as maintaining a strong Chinese republic" or rebuilding its defeated Pacific enemy, Japan. The document's discussion of Japan evinced clear resentment at Americans' preferential treatment of their former colonizer. Americans would do well not to "forget too soon the days of Pearl Harbor," which had been a "real stab-in-the-back business" in its rush to "groom" Japan "for future eventualities."³⁴

How could Washington treat Japan, a "defeated and conquered nation" like a "former ally," while giving a "liberated nation" like Korea only a "small fraction of the attention given to Japan?" The KINC argued that America's Cold War project in Asia

³³ Try as they might, Koreans in the United States found themselves hard-pressed to escape the shadow of their larger East Asian neighbors, both of whom had long eclipsed Korea as Washington's main priorities in the region. Korea, along with the rest of the region, was downgraded on Washington's list of overseas priorities as part of a broader "reordering of priorities" in the spring of 1947 whereby American officials "emphasized economic assistance to Western Europe at the expense of U.S. interests in the Far East and elsewhere." The Marshall Plan was a fruit of this shift. John Gaddis, "Korea in American Politics, Strategy, and Diplomacy, 1945-50," in *The Origins of the Cold War in Asia*, eds. Akira Iriye and Ynosuke Nagai (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).

³⁴ KINC, "Brief in Support of S. 152 and H.R. 860."

had suffered for this illogical decision. When America began its military occupation over southern Korea, the “U.S. Government and her people [had become] directly responsible for the future welfare of Korea and her people everywhere.” But it had failed to live up to its responsibility to protect the peninsula from the evils of Communism. America’s decision to prioritize postwar Japan over Korea had enabled Communist Soviet Russia to “infiltrate” the peninsula; too focused on Tokyo, Washington had left USAMGIK officials “groping in the dark to feel [their] way about,” helpless to stop a growing communist threat.³⁵

The KINC leveraged its modest resources as best it could in support of its brief. Leaders obtained endorsements for the KINB from state governors, local and federal legislators, and less successfully sought to enlist “outstanding internationally-minded Americans” to serve on its advisory board. Not surprising in light of the authors’ home-base in Honolulu, a disproportionate number of supportive letters came from local and state officials in Hawaii who emphasized the Korean community’s many contributions to the islands’ economy, culture, and society.³⁶ One notable message came from the Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Honolulu, which characterized the KINB as a logical successor to Chinese legislative gains. Chamber members expressed their appreciation for “all those Congressman who so nobly voted to help the Chinese nationals” and their hope that Koreans would be given the “same consideration.” In another show of support by an Asian group, the editor of the *Filipino Press*, a Filipino American newspaper in Los Angeles, endorsed the KINB on similar grounds. Representing regional and local

³⁵ KINC, “Brief in Support of S. 152 and H.R. 860.”

³⁶ Walter Jung to Joseph Farrington, March 7, 1947, Joseph Farrington, Jr. papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, Hawaii.

voices, however, most of the letters carried limited weight. Support from the national president of the American Federation of Labor, which abandoned its historically restrictionist position after the end of World War II, the United States Chamber of Commerce, and the Bureau of Naval Personnel in the U.S. Navy Department has more influence. The KINC also used endorsements from the *New York Herald-Tribune* and *New York Times*.³⁷ But the legislation was out of their hands. General hearings on immigration and naturalization policies occupied the House Judiciary Committee all spring, and the KINB was tabled for the rest of the 80th Congressional session.³⁸

Over the following year, Jhung remained active in his capacity as executive secretary of the KINC. In April 1948, he offered a brief statement in support of the Judd bill at hearings before the House Judiciary Committee. His classic Cold War appeal warned that Asia was at a critical “juncture,” and time was “running short” for Washington to preempt disaster. He described a Korea on the brink, a powder keg where the Soviets’ “ominous nerve war” could at any time develop into “an actual fighting war between the forces for world domination by Communist Soviets and those who believe in world peace through democratic processes.”³⁹ In the aftermath of the 1948 Congressional elections that fall, Jhung wrote Farrington expressing hope for the bill’s passage in the next Congressional session.⁴⁰ In an encouraging sign, all four of the KINB’s sponsors

³⁷ All the endorsements cited are reprinted in Korean Immigration and Naturalization Committee, “Brief in Support of S. 152 and H.R. 860 (Superseded by H.R. 2932),” Summer 1947, Joseph Farrington, Jr. papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, Hawaii.

³⁸ The 80th Congressional session lasted from January 1947 to January 1949.

³⁹ U.S. House Judiciary Committee, *Providing for Equality under Naturalization and Immigration Laws*, 80th Cong., 2nd sess., 1948, 153-154.

⁴⁰ Walter Jhung to Joseph Farrington, November 8, 1948, Joseph Farrington, Jr. papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, HI.

from the 80th Congress reintroduced their bills in the first two months of 1949. They were joined by Rep. Herman Eberharter (D-PA) and two veterans of the repeal movement during World War II: Senator William Langer (R-ND) from the Indian campaign, and Warren Magnuson (D-WA), who had moved from the House to the Senate since his successful wartime work for Chinese exclusion repeal.⁴¹ Jung wrote the Hawaii delegate to thank him for his long-standing support and reported that the Committee had been delayed in reopening its Washington, DC, office. It was his final note on KINC letterhead.⁴² The Committee went defunct later that year due to lack of funding and personnel, having lost several key members when they left the United States to serve in the first ROK government in Seoul, South Korea upon its creation in the summer of 1948.

Monumental change swept Korea and East Asia during the two-year period between the KINB's first reintroduction in January 1947 and its revival in early 1949. In August 1948, Washington, working under the auspices of the United Nations, welcomed the creation of the Republic of Korea as a separate South Korean state led by Syngman Rhee. China's fall to Mao Zedong's Communist forces in October 1949 led some U.S. policymakers to expect communist victory on the Korean peninsula; dismissing further efforts as futile, they began agitating for an end to U.S. military and economic aid to Korea altogether. One especially fed-up Congressional critic likened continued funding

⁴¹ Bills on Korean immigration and/or naturalization introduced in the 81st Congress were H.R. 167 by Farrington (R-HI), H.R. 374 by Celler (D-NY), S. 554 by Pepper (D-FA), H.R. 1897 by Eberharter (D-PA), S. 761 by Langer (R-ND), and S. 853 by Magnuson (D-WA). After the failure of the Judd bill in 1948, several lawmakers associated with the JACL introduced joint resolutions providing for Japanese and Korean naturalization only, but these, too, stalled in the Senate.

⁴² Walter Jung to Joseph Farrington, January 5, 1949, Joseph Farrington, Jr. papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, HI.

of Rhee's South Korean government to "pouring money down another [Asian] rathole."⁴³ Based on such Congressional statements, North Korean leader Kim Il Sung, believing that the United States would not intervene, sent troops across the 38th parallel into South Korean territory on June 25, 1950 in an effort to unify the country under a single communist government.⁴⁴ To Kim's surprise, the United States and U.N. did step in, deploying troops to guard Rhee's presidency and thereby escalating the conflict that came to be known as the Korean War.

Although the KINC had ceased to exist by the end of 1949, the Korean Immigration and Naturalization Bill (KINB) reemerged as a political issue one last time in the summer of 1950 as war raged on the peninsula. In a speech on the Senate floor, KINB sponsor Republican Senator William Langer (R-ND) cited the KINB as proof that his party had done its part to prevent the crisis by taking steps to ameliorate the situation on the peninsula. In contrast, he argued, Congressional Democrats had failed to extend "even token recognition" to America's Korean friends by repeatedly blocking the Korean measure. If not for Democratic opposition, Langer insisted, the bill would have passed; as it was Democrats had repeatedly buried the bill in committee, and, in so doing, effectively "sold [Korea] down the river to communism."⁴⁵ This remark capped the legacy of the KINB from its origins in World War II. The measure, first drafted as a wartime bill to secure a space for Koreans in America and legitimize Korea's place in an

⁴³ *Congressional Records*, 81st Cong., 2nd sess., 1950, 193.

⁴⁴ The main statement of this type was Dean Acheson's "perimeter speech" in early 1950, which did not include Korea in the U.S. defensive perimeter in East Asia.

⁴⁵ *Congressional Record*, 81st Cong., 2nd sess., 1950, 4565.

international community of nation-states, had degenerated into a tool of partisan blame-shifting by 1950, used by one group to discredit the anticommunist credentials of the other. Just as cooperation with the U.S. government had not secured Korean Americans' interests, war would prove equally ineffective to do so.

A Transnational Critique for Korean Rights: The Korean American Committee for Wallace

On the opposite coast, a group of Korean Americans affiliated with the leftwing KNRP chapter in Los Angeles launched their own campaign for Korean naturalization rights in 1948 under the banner of the KACW, or Korean American Committee for Wallace. The group championed the candidacy of former vice-president Henry A. Wallace, the Progressive Party's 1948 candidate for U.S. president, and in doing so, claimed to represent the interests of "all Koreans living in America regardless of their political beliefs or affiliations."⁴⁶ In contrast to moderate groups like the Washington, DC-based KINC, however, the KACW harshly opposed U.S. postwar policy in Korea – particularly its project to stem the spread of Soviet Communist influence. As an offshoot of the Los Angeles-based KNRP, the KACW reflected the views of a minority radical group active during the early Cold War years. It labored alongside mainstream Korean American groups as part of the UKC during World War II but broke with the coalition in 1944 over its rejection of Allied plans to oversee a gradual process of Korean independence after the war.⁴⁷ After the U.N. oversaw elections for a separate South

⁴⁶ "Korean for Wallace Formed in L.A.," October 20, 1948, *Korean Independence*.

Korean National Assembly in May 1948, the KNRP joined a coalition of leftwing groups called the Korean Democratic Front in America (KDFFA), whose members claimed to oppose “unto death” foreign interference in Korea’s internal and domestic affairs.⁴⁸ By the fall of 1948, the KNRP chapter in Los Angeles had moved to the far left, emerging as an outspoken supporter of the newly created Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in North Korea.⁴⁹ Along with other members of the KDFFA coalition, they considered the DPRK government of Kim Il-Sung the rightful government of Korea and rejected Rhee’s ROK government as Washington’s puppet.

In forums organized by the KACW over the fall of 1948, members described their political awakening as closely connected to recent events in Korea. One editorialist in the *Korean Independence* credited the “powerful upsurge of the people in Korea” with fostering a “political awakening of Koreans in America.” Through witnessing Koreans’ oppression by foreign powers on the peninsula, Koreans halfway across the world in America had come to recognize that their “deepest desires and hopes are bound together with the desires and hopes of all minorities and the oppressed peoples.” As the “only force which is fighting for equal rights for all minorities on the domestic front, and for the policy of non-interference in Korea on the Foreign front,” he maintained, the Progressive Party represented the interests of not only Koreans in the United States, but

⁴⁷ For more on the KNRP during World War II and this episode, see Chapter 3 and Anne Soon Choi, “Unity for What? Unity for Whom?” *The United Korean Committee of North America, 1941-1945.*, in *From the Land of Hibiscus: Koreans in Hawai‘i, 1903-1950*, ed. Yong-ho Ch’oe (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007). 236-238.

⁴⁸ “Koreans in Open Forum Make Their Stand Clear,” *Korean Independence*, May 26, 1948.

⁴⁹ For more on the KNRP after 1945, see Yang, “Korean Revolutionary Nationalism in America,” 191-194. The DPRK was formally established on September 9, 1948.

of Koreans on the peninsula as well.⁵⁰ This transnational perspective extended to the KACW's platform. Rejecting the accommodationist and pro-American arguments of the KINC campaign, the KACW described its two-pronged project as first, to restore sovereignty to the Korean people and reunify the divided Korean peninsula, and second, to challenge racial discrimination in the United States, including Korean exclusion. In so doing, the left-wing KACW framed U.S. imperialism in Asia and racial discrimination in the United States as two sides of the same coin, common expressions of Americans' white supremacy.

The KACW's platform entwining critiques of U.S. domestic and foreign policy was on full display at an October, 1948, rally in downtown Los Angeles, jointly sponsored with the KNRP to raise local support for Wallace's presidential campaign. The event's estimated 250 attendees adopted resolutions ranging from local appeals for the release of the "Los Angeles Ten," who had been arrested under the Smith Act for their suspected ties to the Communist Party; to foreign policy entreaties demanding the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. forces from the Korean peninsula. Calls to eliminate the racial bar to American citizenship featured prominently on the night's program agenda, as the KNRP asked the rally's participants to sign a petition addressed to local southern California lawmakers. The petition called for the extension of naturalization rights to Koreans as a gesture that would win for America the "confidence and friendship of other peoples abroad," even as it challenged Washington's authority to maintain a presence in Korea.⁵¹ In general, it was unclear how seriously rally organizers expected U.S. state

⁵⁰ "Koreans for Wallace," *Korean Independence*, October 20, 1948, 1.

⁵¹ This discussion of the Korean-American Rally is taken from *Korean Independence*, November 10, 1948.

officials to take their requests. At a time when restrictionist sentiment remained strong, the KACW's decision to focus on naturalization was a strategic one. Citizenship-only bills promoting the incorporation of foreign-born persons already living in the United States were more likely to receive support than measures to admit even a small increase of immigrants to America, particularly from regions like East Asia with a well-known communist presence. The KACW's narrowed demands reflected recognition that while U.S. officials might be persuaded to grant the petitions of Koreans already living in America, they opposed welcoming additional Korean immigrants.⁵² Yet the radical nature of the KACW's expressed goals and the subversive reputations of many key participants meant that it was more likely to raise official suspicion than support.

Even as immigrant and ethnic American groups like the JACL and KINC sought to distance themselves from the stigma of communism, the KACW invited government scrutiny with the rally's open support for recognized communist entities and figures with known ties to communist and communist front groups. The evening's program featured Earl Robinson, a well-known Communist Party (CP-USA) member during the 1930s, leading the C.I.O. chorus in song, and Diamond Kimm, KNRP chairman and editor-in-chief of the *Korean Independence* newspaper, who addressed the crowd with a speech on Koreans' contributions to the United States. The California State Senate Committee on Un-American Activities had identified the KNRP newspaper as a communist front earlier that year. Kimm and fellow rally speaker and Progressive Party candidate for the California state assembly Maynard Omerberg both appeared before the House Committee

⁵² The same logic underpinned the JACL's support for the Walter Resolution in 1949. The alternate measure omitted provisions related to an immigration quota and proposed citizenship rights for Japanese and Koreans only.

on Un-American Activities (HUAC) several years later. In the late 1940s, the Progressive Party came under suspicion of Communism. While most of its leaders were not themselves Communist, the Party received the endorsement of the CP-USA and its ranks included several known Communists and Communist sympathizers. In the words of one political pundit, the Party comprised “a malaprop chief and a mass of malleable youth, manipulated by a Communist minority.”⁵³ A staff writer at *Time* focused on the Party’s presidential candidate in particular, noting that while it was “not true that Henry Wallace is an agent of Moscow,” he often “behave[d] like one.”⁵⁴

While support for the Progressive Party bought the KACW under suspicion, its leader’s ties tended to confirm the organization’s Communism. Chairwoman and rally speaker Alice Hyun was the sister of known CPUSA member Peter Hyun. Fluent in Korean, Chinese, and Japanese, Alice served as a language specialist for the U.S. Women’s Army Corps for three years after World War II, during which time she reconnected with her old friend Pak Hun-Young, a rising leader in the Korean Communist Party.⁵⁵ Upon her return stateside in 1948, Alice Hyun joined her brother Peter in Los Angeles, where he served as the *Korean Independence* newspaper’s English-language editor. In one of the October rally’s featured speeches, Alice Hyun described thriving conditions in North Korea based on a report from the Korean Unity Conference,

⁵³ Howard K. Smith, "The Wallace Party," *Nation* 167:6 (August 7, 1948): 145-147.

⁵⁴ Underscoring how far the candidate diverged from the views of most mainline voters, the writer went on to conclude that “Wallace ha[d] made a career by supplying to the liberals a commodity they crave: rhetoric which accomplishes in fantasy what cannot be accomplished in reality.” “What Is Henry Wallace?” *Time* 51:11 (March 15, 1948): 118.

⁵⁵ Alice and Pak were old friends from the Hyun family’s time spent in China with the Korean Provisional Government. Peter Hyun also wrote about a meeting with Pak during his time with the USAMGIK in Seoul. Peter Hyun, *In the New World: The Making of a Korean American* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), 238-239.

a gathering of 500 Korean political leaders from across the peninsula held in Pyongyang earlier that year.⁵⁶ The platforms adopted by the Unity Conference ran sharply counter to the strategic interest of the United States to keep Korea firmly within its anticommunist orbit. These included calls for the immediate withdrawal of all foreign occupation troops (both American and Soviet) from the peninsula; the creation of a unified, free Korean government through a free national election without international oversight; and the adoption of an economic program best suited to the welfare of the Korean people, presumably socialist communism.

Hyun posed a sharp contrast with conditions in South Korea, which she declared now teetered on the verge of civil war because of continued U.S. intervention. In a prescient statement, she warned that unless the United States ended its support for the current reactionaries in power – a reference to Rhee – Washington would be responsible for starting a civil war on the peninsula. Hyun’s remarks called attention to the conflict between Washington’s plans for a creation of a separate South Korean state and Korean Americans’ vision of a unified, sovereign Korea. Alice Hyun aligned the KACW and its supporters with the former group, Korean nationalists, first.

In spite of Hyun’s ties, neither the parent organization KNRP nor its offshoot, the KACW, began as a Communist front group or organ of the Korean Communist Party, and neither group ultimately became entirely Communist.⁵⁷ While several of the groups’

⁵⁶ The report had been authored by two well-known Korean nationalist leaders, Kim Kyu-sik and Kim Koo. Their involvement at Pyongyang had consequences for the two men, losing for Kim Kyu-Sik, in particular, the confidence of many U.S. occupation officials who had long preferred him to Rhee. Kim’s willingness to engage with the North and communists made supporting him out of the question.

⁵⁷ According to scholar Eun-Sik Yang, the KNRP likely had some form of regular correspondence with the Korean Communist Party beginning in 1946 – that was the year that the KNRP organ, the *Korean*

leaders – Peter and Alice Hyun, and Diamond Kimm, among others – did join the Communist Party at some point, most KNRP members and supporters – of what few remained by the 1950s when official harassment was at its peak – did not. At any point in time, they remained more interested in Korean reunification and independence than in any plan for Soviet Communist domination, but U.S. officials had difficulty distinguishing their nationalist goals and their communist rhetoric.

However distinct the KNRP and KACW may have been from the Communist Party, this association weakened its political power and a final assessment of the KACW and its 1948 effort remains mixed. As an ephemeral third party candidate, Wallace had no real hope of the White House; the controversial candidate did even worse than expected, winning only 2.4 percent of the popular vote and no electoral votes.⁵⁸ From the vantage point of Korean rights, the KACW and KNRP's efforts to champion the cause of citizenship undoubtedly harmed more than they helped by threatening to taint the issue with the stigma of communism. The right-wing elements of the McCarran-Walter measure tended to remove this stigma, but several of the KACW and KNRP's individual supporters battled charges of subversion after 1950.

In spite of these failures, the KACW represented a significant development for Korean Americans. In the words of one KACW supporter, the Committee heralded a

Independence newspaper, began printing dispatches from the *Haebang Ilbo* or Liberation News, the newspaper of the Korean Communist Party. See Hyun, *In the New World*, 273; Yang, "Revolutionary Nationalism," 191-193.

⁵⁸ The vast share of the Wallace's votes – 1.5 million votes – came from New York alone. Another third-party candidate, Dixiecrat Strom Thurmond, by contrast, won 39 electoral votes in the South. Wallace would become estranged from the Progressive Party two years later over his support for U.S. and U.N. intervention in the Korean conflict, which directly contradicted the party's platform of non-intervention and peace. In 1952, Wallace published *Where I Went Wrong*, detailing where he had been wrong and discussing his newfound embrace of anticommunism.

departure from the community's long-held "position of isolation . . . and the beginning of their practical move in identifying themselves as an integral part of the American community."⁵⁹ Certainly, the October 1948 rally suggested that a shared commitment to common principles of racial equality and the right of all peoples to self-determination could serve as a basis for collective action, at least in principle, if not always in practice. Indeed, Wallace's 1948 run for president galvanized minority communities across the nation, leading to groups like the New York *Nisei* for Wallace and, in southern California, Harry Hay's Bachelors for Wallace (a precursor to the Mattachine Society, the first significant American grassroots organization for LGBT rights). While the KACW did not end Korean American political nonparticipation, it did set the stage for collective action on issues such as protection for the foreign-born and peace efforts focused on Korea after 1950. The assistance of organizations including the National Lawyers Guild and the American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born, for example, would prove especially valuable to KACW alumni in their subsequent legal battles against U.S. state deportation.

A Forgotten People in a "Forgotten War": Korean Americans and the Korean War

A few months after the KACW rally, INS officials arrested and briefly detained featured speaker and *Korean Independence* newspaper editor Diamond Kimm on the charge of overstaying his visa. Kimm's 1949 INS reactivation notice stated that his case had been reopened "for the purpose of permitting him to apply for the benefits of recently

⁵⁹ Although the piece was unsigned, the author was likely Peter Hyun. *Korean Independence*, November 10, 1948.

enacted legislation,” but it was a ruse; in a common practice at the time, the government only intended to expedite deportation.⁶⁰ The timing of the state’s crackdown was notable. Years of outspoken opposition to U.S. foreign policy and unqualified support for Soviet and North Korean Communist policies formed the basis of the state’s case against Kimm. Local immigration officials arrested him again on June 15, 1950 and held him. Ten days later, North Korean troops crossed the thirty-eighth parallel into South Korean territory in a surprise attack. Within days, U.S. and U.N. troops and money began pouring into the peninsula. Sitting in a small Los Angeles jail cell, Kimm heard the news: Korea was at war. In early 1951, as the war escalated on the peninsula, the United States deported Kimm to South Korea. His legal team immediately appealed the order, beginning nearly a decade of gains and setbacks in the courts. Over the next few years, at least seven of Kimm’s staff at the newspaper, including several alumni of the KACW, would receive similar orders citing various grounds to justify their removal.

Much has been written about how the Chinese Communist victory and emergence of “Red China” in late 1949 led to a U.S. state crackdown on Chinese communities in America.⁶¹ Fewer scholars have explored how that racialization expanded beyond Chinese to shape the experiences of Koreans, the other major target of U.S. containment efforts in early Cold War Asia.⁶² Perceived racial similarities between Chinese and

⁶⁰ The law in question empowered the Attorney General to grant stays or suspensions of deportation to qualified individuals. Eligibility included a residency requirement of seven years and proof of “good moral character for the preceding five years.” Yang, 195.

⁶¹ The Chinese Confession Program of the mid-1950s was a notable example. See Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004) and Ellen D. Wu, “America’s Chinese”: Anti-Communism, Citizenship, and Cultural Diplomacy during the Cold War,” *Pacific Historical Review* 77, no. 3 (2008).

⁶² A notable exception is Cindy Cheng, *Citizens of Asian America: Democracy and Race During the Cold War* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), Chapter 4.

Koreans, coupled with the emergence of a formal wartime partnership between North Korea and the newly established Communist government of the People's Republic of China, encouraged Koreans' racialization with Chinese as part of a broad Asian Communist threat. This association carried grave consequences for Korean leftists in America at the height of the Cold War in Asia: the Korean War.

The early 1950s marked for many Korean leftists the height of Cold War repression in the form of arrests, prolonged detentions, and even formal deportation orders. The McCarran Internal Security Act of 1950 formed the major legal basis for this treatment, making membership, past or present, in either Communist or Fascist organizations grounds for expulsion from the United States with no statute of limitations.⁶³ Immigration boards and other government agencies asked the accused to confirm such membership. Like Kimm, most refused to answer, invoking their Fifth Amendment right to avoid self-incrimination. Divergent views of Communism lay at the heart of the deportation cases.⁶⁴ Leftwing groups like the KNRP and its offshoot KACW justified their support for the North Korean Communist regime on nationalist grounds; in contrast with Rhee's ROK government, the DPRK's had been chosen by and for the Korean people, largely free of overt foreign interference. Yet Washington's

⁶³ A product of the Cold War, the Internal Security Act of 1950, 64 Stat. 993, also known as the Subversive Activities Control Act or the McCarran Act, was passed over Truman's veto and took effect on September 22, 1950.

⁶⁴ According to historian Bruce Cumings, "[a]n American's understanding of communism in the United States held little relevance for understanding communism in Korea. . . Communism in Korea in 1945 did not signify a deeply held worldview or adherence to an authority residing in Kremlin, or a commitment to Marxist internationalism. It was a specifically Korean communism." This, in brief, was the fallacy that continued to plague Korean American activism throughout the postwar years. Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 1, 86; also quoted in Cheng, *Citizens of America*, 194. For more on Korean Communism under Soviet-American tutelage, see Robert A. Scalapino and Chong-Sik Lee, *Communism in Korea*, vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), Chapters 4-5.

preoccupation with containing Soviet influence discounted this understanding; for many U.S. officials, the Korean civil conflict was a proxy for America's bilateral contest with Moscow.⁶⁵

The perceived menace of a formal Asian communist bloc that began with the creation of the DPRK in September 1948 expanded exponentially with the victory of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) over the U.S.-supported Chinese Nationalists over the second half of 1949. China's "fall" to the CCP redoubled U.S. policymakers' fears of a distinctly Asian variant of Communism that posed a formidable threat independent of Moscow. Reports of Communism's growing popularity on the peninsula only compounded their alarm, reshuffling, in turn, American views of the lines dividing "good" from "bad" Asian groups.⁶⁶ Whereas Chinese Americans had once enjoyed the approbation of white Americans during World War II, they now faced mounting harassment by the U.S. anticommunist state as overseas extensions of the Chinese Communist threat.⁶⁷ Japanese Americans usurped their once-favored position.

Despite the efforts of Korean Americans to claim similarity with their Japanese American counterparts, Washington increasingly linked Koreans in the United States

⁶⁵ As Cumings has argued, the "essence of the American failure in Korea" remained that "American policies, in their conception and their consequence, took no heed of Korean needs and demands for a full restructuring of colonial legacies," but instead interpreted all support for the North Korean Communist regime of Kim Il-Sung as part of a Soviet-inspired effort to overthrow the U.S. government and aid Moscow in its "master plan to dominate all of Korea." Bruce Cumings, *The Two Koreas* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, May/June 1984), 27; Cumings, *Origins of Korean War*, vol. 1, 444.

⁶⁶ Much has been written about how the Cold War racialized individual Asian American groups distinctly on the basis of divergent geopolitical developments in Asia. Yet this work has focused almost exclusively on Chinese and Japanese Americans as two groups with very different encounters with the U.S. anticommunist state. Ellen D. Wu, "Race and Asian American Citizenship: From World War II to the Movement" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2006). Also see Cheng, *Citizens of Asian America: Democracy and Race During the Cold War* (New York: New York University Press, 2013).

⁶⁷ See Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, Chapter 6.

with the Chinese Communist threat because of perceived similarities between the DPRK and the newly established People's Republic of China. The entry of Chinese Communist forces into the Korean conflict on the side of the North Korean Communist regime in October 1950 only confirmed the association. Several additional factors compounded the racialization of Koreans in America as continuous with the Communist threat in Asia. The first were the red-baiting tactics that Rhee and the ROK government regularly used to discredit his critics in the United States, who grew in number and outspokenness after 1948. Years after his return to Korea, Rhee maintained an active hand in Korean American community affairs through his network of loyal supporters scattered throughout the United States.⁶⁸ Over the first year of his presidency, he took concerted steps to establish his government's legitimacy and ensure the support of Koreans in America. Instead, his perceived meddling became the target of attack by anti-Rhee intellectuals, in particular. One especially controversial decree in the spring of 1949 required Koreans in America to register with the new ROK government, or risk losing their eligibility for Korean citizenship and with it, the hope of ever returning to the peninsula, even to visit.⁶⁹ Rather than solidify Rhee's control over U.S. Korean communities, the measure renewed criticism of his administration's authoritarian

⁶⁸ For an example from within the Korean Hawaiian community, see Kingsley Lyu, "Korean Nationalist Activities in Hawaii and the Continental United States, 1900-1945, Part II: 1919-1945," *Amerasia* 4:2 (1977): 73-76 and Wayne Patterson, *The Ilse: First-generation Korean Immigrants in Hawai'i, 1903-1973* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2000). On the Rhee lobby in Washington, see Cumings, vol. II, 61-65. Rhee maintained strong and long-standing ties with his Hawaii-based supporters, particularly those associated with the *Tongjihoe* (Korean Comrade Society). In the fall of 1945, it was *Tongjihoe* dollars that funded Rhee's flight to Seoul. And in 1960, *Tongjihoe* supporters chartered the airplane that brought Rhee from Seoul back to Hawaii after student protests forced him to give up the presidency amid charges of corruption and election-fixing.

⁶⁹ The ROK government's practice of denying Korean visas to non-Rhee supporters continued even after the Korean War armistice. Patterson, 212-213.

methods.⁷⁰ To counter such criticism, Rhee took to branding his major opponents “communist or communist sympathizers” – accusations that resulted in the deportation of several opponents to Europe. Not detrimental for his detractors alone, Rhee’s methods fueled anticommunist fears in Washington by giving substance to U.S. officials’ suspicions of communist loyalties among Koreans in America.

The vocal support of Korean radicals like Kimm for Chinese Communists in Asia added to the clamor. As civil war in China raged through the summer of 1949, writers in the KNRP’s *Korean Independence* newspaper openly identified with the CCP and its leader Mao Zedong as co-fighters in a larger race war against the West. One editorialist described Koreans like himself in common cause with Chinese Communists as a single “democratic Asiatic people . . . shedding blood to liberate themselves from the cannibalism of Western Imperialism.”⁷¹ In his telling, Chinese Communists’ success was a badge of racial pride not only for Chinese, but for Koreans like himself insofar as it demonstrated the equality of Asian peoples with Western whites. During World War II, Tokyo’s use of pan-Asian rhetoric in their calls for a Greater Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere uniting Asian peoples from across the continent had ignited alarm in Washington regarding the threat of Asian racial solidarity to U.S. security interests.

The revival of similar appeals by Mao Zedong and the CCP renewed these fears, and all the more keenly during a time of nationalist ferment and decolonization throughout Asia. KNRP writers welcomed the CCP’s eventual victory with declarations of a “new day awakening in Asia.” Their sense of Asian racial pride was unmistakable.

⁷⁰ *Korean National Herald*, July 6, 1949.

⁷¹ *Korean Independence*, April 27, 1949.

The *Korean Independence* newspaper's English editor, Sang Park, called the CCP's capture of the Nationalist capitol Nanking on April 24 a "glorious triumph" for "all Asiatics" over Americans' use of scare tactics to threaten Asia with "atomic bombs" and efforts to "enslave hungry peoples to [the] Dollar." The editorial reflected a growing sense of Asian racial pride. Park argued that the Chinese Communist victory proved that Westerners could no longer "look down upon the Asiatic peoples as an inferior race . . . predestined to eke out their bare subsistence by serving them as their slave[s]." Instead, it heralded Asia's rise to become the "cradle of new spiritual, cultural, and intellectual Renaissance" in the world.⁷²

FBI informer Anita Bell Schneider confirmed the existence of Sino-Korean Communist networks linking DPRK and CCP leaders to Koreans in southern California several years later in a statement before the HUAC. The FBI hired Schneider to infiltrate and gather intelligence on the peace movement in California. Her testimony drew a direct chain of command from Communist leader Mao Zedong to Koreans in southern California. She claimed to have worked closely with Alice Hyun's brother Peter and other CPUSA members in the Southern California Peace Crusade from 1951 to 1954, when the organization identified her and expelled her. In a series of very leading question-and-answer exchanges, she testified that Communists like Peter Hyun had used peace issues to mask their main work of spreading "Communist or Russian propaganda." By presenting themselves as a "peace movement," Schneider maintained, the Party had been able to mobilize the money and prestige of unsuspecting, non-Communist members

⁷² "New Day Dawns in Asia," *Korean Independence*, April 27, 1949, 1.

to further the Com-intern's agenda to "weaken the United States" by creating dissension and encouraging criticism of U.S. government policies.⁷³

The outbreak of the Korean War less than a year later prompted a more mixed reaction from Korean American communities. The fighting began in June of 1950 with North Korean troops unexpectedly crossing the 38th parallel into ROK territory in a bid to reunify the peninsula under the North Korean Communist government. Members of the KNA in Hawaii, the oldest and largest Korean American organization, took the opportunity to denounce Rhee's ROK government for creating conditions ripe for violence.⁷⁴ Most Koreans in the United States hoped for reunification and peace, leaving them unable to pick a side in the conflict.⁷⁵ The left wing of Korean America by no means monopolized the preference for reunification of the Korean peninsula; moderate Korean American groups also desired reunification, regardless of American priorities. When rumors of an American plan began to circulate in Seoul during the first year of the occupation, KNA and UKC leaders categorically denounced the idea because it would divide the state.⁷⁶ In May 1948, KNA leaders in Hawaii rebuffed an invitation by Rhee's supporters to join them in commemorating the new South Korean state. In their formal reply, KNA leaders stipulated that they would only "join their countrymen to honor the

⁷³ House Committee on Un-American Activities, *Investigation of Communist Activities in the Los Angeles, Calif., Area: Hearing Before the House Committee on Un-American Activities*, 84th Cong., 1st sess., June 27, 1955, 1502-6. For Peter Hyun's account of the episode, see Peter Hyun, *In the New World*, Chapter 13.

⁷⁴ "South-North War," *Korean National Herald*, July 5, 1950.

⁷⁵ Bong-Youn Choy, *Koreans in America* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1979), 189.

⁷⁶ The statement was made by Sidai Hahn, chair of the UKC delegation in Seoul and KNA leader from Los Angeles. "Chairman Sidai Hahn Urges Unified All-Korea Government, Opposes Separate Southern State," *The New Korea*, June 20, 1946.

occasion when the united government of north and south Korea is established.”⁷⁷ At the same time, KNA leaders were pragmatic above all. Thus, though they may have opposed the creation of the ROK in 1948, the Hawaii KNA chapter released a statement calling for the passage of a bill introduced to Congress in 1949 as a way to cement relations “between the *new Korean government* and the United States of America.”⁷⁸ By the Korean War years, the UKC had gone defunct, and the KNA spoke as the main mouthpiece of the Korean American community. But the more extreme pronouncements of the community’s left wing drowned out its moderate voice after 1950.

Kimm and several alumni of the KACW and the KNRP in southern California spearheaded the left-wing cause. Uninterested in appeasing Washington lawmakers, they spent the Korean War years propagating critiques of America’s unwelcome meddling in Koreans’ domestic affairs on the pages of *Korean Independence*. As English-language editor Peter Hyun once described it, the paper’s editorial policy during the war overwhelmingly repeated three themes: “stop the war in Korea, oust Syngman Rhee, and all powers outside Korea – hands off.”⁷⁹ Unlike the majority of Korean Americans, *Korean Independence* writers largely welcomed war on the peninsula as a necessary step toward Korea’s reunification and self-government. They openly aligned themselves with the Communist DPRK and CCP. Notably they published in English as well as Korean, unlike other major Korean immigrant newspapers of the time, which seemed to invite

⁷⁷ “Hawaii Koreans Reject Rhee,” *Korean Independence*, July 28, 1948,

⁷⁸ President Song Soon Sur, Korean National Association, Hawaii, to Senator Langer, March 22, 1949, Joseph Farrington papers, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, Hawaii.

⁷⁹ Peter Hyun, quoted in Patterson, *The Ilse*, 211.

official scrutiny by America's anticommunist bureaucracy.⁸⁰ As fighting raged in Korea, the *Korean Independence* issued a steady stream of petitions calling on the United States and the U.N. to withdraw from what they called an "internal family matter" and restore to Koreans their right to govern themselves.⁸¹ Defying the accepted wisdom of North Korean culpability, they named U.S. troops as the true "aggressor" behind the conflict and expressed their hope that North Korean troops and their "Chinese saviors" would prevail against the forces of "American imperialism."⁸²

Over the course of the Korean War, *Korean Independence* writers became increasingly aggressive in their attacks on America and its role in escalating the violence on the peninsula. An October 1950 article series cited "secret documents" captured by North Korean soldiers during its brief occupation of Seoul as "irrefutable evidence" of Rhee's plot to attack North Korea and unite it under South Korean rule, a plan "conceived long before" June 1950 and carried out with American and U.N. officials' support.⁸³ Two years later, they printed their most damning piece to date, alleging that U.S. military forces had introduced germ warfare to Korea. According to the report, U.S.-piloted planes had dropped "bubonic plague-carrying fleas" over the city of Kaesong, North Korea. The piece cited exclusive testimony from a Chinese spy – identified as 21-year old

⁸⁰ Long after the other major Korean immigrant newspapers in Hawaii and California had reverted to their prewar Korean-only format, the KNRP's *Korean Independence* newspaper continued to print in both English and Korean. Other major Korean community newspapers included the *New Korea*, published by the Korean National Association (KNA) in Los Angeles, and the *Korean Pacific Weekly* published by the KNA in Hawaii.

⁸¹ According to one writer, the "sons of the American people [were] dying in vain" in what was really a "revolt of the Korean people against the tyranny of Syngman Rhee." *Korean Independence*, July 19, 1950.

⁸² *Korean Independence*, December 13, 1950.

⁸³ *Korean Independence*, October 25, 1950.

Wang Chi – who claimed to have been hired by U.S. officials to gather intelligence on the effects of America’s bacteriological weapons on North Korean civilians.⁸⁴

Lawmakers questioned Kimm about these reports during his hearing before the HUAC several years later.

Kimm’s HUAC experience typified what one scholar described as the “stylized rituals” and “staged quality” of most public HUAC hearings and indeed, of much U.S. government redbaiting after 1950.⁸⁵ The committee sought exposure, not information. At Kimm’s hearing, HUAC members focused their questions on the nature of the *Korean Independence* newspaper and its relationship to the Communist Party and Party directives. The specificity of the committee’s questions about the publication’s content attests to the care with which state officials had monitored its pages for years. But no matter how damning or specific the question, Kimm refused to answer. When asked to name the sources behind the newspaper’s charges of U.S.-deployed bacteriological warfare in North Korea, for example, Kimm declined even to confirm his affiliation with the newspaper, much less reveal anything about the origins of those reports. He parried query after query by invoking the First and Fifth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution, much to the committee’s exasperation. As a self-identified “active newspaperman,” Rep. Donald Jackson (R-CA) insisted that constitutional freedoms did not apply to the *Korean Independence* because it was not a “free American newspaper,” but rather a “house organ of the international Communist conspiracy” which regularly printed “policies and directives . . . handed down from a foreign power.” He depicted the *Korean*

⁸⁴ “Captured Germ War Agent Confesses Crime,” *Korean Independence*, April 9, 1952.

⁸⁵ Ellen Schrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1994), 54-56.

Independence as “little free from the influence of international communism as anything I have ever observed in the way of journalistic endeavor.”⁸⁶ Kimm’s reticence notwithstanding, committee members condemned Kimm and the *Korean Independence* as servants of the Communist cause, exempt from constitutional rights. Local press covering the hearings reprinted an especially testy episode from the exchange, in which Rep. Jackson decried Kimm’s multiple references to his First and Fifth Amendment rights as a “misuse of the Constitution.”⁸⁷

Throughout the 1950s, Kimm contested his deportation order in multiple appeals in U.S. courts. As a foreign-born alien, Kimm had few rights and little recourse under existing laws that barred him from U.S. citizenship and Cold War security measures like the McCarran Act of 1950, which drew sharp distinctions between the rights of aliens and the rights of American citizens. For him and other Korean deportees, the assistance of outside civil liberties and progressive organizations, including several of the partnerships forged during the 1948 Wallace campaign, proved invaluable to organizing an effective legal defense. With the help of the ACLU, for example, *Korean Independence* English editor Sang Ryup Park won a permanent stay of his deportation order in 1952.⁸⁸ Formed in 1950, the Los Angeles Committee to Protect the Foreign Born (LACPFB) created an

⁸⁶ House Committee on Un-American Activities, *Investigation of Communist Activities in the Los Angeles, Calif., Area: Hearing Before the House Committee on Un-American Activities*, 84th Cong., 1st sess., June 28, 1955, 1567-1568.

⁸⁷ Kimm was described as a “wholly uncooperative witness . . . in close liaison with American Communist Party headquarters.” “Southland Man Quizzed on Pro-Soviet Speeches,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 29, 1955. For an earlier example, see Kent Hunter, “Reds Woo 40 Million Foreign-Born in U.S.,” *Los Angeles Examiner*, July 28, 1947.

⁸⁸ “Park Wins Stay of Deportation Order,” *Korean Independence*, March 19, 1952. On August 20th, the *Independence* declared complete victory in Park’s case; he was granted a writ of habeas corpus by a district judge in San Francisco, which enabled him to remain in the U.S. indefinitely. “Park Wins Fight on Deportation,” *Korean Independence*, August 20, 1952.

Asian subcommittee committed to the defense of Asian-born deportees, a group that included Kimm and his colleague David Hyun, KACW chairwoman Alice Hyun's brother. When appeals on procedural grounds failed to bring lasting reprieve, both men's team of lawyers, secured with the help of the LACFPB, ACLU, and National Lawyers Guild, turned to a provision of the McCarran-Walter Act (1952) empowering the Attorney General to stay deportation orders in cases where a deportee was likely to face physical persecution in his destination country.⁸⁹ At a loss for other options, Kimm and Hyun, their legal teams and families, seized upon the clause with renewed hope.

The fact that the United States expelled Korean-born aliens to South Korea influenced their legal defense. Kimm – like Rhee himself – was originally from a city located above the thirty-eighth parallel, but the United States would not send him to North Korea. First, the United States did not officially recognize North Korea as a nation. This created visa technicalities that made it impossible to repatriate directly to North Korea from America. This allowed Koreans threatened with deportation to make reports of ROK President Syngman Rhee's violent and dictatorial practices, which had already been circulating for years, central to their case. Between 1952 and 1954, Kimm and Hyun's legal teams and their supporters undertook a concerted effort to document Rhee's record of violence against political opponents and critics, compiling affidavits and news reports attesting to Rhee's use of strong-arm tactics against individuals he perceived as a threat to his government or to himself personally.

⁸⁹ Eligibility for relief included a residency requirement of seven years and proof of "good moral character for the preceding five years." 66 Stat. 212, 8 U.S.C. 1253(h) (1952).

A 1956 defense pamphlet issued by Kimm's supporters drew from these affidavits and articles to argue for his legal relief.⁹⁰ Reginald Thompson, a British press correspondent in South Korea, recounted how "men, women and even children were brutally beaten up," "hundreds faced the firing squads" and their corpses "riddled with bullets were heaped into common graves." Yale anthropologist Cornelius Osgood wrote about how Rhee's "South Korean police publicized murder and brutality by depositing the dead bodies of their prisoners on the doorsteps." Some of the most damning statements came from one-time members and employees of the USAMGIK in Seoul. Ely Haimowitz, former chief of the Cultural Affairs division of the Office of Civil Information of the U.S. armed forces in Korea during 1947, testified to Rhee's government practice of silencing opposition "with bullets or clubs or both." Stewart Meacham, former labor advisor to the commanding general of U.S. armed forces in Seoul, concurred with his observation that "[t]he opponents of Rhee die violently." Stanley Earl, now working as a local official in Portland, Oregon, claimed to have resigned his government post "in protest over U.S. support of Rhee's dictatorial policies."⁹¹

Korean newspaper reports naming Kimm supported the view that the Rhee government would persecute him if he were sent to South Korea. According to the *Dong-Ah Daily*, one of South Korea's major newspapers, government officials in Rhee's administration were "closely watching the outcome of the traitors under deportation

⁹⁰ All quotations in this paragraph are taken from "Report of the Past Activities of the Friends and Neighbors of David Hyun," [1954], Box 8, File 4, Los Angeles Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born (LACFPB) papers, Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research (SCLSSR), Los Angeles, CA.

⁹¹ "Report of the Past Activities of the Friends and Neighbors of David Hyun," SCLSSR.

proceedings” whom they believed had “sold themselves to the reds in the U.S.” Pieces written by ROK government sources denounced Kimm and the *Korean Independence* by name, referring to Kimm as a “traitor to Korea” and the *Independence* as a “Communist propaganda newspaper.”⁹² Clearly, Kimm would face brutality in South Korea.⁹³

Kimm’s supporters’ strategy had one major flaw, however, which made it unlikely that the U.S. Attorney General would accept the argument. By inviting scrutiny of Rhee’s record, the deportation loophole indirectly shone light on Washington’s role in not only helping to create but also continuing to fund Rhee’s widely criticized regime. The defense’s focus on Rhee placed INS and Justice Department officials in the awkward position of passing judgment on the State Department’s policy of supporting Rhee’s South Korean government. To rule in Kimm’s favor meant, in effect, to uphold his legal team’s argument that Rhee was a dictator and thereby implicate U.S. policymakers and State Department officials with supporting an anti-democratic administration.⁹⁴ The alternative – to defend U.S. support for Syngman Rhee as media observers, humanitarian groups, and other news sources presented proof of his brutalities and corruption – was likewise unenviable. To be sure, the arguments contained in Kimm’s 1956 legal brief were not new; they simply recapitulated charges already circulating in the international media. However, the Kimm case and those of other Korean deportees did humanize the stakes of the reports for the individuals and families involved.

⁹² Taken from translation of articles from the *Dong-ah Daily* (Seoul, Korea), February 23, 1956.

⁹³ For further discussion of this point, see Rev. George A. Warmier, Rabbi Morton A. Bauman, Rev. J. Stuart Innerst, California, open letter to Friend, August 29, 1956, American Committee for Protection of the Foreign Born (ACPFB) papers, Tamiment Library, New York University, New York, NY.

⁹⁴ This was an especially tricky proposition during a time when many lawmakers called for reducing U.S. aid to South Korea in the aftermath of the Korean cease-fire in 1953.

Deportees' experiences of harassment by U.S. authorities also pushed them closer, both rhetorically and in practice, to other American minority groups. Between 1950 and 1954, local authorities raided the *Korean Independence* newspaper office three separate times. Everyone on the newspaper staff had received deportation summonses by 1954. Few were surprised at the charges; many had been present at Diamond Kimm's arrest in 1950. The newspaper emphasized the plight of its staff, publishing pieces decrying the "deportation hysteria" as symptomatic of a broader "anti-[S]emite, anti-communist, and anti-foreigners hysteria" sweeping the United States, and protested the "second-class status," "oppressive laws," and "vanishing civil rights" that Koreans and other foreign-born Americans suffered under a "discriminatory" government.⁹⁵ One editorialist declared Koreans' part in the "struggle of ALL freedom-loving people . . . irrespective of faith, color, or national extraction" against "U.S. white supremacy and aggression." Drawing an explicit link between the oppression of Koreans in Korea and minorities in the United States, the writer maintained that so long as white supremacy drove Americans in America to practice "discrimination against Mexican nationals and Mexican Americans," "anti-Semitism," and "second-class citizenship for Negro people," Koreans could never achieve victory in their own "struggle for self-determination" which was "bound very closely with the mores of America." In this way, deportees used the opportunity both to claim solidarity with other persecuted minority groups in America and to situate their common plight within a transnational critique of "U.S. white supremacy and aggression," as practiced at home and in Asia.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Excerpts taken from *Korean Independence*, January 7, 1953, 1; *Korean Independence*, March 19, 1952; *Korean Independence*, January 1954.

Ultimately, the LACFPB, ACLU, and other progressive groups could not save Kimm. In 1959, a Southern California district court judge concluded on the basis of Kimm's expired student visa alone that there was "not the slightest hint of any evidence that he is not deportable."⁹⁷ In 1960, having exhausted all his other legal options, Kimm appealed one last time before the U.S. Supreme Court, whose decision would be irrevocable and not subject to further appeal. Recognizing the gravity of the hearing, the Friends of Diamond Kimm Committee in Los Angeles issued final pleas in the 1960 conference journal of the Los Angeles Committee to Protect the Foreign Born.⁹⁸ A piece titled "Hangman Rhee Must Never Get Kimm!" overviewed the government's case against Kimm and called for donations and prayers in the concluding push.⁹⁹ But to no avail. By a narrow margin of 5 to 4, the Court denied Kimm's request for a suspension of deportation. The decision cited his "failure to prove his eligibility for a suspension" on the grounds of physical persecution.¹⁰⁰ With no further options for legal recourse, Kimm and his wife, Fania, departed Los Angeles in 1962, having chosen to depart voluntarily

⁹⁶ "Speak Out for Peace," *Korean Independence*, February 13, 1952.

⁹⁷ *Kimm v. Hoy* (1959), Appeal from the United States District Court for the Southern District of California, Central Division, Diamond Kimm: Deportation proceedings, correspondence and filings, Korean American Digital Archive (KADA), Korean Heritage Library, University of Southern California.

⁹⁸ Rose Chernin, "Ten Years of Resistance," *Ten Years of People's Resistance to the Walter-McCarran Law, 1950-1960 (Journal for 1960)*, published for the tenth annual conference of the Los Angeles Committee for Protection of Foreign-Born (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Committee for Protection of Foreign Born, 1960), 6. Messages in the back of the conference issue reflected the wide range of support that the journal drew from individuals, groups, businesses, friends of deportation and denaturalization victims. Mirroring the diversity of the coalition in geography and vocation as well as race/ethnicity, sponsors included: "Physician and surgeon friends of the Committee," "Hungarian Group," "Japanese Group," "Needle Trade Committee," "Mexican Committee," "Westside Committee," and "Bay Cities Committee."

⁹⁹ Belle Parsons and John F. Clewe, "Hangman Rhee Must Never Get Kimm!," *Journal for 1960*, 30-31.

¹⁰⁰ Joseph Forer (LACFPB-affiliated attorney in Washington, DC), "The Committee in the Supreme Court," *Defense, Service, and Legislation for the Foreign Born (Journal for 1963)*. (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Committee for Protection of Foreign Born, 1963), 7.

rather than be formally deported to South Korea where Kimm faced certain persecution as a communist traitor.¹⁰¹

Writing from Czechoslovakia where the couple stopped to file for entry to North Korea, Kimm reflected on the idea of going home, which he claimed had been his “sweetest dream for the last 30 years.” Despite the circumstances of his homecoming, Kimm declared his case a “victory” insofar as he had been able to decide his destination. North Korea had been the natural choice. He supported the North Korean government of Kim Il Sung and feared no harm from DPRK state officials. Kimm wished the Los Angeles Committee continued “courage . . . [and] steadfastness” in its battle to “make victory a reality” for foreign-born Americans facing deportation. He ended by expressing the couple’s hopes for the final leg of their journey. “We are looking forward with great anticipation to the day when we set foot in my native land,” he wrote, “now so much more beautiful than when I left it so many years ago.”¹⁰² Fania, Diamond’s American-born Czech wife, conveyed similar resolve. In a note dated July 1962, she reported that the couple had arrived at their destination: “Korea, the land of Morning Calm, the eastern-most part of the Asian continent.” “For me,” she wrote, “it is a complete and terrific change in every respect, apart from missing my family and that of my larger family—you my friends. Were I to say that the adjustment is easy, I would not be telling

¹⁰¹ For more on the Kimm case, see Jane Hong, *Wosingt’ŏn-esŏŭi chomang: Miguk-ŭi chŏngch’ijŏk kugoe ch’ubangkwa hanin tiasŭp’ora* [The View from Washington: Political Deportation & the Korean Diaspora in the United States]. *Yoksa munje yon’gu* (Critical Studies on Modern Korean History) 26 (December 2011): 259-275 and Cheng, *Citizens of Asian America*, Chapter 4.

¹⁰² Diamond Kimm, “Letter from Afar: Homeward to My Native Land.” *Constitutional Protection for the Foreign Born (Journal for 1962)* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Committee for Protection of Foreign Born, 1962), 19-20.

the truth. However, this is my home now, and I am determined to learn and make good.”¹⁰³ Whether she did so remains a mystery; the couple was not heard from again.¹⁰⁴

By contrast, history records the fate of former KACW chairwoman Alice Hyun. Hyun left the United States for North Korea shortly after the war began in July 1950. In Pyongyang, she reunited with her old friend, Korean Communist Party leader Pak Hun-Young, then serving as the minister of foreign affairs for the DPRK government. She served as his personal secretary for several years before being executed as an “American spy” in a government purge that also claimed the lives of Pak and thirty-eight other associates whom DPRK President Kim Il-Sung had deemed a threat to his position. Writing about her death years later, her brother Peter remarked on the irony that his sister had “spent all her life fighting for Korea, only to be executed by another Korean.”¹⁰⁵ Together with Kimm, Alice Hyun’s fate stands as one of the most striking examples of Cold War consequences in action, exemplifying the very real consequences that communist and nationalist struggles could carry for Korean Americans during these years.

¹⁰³ “Exile,” *Journal for 1963*, 40.

¹⁰⁴ Kimm was purportedly killed several years later by the North Korean regime on charges of being an American spy, but it is hard to know for sure as these reports have never been confirmed. Michael Munk, “The Fate of the Kwaks,” *NK News*, February 21, 2011.

¹⁰⁵ Along with Kimm, Alice Hyun’s brother Peter was called to testify before the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) in 1955 and suffered ongoing harassment on U.S. authorities for his role in the Southern California Peace Crusade, widely considered a Communist front organization. His American citizenship by virtue of his Hawaii birth shielded him from the same degree of punishment that his Korean-born peers faced, however, particularly the threat of deportation. In comparison, it took Peter’s younger, Korean-born brother David Hyun more than a decade and a half to prevail in his own deportation appeals. For more on Alice Hyun, see Peter Hyun, *In a New World*, 272-273. For more on the David Hyun case, see Cheng, Chapter 4.

Korean Immigration After 1952

The long shadow cast by the Korean War arguably influenced Korean immigration to the United States more than any single piece of legislation passed by Congress before 1965. The 1952 McCarran-Walter Act had made Koreans eligible to naturalize as U.S. citizens for the first time in American history, but the U.S. Korean population, numbered fewer than 12,000 by the early 1950s.¹⁰⁶ The McCarran-Walter Act's granting of a nominal immigration quota to Korea likewise had small impact. But, like Japanese immigrants, the majority of the seventeen thousand Koreans who had entered the United States by 1965 were women who entered the United States outside of the annual quotas, as the spouses of American servicemen.¹⁰⁷ As scholars such as Ji-Yeon Yuh have shown, the migration experiences of these women diverged widely from those who came as a result of the formal quota of 105 Koreans per year. Norms of white male patriarchy indelibly shaped these women's experiences in the United States. The stigma associated with these unions also separated these women from existing Korean American communities and networks upon their arrival in the United States.¹⁰⁸ Ironically, these ostracized women formed some of the earliest links in the chain migration system that later led to an exponential increase in Asian immigration. According to one estimate, as

¹⁰⁶ Choy, 183.

¹⁰⁷ Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1989).

¹⁰⁸ According to historian Ji-Yeon Yuh, nearly one hundred thousand women came to the United States as military brides from South Korea between 1950 and 1989. Ji-Yeon Yuh, *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America* (New York: NYU Press, 2004). Also see Katharine H. S. Moon, *Sex among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

many as forty to fifty percent of all Korean immigrants since 1965 came to the United States directly or indirectly through the sponsorship of a Korean military bride.¹⁰⁹

The influence of the Korean War on immigration trends also extended to another kind of immigrant: the Korean adoptee. Like military brides, these children came to the United States outside of the national quotas. Between 1955 and 1961, American families, most of them white, adopted 4,190 mixed-race and full-blooded Korean children into the United States.¹¹⁰ As historian Arissa Oh has shown, the mechanisms of these adoptions lay the “imaginative, procedural, and institutional groundwork” during the 1950s and early 1960s for inter-country adoption in the United States. By the time the 1965 Immigration Act overhauled the national origins quota system, a 1961 law had normalized adoptees as immigrants by giving them the status of “immediate relatives,” who could enter the U.S. as non-quota migrants, rather than as “eligible orphans” or “refugees.”¹¹¹

This trend toward non-quota immigration was not limited to Korea but reflected broader changes in Asian immigration over the 1950s, whereby formal national quotas were increasingly rendered meaningless by new categories of non-quota migration that were the product of an increased American military presence across the continent. As Secretary of State Dean Rusk noted in a statement before the House Judiciary Committee in 1964, non-quota immigrants accounted for roughly 90% of the approximately 120,000

¹⁰⁹ Cited in Ji-Yeon Yuh, “Out of the Shadows: Camptown Women, Military Brides, and Korean (American) Communities,” *Asian American Studies Now: A Critical Reader*, eds. Jean Yu-wen Shen Wu and Thomas C. Chen (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 247-8.

¹¹⁰ Figure taken from Arissa Oh, “From War Waif to Ideal Immigrant: The Cold War Transformation of the Korean Orphan,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 31:4 (Summer 2012): 41.

¹¹¹ For a more detailed discussion of the legal mechanisms underwriting Korean adoptee migration, see Oh, “From War Waif,” 35, 40-42.

persons admitted to the United States from China, Japan, and the Philippines between 1953 and 1963.¹¹² Such figures, when used to underscore the inadequacies of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act, fueled calls for more sweeping immigration reform – in particular, the elimination of the national origins quota system– as the next logical step in America’s bid to update its immigration policy to reflect its leadership role and foreign policy priorities in the world.

¹¹² House Committee on Judiciary, *Immigration, Part 2: Hearings on H.R. 1629, H.R. 1654, et. al.*, 88th Cong., 2nd sess., August 1964; quoted in David Reimers, *Still the Golden Door: The Third World Comes to America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 75.

EPILOGUE

The [McCarran-Walter] bill represents the first major revision of our immigration laws since 1924. As such I think it should make a contribution to the solution of some of the problems we face in the world; it should be in harmony with the spirit which animates our foreign policy and our relations with other countries; and it should strengthen our claim to leadership of the free world. Measured by these standards, it is a thoroughly bad bill.¹

After the McCarran-Walter Act passed Congress over a presidential veto in June 1952, observers and scholars alike agreed that a comprehensive overhaul of the U.S. immigration system was a matter of time. As Harvard historian and public intellectual Oscar Handlin declared in the title of a magazine piece published just weeks after the legislation became law, “The Immigration Fight Has Only Begun.” The article offered “lessons” from the “McCarran-Walter Setback” for the future of immigration policy in America.²

As his actions in the final months of his presidential term reflected, Truman agreed with Handlin. In September 1952, he created by executive order a Commission on Immigration and Naturalization charged with evaluating and making recommendations on U.S. immigration and naturalization policies “desirable in the interests of the economy, security and responsibilities of this country.”³ The President stated his belief that America’s immigration and naturalization policies were “of major importance to [the

¹ Averell Harriman, Director for Mutual Security, to President Harry S. Truman, June 21, 1952, reprinted in Raymond H. Geselbracht, “Harry S. Truman and Immigration: A Graphic Essay Based on the Holdings of the Harry S. Truman Library,” in Roger Daniels, ed., *Immigration and the Legacy of Harry S. Truman* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2010), 83.

² Oscar Handlin, “The Immigration Fight Has Only Begun,” *Commentary* 14 (July 1952): 1-7.

³ U.S. President Truman, “Special Message to the Congress Transmitting Report of the President’s Commission on Immigration and Naturalization,” January 13, 1953.

United States'] own security and to the defense of the free world.”⁴ His statement reaffirmed the central importance of U.S. foreign policy imperatives to the formulation of American immigration and naturalization laws.

Through the 1950s and early 1960s, Presidents echoed the priority of foreign policy imperatives, citing America’s Cold War interests in Asia and other parts of the non-white world in relation to U.S. immigration policy. The Commission’s final report, *Whom Shall We Welcome* (1953), laid out an expansive vision for reform that anticipated many of the changes to come in the 1965 Immigration and Nationality, or Hart-Celler, Act, including elimination of the 1920s-established national origins quotas.⁵ The 1965 Act created in their place a preference system based on immigrants’ skills and family reunification. Supporters of the measure welcomed the change, but scholars have called the liberal nature of the legislation into question.⁶

Scholars and media observers alike frequently describe the 1965 Act as a “watershed” in U.S. history, as well as in the words of a 2008 *Boston Globe* article, the “most important piece of legislation that no one’s ever heard of.”⁷ In the 1950s, 153,000 immigrants (or 6% of the overall flow) entering the United States were of Asian descent;

⁴ “Order Creating the Commission,” September 4, 1952, reprinted in U.S. President’s Commission on Immigration and Naturalization, *Whom Shall We Welcome* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1953), 272-273.

⁵ Act of 1965, *Public Law 89–236*. U.S. President’s Commission on Immigration and Naturalization, *Whom Shall We Welcome* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1953).

⁶ For a discussion of why the 1965 Act was not the liberal watershed it is often described to be, see Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), Chapter 7.

⁷ See, for example, Pyong-Gap Min, ed., *Asian Americans: Contemporary Trends and Issues* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing, 1995), 267. Quoted in Peter S. Canellos, “Obama victory took root in Kennedy-inspired Immigration Act,” *Boston Globe*, November 11, 2008, A2.

in the 1970s, those numbers had risen to 1.6 million or 35% of legal immigration.⁸ Scholars debate whether the 1965's Act's framers anticipated the legislation's dramatic consequences. According to historian David Reimers, the consequences of the legislation were sweeping, but they were not planned.⁹ More recently, legal scholar Gabriel Chin has challenged this view, arguing that lawmakers clearly recognized the likelihood of an influx of Asian immigrants to the United States, and that they supported the measure in clear anticipation of this shift.¹⁰ Regardless of the vision of the framers of the 1965 Act, it has transformed U.S. demographics.

Asian Americans and the Immigration Debate After 1952

Several major developments both at home and abroad shaped the immigration debate in America during the thirteen-year period between passage of the McCarran-Walter Act in 1952 and the enactment of the Hart-Celler Act in 1965. The first of these was the escalation of Cold War tensions that cemented the centrality of national security concerns in discussion of immigration reform. Asia emerged as a key site of Cold War

⁸ Figures taken from Charles B. Keely, "The Immigration Act of 1965," in Hyung-Chan Kim, ed., *Asian Americans and Congress: A Documentary History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 530-532.

⁹ As evidence, Reimers quoted the words of President Lyndon Johnson upon his signing of the Hart-Celler bill at the foot of the Statue of Liberty on Ellis Island in October 1965. In Johnson's own words, the Hart-Celler legislation was "not a revolutionary bill. It does not affect the lives of millions. It will not reshape the structure of our daily lives, or really add importantly to either our wealth or our power." On the other hand, Johnson's words were arguably intended to mollify the fears of U.S. lawmakers and other opponents of the measure. President Lyndon B. Johnson's Remarks at the Signing of the 1965 Hart-Celler Act, October 3, 1965, reprinted in David Reimers, "An Unintended Reform: The 1965 Immigration Act and Third World Immigration to the United States," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 3:1 (Fall 1983): 17.

¹⁰ For the two main sides in this debate, see David Reimers, "An Unintended Reform: The 1965 Immigration Act and Third World Immigration to the United States," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 3:1 (Fall 1983): 9-28 and Gabriel J. Chin, "The Civil Rights Revolution Comes to Immigration Law: A New Look at the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965," *75 North Carolina Law Review* 1 (November 1996): 273-345.

conflict when, two years after an armistice ended the fighting in Korea, the Sino-Soviet split in 1955 formalized Washington's recognition of an Asian – and specifically, Chinese and North Korean – Communist threat independent of Moscow.¹¹ During the same period, U.S. military involvement in Vietnam steadily deepened, and conflict at home about that involvement deepened as well.

The admission of Hawaii into the Union as America's fiftieth state in 1959 also represented a major development impacting immigration debates, by changing the culture of Congress. For the first time, U.S.-born citizens of Asian descent joined the elite ranks of the U.S. House and Senate as equal voting members.¹² Hawaii had long served as a hotbed of lobbying and fundraising for the repeal campaigns. Now Chinese and Japanese American officials like Hiram Fong, Daniel Inouye, and (later) Spark Matsunaga led the fight for immigration reform firsthand from their positions of power on Capitol Hill; Fong did so as the only Hawaii Senator ever to serve on the Senate Judiciary Committee, which oversaw immigration and naturalization policy.¹³ They joined the handful of Asian American witnesses who spoke in support of immigration-related reform measures at executive and legislative hearings throughout the 1952-1965 period.¹⁴

¹¹ Stalin's death in 1953 also led to significant shifts within Soviet Communism itself.

¹² For more on the importance of Hawaiian statehood to conceptions of Asian American citizenship, see Ellen D. Wu, *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), Chapter 7.

¹³ For example, see Hiram Fong's testimony at U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Immigration and Naturalization, *S. 1932 and Other Legislation Relating to Immigration Quota System, Volume 2*, 88th Cong., 2nd sess., 1964, 58-89.

¹⁴ Asian American witnesses at the various hearings represented the *Chicago Shimpō* (The Chicago Japanese American News), Japanese American Citizens League, Chinese American Citizens Alliance, Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association of New York, Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association and Chamber of Commerce of San Francisco, and the American Legion of California, among other entities.

While southern and eastern Euro-American groups directed their energies toward abolition of the national origins quotas and, to a lesser extent, refugee policy, Asian Americans focused on issues related to refugees and deportation in about equal measure. With Southern Democrats and conservative committee barons blocking comprehensive reform, immigration activists had the most success in lobbying for policy on admitting displaced persons into the United States. While their voting power never rivaled that of Euro-Americans, Chinese Americans skillfully leveraged their connections to both U.S. and Chinese Nationalist officials to press for the admission of Chinese under Congressional and executive refugee policies.¹⁵ Using the logic of anticommunism, the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association spearheaded campaigns for the inclusion of Chinese Nationalists fleeing Communist China under newly passed refugee legislation. Their moderate success included the 1953 Refugee Relief Act permitting the entry of 2,777 Chinese, and a 1960 Fair Share Law allowing for the immigration of 4,500 Chinese refugees from Hong Kong.¹⁶

Asian American activism in the arena of deportation policy sought to address injustices related to the government's harassment and deportation of Asian-born individuals suspected of having Communist ties and/or holding Communist beliefs. The 1950 McCarran Security Act and 1952 McCarran-Walter Act together strengthened the

¹⁵ Mae M. Ngai, "Legacies of Exclusion: Illegal Chinese Immigration During the Cold War Years," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 18:1 (Fall 1998): 20-21.

¹⁶ In assessing the impact of refugee laws pertaining to Chinese immigration on the 1965 Act, historian Madeline Hsu has observed that a significant portion of the opposition to the McCarran-Walter legislation came from groups that targeted the measure's inability to account for the problem of refugees. The problem of displaced persons was increasingly seen as an especially egregious failing within the context of America's Cold War security interests abroad. Madeline Y. Hsu, "The Disappearance of America's Cold War Chinese Refugees, 1948-1966," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 31:4 (Summer 2012): 17-18; David Reimers, "An Unintended Reform: The 1965 Immigration Act and Third World Immigration to the United States," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 3:1 (Fall 1983): 13-14.

government's powers to deport and even denaturalize foreign-born subversives. Asian American organizations, such as the Korean National Revolutionary Party in Los Angeles, partnered with progressive groups like the ACLU to contest the constitutionality of these state practices and rally in support of Asian American civil rights.¹⁷ The Chinese American Citizens Association (CACA) and the Nisei Progressives did the same for suspected subversives within the Chinese and Japanese American communities, respectively.¹⁸

While the Nisei Progressives fought deportation, the staunchly anticommunist JACL and other Japanese Americans remained active in Washington, advocating for Hawaiian statehood and general civil rights legislation. In 1952, the League's Washington representative Mike Masaoka began a career as a professional lobbyist, opening his own public relations firm called Mike M. Masaoka Consultants.¹⁹ Masaoka's subsequent appearances and statements in the media prompted debates within the JACL's ranks and leadership regarding the organization's proper role in relationship to U.S. international affairs. This controversy highlighted the continued ambivalence of Asian American citizenship even after the end of formal exclusion.

As the most prominent Asian American organization to support the 1952 McCarran-Walter measure, the JACL gained widespread recognition (as well as

¹⁷ See Cindy Cheng, *Citizens of Asian America: Democracy and Race During the Cold War* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), Chapter 4.

¹⁸ According to Cheng, CACA leaders consciously emulated the JACL's public relations campaigns to improve and rehabilitate the public image of Chinese Americans in an effort to prevent the possibility of Chinese internment in the Japanese American (World War II) mold. For more, see Cheng, *Citizens of Asian America*, Chapter 5. On the Nisei Progressives, see Ellen D. Wu, *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), Chapter 3.

¹⁹ See Mike Masaoka and Bill Hosokawa, *They Call Me Moses Masaoka: An American Saga* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1987), 253-255, 267-280.

notoriety) on both sides of the Pacific for its role in lobbying for the legislation's passage.²⁰ Mike Masaoka, who spearheaded the national campaign as the JACL's Washington representative, received much of the credit. Desiring to capitalize on the goodwill the McCarran-Walter Act's victory won for the JACL, JACL leaders debated a proposal in 1952 to send Masaoka to Japan as an envoy of the League. Supporters of the plan argued that the welfare and treatment of Japanese Americans depended on U.S.-Japan relations, making any contacts Masaoka might forge with Japanese officials and business leaders useful. But former JACL president Saburo Kido warned that Japan might seek to use the JACL "as a tool." Others joined him in reiterating that the JACL had been created on behalf of Japanese *Americans*, not Japanese.²¹ The proposal was tabled after heated discussion, but the larger issue of the League's official stance on foreign affairs remained a point of contention throughout the 1950s.²²

The debate was ostensibly resolved in 1957 with the establishment of a National Committee on International Relations. The following year, several figures affiliated with the JACL, such as Masaoka and former JACL president Saburo Kido, helped oversee the formation of the American Committee on Japan as a separate group dedicated to U.S.-Japan affairs. Both entities claimed to speak for the Japanese American community in

²⁰ Masaoka, *They Call Me Moses Masaoka*, 236-237.

²¹ JACL, Official Convention Minutes, 1952, quoted in Wu, *The Color of Success*, Chapter 3.

²² In the meantime, the JACL had its commitments repeatedly called into question. The 1956 release from prison of Iva "Tokyo Rose" Toguri d'Aquino, one of the young *Nisei* women stranded in Japan during World War II who had worked for Radio Tokyo delivering Axis propaganda as an announcer for its English-language broadcasts, evoked a heated exchange in publications including *Newsweek* and the JACL's *Pacific Citizen* newspaper over Japanese American loyalty. JACL spokespersons vehemently defended *Nisei* loyalty to the United States, seeking to silence voices within the Japanese American community that were pledging allegiance to Japan. See Wu, *The Color of Success*, Chapter 3.

international matters. Their creation reflected the League's recognition that U.S. relations with Japan would guide the fate of Japanese America.²³

Apart from the JACL, Asian American organizations involved in the repeal movement generally diminished in influence over the following decades. The state deportation of leaders like Diamond Kimm and other left-wing Koreans all but dismantled the Korean National Revolutionary Party by 1956. The Korean National Association (KNA), the oldest Korean organization in the United States, continued to exist, but throughout the 1950s, internal factionalism and government harassment of its suspected pro-communist elements weakened it. ROK president Syngman Rhee continued to suppress criticism of his government by Koreans in the United States by branding them communist sympathizers and punishing any dissenters by making them ineligible to visit South Korea.²⁴ Community repression was especially strong in Hawaii, Rhee's former base of power. When popular protest forced Rhee from office in April 1960, many Korean Americans could visit South Korea for the first time in decades.²⁵

By the early 1970s, KNA membership had dropped to record low levels, and the group's focus turned inward to social and cultural affairs within the community and away from politics. Few U.S.-born Korean Americans maintained KNA membership, and the overwhelming majority of Korean immigrants in the 1950s and early 1960s came as military brides and adoptees. These newcomers generally settled far from the largest

²³ For more on the JACL's ties to Japan, see Masaoka, *They Call Me Moses Masaoka*, Chapter 13.

²⁴ Wayne Patterson, *The Ilse: First-generation Korean Immigrants in Hawai'i, 1903-1973* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 212-214.

²⁵ That is not to say that political dissent ended in the United States. Korean American communities became a center of opposition to Park Chung Hee, the military general who led South Korea from 1963 to 1979.

Korean American communities in Hawaii and California and did not seek out organizations like the KNA.

The India League of America (ILA) maintained an active voice in U.S. foreign affairs through the 1950s. Even after India became formally independent (and Great Britain helped establish Pakistan as a separate Muslim state) in 1947, Singh and the ILA remained outspoken, anti-colonial voices for the Indonesian and Indochinese independence movements.²⁶ The ILA's efforts benefited from the reputation it had built during the 1940s through its campaign for Indian independence and the Luce-Celler immigration bill. Singh and the ILA develop a closer relationship with Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian National Congress leader who became India's first Prime Minister.²⁷ In 1952, the *New York Times Magazine* published J.J. Singh's essay, "How to Win Friends in Asia." The piece arguably marked the pinnacle of Singh's career as a bridge between the United States and India.²⁸ When Singh returned to India in 1959, the ILA's influence waned until it eventually went defunct.

Dalip Singh Saund took up Singh's mantle to some extent. A Punjabi Sikh, Saund originally came to the United States in 1920 to study agriculture but instead earned a mathematics doctorate at the University of California at Berkeley. After graduating in 1924, Saund spent the next three decades as a lettuce farmer in California's Imperial

²⁶ The ILA practiced what historian Robert Shaffer has described as a "nuanced" or "liberal" anti-communist approach that refused membership to known and suspected communists on the one hand, but did not hesitate to criticize U.S. policies that appeared racist or colonial in nature on the other. Robert Shaffer, "J.J. Singh and the India League of America, 1945-1959: Pressing at the Margins of the Cold War Consensus," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 31:2 (Winter 2012): 81-85.

²⁷ For example, in 1949, the ILA cosponsored one of Nehru's public appearances in New York City. *Ibid.*, 80.

²⁸ J.J. Singh, "How to Win Friends in Asia," *New York Times Magazine*, September 28, 1952.

Valley. In 1949, he became a U.S. citizen under the citizenship provisions of the 1946 Luce-Celler Act, which J.J. Singh and the ILA had championed.²⁹ In 1956, the 29th District of California elected Saund to the U.S. House of Representatives, where he served as the first U.S. Congressman of Asian descent in American history. He served three terms from January 1957 to January 1963.³⁰ Saund's Congressional career stands as a testament to the gains that repeal made possible.

* * * * *

Writing in 1969, JACL historian Bill Hosokawa revisited Asian Americans' quintessential dilemma when he posed the question, "Must it be inevitable that when some irritant from Tokyo causes Washington to sneeze, the *Nisei* will run a fever?" Hosokawa argued that it should not. Nikkei should have "control over their own destiny;" he called the idea "futile and fatalistic" that Japanese Americans' fates were "tied in perpetuity to the land of his ancestors because of white America's racism."³¹

Evidence suggest Hosokawa had reason to hope. On many measures, Asian Americans are moving toward acceptance as equal members of the U.S. body politic. As one example, a National Public Radio program asked in August 2012 if it could be the "Year of the Asian Voter."³² Quoting political scientist Janelle Wong, the piece predicted that Asian Americans' increasing tendency to congregate in swing states, combined with

²⁹ Saund also supported the Luce-Celler campaign from his home on the West Coast. Although far removed from Washington, DC, West Coast Indian communities provided significant financial support for the ILA effort. Premdatta Varma, *Indian Immigrants in USA* (New Delhi: Heritage Publishers, 1995), 294.

³⁰ For more, see Dalip Singh Saund, *Congressman From India* (New York: Dutton, 1960).

³¹ Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1969), 497.

³² National Public Radio, "Could 2012 Be the Year of the Asian Voter?," August 5, 2012. It bears noting that the piece used the term "Asian voter" rather than "*Asian American*."

their growing numbers and high rates of naturalization and voting, would make them a growing political force in the future.

At the same time, there is reason to remain sober. A recent *New Yorker* piece, citing the rise and intensity of anti-Chinese messages in rotation before Election Day, described 2012 as the year when “China-bashing went mainstream.”³³ Not since the early 1980s, when “Japan bashing” became commonplace and advocates launched “Made in the USA” campaigns to counter Japan’s inroads into American markets, has an Asian people featured so centrally in U.S. political campaigns and media as a racialized threat to American prosperity and security in the world. The episode in the 1980s gave rise to racial violence at home, such as when two laid-off auto workers from Detroit beat American-born Chinese Vincent Chin to death, making him a target for their anger at the Japanese car companies then undercutting American brands. The incident made clear that the assumption of an indelible racial link connecting Asian Americans to Asia still mattered. It is worth thinking about how similar perceptions, based on race, are still relevant today, even if the target group has changed.³⁴

³³ Evan Osnos, “The Year China-Bashing Went Mainstream,” *New Yorker*, November 6, 2012, accessed May 2, 2013, <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/evanosnos/2012/11/the-year-that-china-bashing-went-mainstream.html>.

³⁴ See, for example, Murtaza Hussain, “Anti-Muslim Violence Spiraling Out of Control in America,” December 31, 2012, *Al Jazeera News*, accessed May 1, 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/12/20121230135815198642.html>

APPENDIX A

Select U.S. Immigration Laws Pertaining to the Repeal of Asian Exclusion, 1943-1965

- 1943 *Magnuson Act, Public Law 78-199 (57 Stat. 600)*
Repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act, established an annual immigration (race-based) quota of 105 for Chinese, and made Chinese eligible for U.S. citizenship.
- 1946 *Luce-Celler Act, 8 U.S.C.A. 703 (60 Stat. 416)*
Provided annual immigration (race-based) quotas of 100 to Indians and Filipinos, respectively, and made both groups eligible for U.S. citizenship.
- 1946 *Chinese War Brides Act, Public Law 79-713 (60 Stat. 975)*
Permitted Chinese alien wives of U.S. citizens to enter the United States as non-quota immigrants.
- 1947 *Alien Fiancés and Fiancées Act, or Soldier Bride Act, Public Law 213-289 (80 Stat. 190)*
Amended War Brides Act of 1945 to allow Japanese wives of U.S. GIs to enter the United States despite the general restriction on Japanese immigration under the 1924 Immigration Act.
- 1952 *McCarran-Walter (Immigration and Nationality) Act, Public Law 82-414 (66 Stat. 163)*
Created the Asia-Pacific Triangle to replace the Asiatic Barred Zone, granting all Asian powers annual (race-based) immigration quotas (usually between 100 to 185) with an overall ceiling of 2,000 immigrants from Asia; struck down all racial restrictions to U.S. citizenship; and strengthened the power of the federal government to deport (and denaturalize) suspected subversives.
- 1953 *Refugee Relief Act, Public Law 203 (67 Stat. 400)*
Allocated 214,000 non-quota refugee visas, including 2,000 to Chinese, and enabled several thousand Chinese living in the United States to adjust their status to permanent residence and citizenship. In total, 2,777 Chinese refugees entered the U.S. under this Act.
- 1965 *Immigration and Nationality (Hart-Celler) Act, Public Law 89-236 (79 Stat. 911)*
Abolished the national origins quota system and replaced it with a series of preferences based on immigrants' skills and family reunification; under the revised system, Asians have comprised 40% of all legal immigrants to the United States since the early 1970s.

APPENDIX B

Population and Immigration Tables

TABLE 1 Chinese American Population with Immigration by Decade and the Immigration Law in Effect, 1900-1980

DECADE ENDING	POPULATION	IMMIGRATION OVER PRIOR DECADE	LAW IN EFFECT IN PRIOR DECADE
1900	118,746	14,799	Chinese Exclusion Act
1910	94,414	20,605	Chinese Exclusion Act
1920	85,202	21,278	Chinese Exclusion Act
1930	102,159	29,907	Chinese Exclusion Act and 1924 Act
1940	106,334	4,928	Chinese Exclusion Act and 1924 Act
1950	150,005	16,709	1924 Act until Magnuson Act in 1943
1960	464,332	25,201	Magnuson Act, then 1952 Act
1970	591,290	109,771	1952 Act until 1965 amendments
1980	716,331	237,793	1965 amendments
1990	847,562	446,000	1965 amendments

SOURCE: Adapted from Bill Ong Hing, *Making and Remaking Asian America Through Immigration Policy, 1850-1990* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 48.

TABLE 2 Asian Indian Population with Immigration by Decade and the Immigration Law in Effect, 1900-1980¹

DECADE ENDING	POPULATION	IMMIGRATION OVER PRIOR DECADE	LAW IN EFFECT IN PRIOR DECADE
1900		68	Open immigration
1910	5,424	4,713	Open immigration
1920		2,082	Open, then Asiatic Barred Zone of 1917 Act
1930	3,130	1,886	1924 Act
1940	2,405	496	1924 Act
1950		1,761	1924 Act, then Luce-Celler quota in 1946
1960	12,296	1,973	1946 quota, then 1952 Act
1970	72,500	27,189	1952 Act until 1965 amendments
1980	387,223	164,134	1965 amendments
1990	815,447	147,900	1965 amendments

SOURCE: Adapted from Hing, *Making and Remaking Asian America Through Immigration Policy*, 70.

¹ The term “Asian Indian” includes natives of India, Pakistan (after its creation in 1947), and Bangladesh (after its creation in 1971).

TABLE 3 Korean American Population with Immigration by Decade and the Immigration Law in Effect, 1900-1980

DECADE ENDING	POPULATION	IMMIGRATION OVER PRIOR DECADE	LAW IN EFFECT DURING PRIOR DECADE
1900			
1910	5,008		Open until Gentleman's Agreement (1907)
1920	6,181		Gentleman's Agreement (1907)
1930	8,332		Gentleman's Agreement (1907) until 1924 Act
1940	8,568		1924 Act
1950 ²	7,030		1924 Act
1960	11,000	7,025	1924 Act until 1952 Act
1970	69,150	34,526	1952 Act until 1965 amendments
1980	357,393	267,638	1965 amendments
1990	798,849	336,000	1965 amendments

SOURCE: Adapted from Hing, *Making and Remaking Asian America Through Immigration Policy*, 66.

² The INS did not count Koreans separately until 1948.

TABLE 4 Japanese American Population with Immigration by Decade and the Immigration Law in Effect, 1900-1980

DECADE ENDING	POPULATION	IMMIGRATION OVER PRIOR DECADE	LAW IN EFFECT DURING PRIOR DECADE
1900	85,716	25,942	Open immigration
1910	152,745	129,797	Open immigration until Gentleman's Agreement (1907)
1920	220,596	83,837	Gentleman's Agreement (1907)
1930	278,743	33,462	Gentleman's Agreement (1907) until 1924 Act
1940	285,115	1,948	1924 Act
1950	326,379	1,555	1924 Act
1960	464,332	46,250	1924 Act until 1952 Act
1970	591,290	39,988	1952 Act until 1965 amendments
1980	716,331	49,775	1965 amendments
1990	847,562	44,800	1965 amendments

SOURCE: Adapted from Hing, *Making and Remaking Asian America Through Immigration Policy*, 54.

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