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# Educating the enemy: Chinese students and the Sino-American Cold War, 1948-1955

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**Educating the enemy:  
Chinese students and the Sino-American Cold War, 1948-1955**

by

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A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
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Saboteur

A note on transliteration: Names and places in this paper have been transliterated using the Pinyin system. However, in a few instances, names popularized under the Wade-Giles system, such as Chiang Kai-shek, have been left under the Wade-Giles system of transliteration. References to individuals or places from quotations have been left in their original transliteration with the Pinyin transliteration placed in brackets next to them.

## ABSTRACT

In response to the People's Republic of China's intervention in the Korean War, the United States terminated education exchange programs and detained scientifically and technically trained Chinese students and intellectuals living in America. This response was partly an exigency of the war but was also reflective of the broader Sino-American Cold War. Utilizing archival material from the Truman and Eisenhower Presidential Archives, as well as published government documents, this paper traces the shifting patterns of American thought regarding education exchange and the utility of Chinese intellectuals and argues that the American government politicized Chinese students as early as the remission of the Boxer Indemnity Fund in 1905 but came to actively utilize them during the Cold War in an attempt to wage an intellectual war against the PRC. By retaining Chinese students, the United States hoped to deny China advanced scientific and technical information. It also finds that the pressures of constraining a large cohort of stateless individuals, whose technically illegal residence in the United States placed considerable administrative and financial burdens on the American government, led, in part, to enactment of immigration reforms during the early to mid-1950s.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In early October 1950, the *SS President Cleveland*, its magnificent blue and red smokestacks billowing acrid, black smoke, pulled out of port in Los Angeles and began its two-week journey to Hong Kong. Ji Chaozhu stood on the deck and leaned against the railing. He watched the shrinking Californian coastline disappear with an ambiguous feeling. Watching the coastline melt into the horizon, he wondered if it would be the last time he laid eyes on the United States. He was leaving his adopted home of twelve years for an uncertain future in the newly formed People's Republic of China (PRC). But his sense of duty called him back. A self-professed Communist, Ji was elated at the chance to work in the construction of "New China," a chance he knew required him to leave his mother behind in New York and make the long journey to Beijing.

On October 25, 1950, after two weeks at sea, Ji and his fellow Chinese passengers filed off the ship along a separate gangplank, isolated from those who were to remain in Hong Kong. Flanked by tall, turbaned Sikh policemen, the cohort of a dozen or so Chinese students were loaded onto a train and escorted to Luo Hu Station at the Hong Kong border. There, Ji and his fellow Chinese, to the sounds of cheering and the song "The East is Red" blaring over loudspeakers, crossed a small bridge into Mainland China. Arriving without incident, they returned to fulfill their various roles in the creation of the newly emergent Chinese state.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ji Chaozhu, *The Man on Mao's Right: From Harvard Yard to Tiananmen Square, My Life Inside China's Foreign Ministry* (New York: Random House, 2008), 60-69.

Back in California, however, another Chinese scholar, Qian Xuesen, was living under house arrest and preparing for a legal battle that brought charges against him of being a Communist and a spy. Qian, an expert in rocketry and a scientist at the California Institute of Technology, had originally planned to fly back to China via Canada and Hong Kong in August 1950. Qian loaded his books and personal papers into crates and arranged to have them shipped to his home in Shanghai through a freight company. He purchased a plane ticket and prepared to make his voyage home. Yet, on August 23, agents from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) delivered to Qian an order to remain in the country and confiscated eight crates of Qian's personal papers and books. Two weeks later, on September 7, 1950, Qian was arrested and imprisoned at an INS detention facility in Los Angeles on charges of being a Communist and attempted smuggling of top-secret documents, weapons diagrams, and photos of jet engines into China.<sup>2</sup>

Qian would spend the next five years trapped in the United States, disallowed from leaving the country, repeatedly interrogated and questioned about his political affiliations, and constantly monitored by the FBI. His books and personal papers, which US customs had impounded, were denied to him for two years and he was forbidden from leaving Los Angeles. When he finally returned to China in late 1955, Qian wrote that the American government's actions reminded him of an old Chinese adage: "Speak words of justice and moral integrity; harbor the intents of thieves and whores."<sup>3</sup> Qian's displeasure with the American government

<sup>2</sup> "Chinese Jet Expert Held as Alien Red," *The New York Times*, September 8, 1950, 12. See also Hsue-shen Tien, "Wo Zai Meiguo De Zaoyu [My bitter experience in the United States]," in *Bazhishe xiangei zhuguo* [Intellectual contributions for the homeland], trans. Ellen Yeung (Hong Kong: Zhoumo Bao, 1956), 47-51. Reprinted in., *Chinese American Voices: From the Gold Rush to the Present*, eds. Judy Yung, Gordon H. Chang, and Him Mark Lai (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 247-251; For a more detailed account of Qian's experience in the United States, as well as upon his return to China, see his biography: Iris Chang, *Thread of the Silkworm* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

<sup>3</sup> Hsue-shen Tien, "My Bitter Experience...", 51.

continued through the end of his life and he never returned to the United States. Instead he dedicated the rest of his life to helping “the Chinese people build up the nation to where they can live with dignity and happiness” and assisted in the development of China’s rocketry program and atomic research.<sup>4</sup>

Both Qian and Ji’s experiences in the United States represent the bifurcated pattern of existence and treatment that Chinese students, scholars, and intellectuals received in the early Cold War era from the American government. Those, like Ji, who came to pursue undergraduate or graduate degrees in the humanities or fine arts, were often able to return to China without incident. Those, like Qian, who came in pursuit of degrees in the ‘hard sciences’ and obtained advanced degrees in scientific and technical fields, often found themselves on the receiving end of punitive measures from the American government for fear that they constituted a prejudicial threat to American national security. While neither case is ubiquitous for the experiences of Chinese in America, as many other Chinese students chose to remain in the United States or went to Taiwan, the two experiences do help illuminate American policy toward the People’s Republic of China in the early Cold War era and the expansion of the Cold War into new fronts that sought to limit and control the dissemination of scientific and technical knowledge in order to leverage it for political gain.

Between 1949 and 1955 both the American and Chinese governments attempted to use Chinese students in order to achieve both short and long-term political goals. In this way, these students represented not only a wealth of information that could be beneficial (or detrimental) to domestic industrial and scientific development, but became unwitting pawns in the international political Cold War struggle between the United States and the People’s Republic of China. While

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<sup>4</sup> Evan Osnos, “The Two Lives of Qian Xuesen,” *The New Yorker*, November 3, 2009  
<http://www.newyorker.com/news/evan-osnos/the-two-lives-of-qian-xuesen>

their political utility shifted in conjunction with Cold War considerations, the financial and administrative burdens of their retention also engendered liberalizing legislative reform to immigration policy. Exigencies of the Sino-American Cold War thus politicized Chinese students and intellectuals in the international arena and forced a more liberal restructuring of immigration policy domestically.

Scholarly attention to the Chinese experience in the United States is manifold. From the earliest Chinese sojourners to the coolies and migrant laborers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the recent émigrés of the twenty-first century, scholars have devoted forests of paper to exploring the complex and often frustrating intricacies of Sino-American cultural exchange and migration. Greatly understudied within this vast body of literature, however, are the Chinese students and intellectuals who found themselves in a state of legal limbo following the collapse of the Guomindang and establishment of the People's Republic of China.

The earliest scholarly works focusing on these individuals emerged in the mid to late-1950s. Sociological in approach, these works attempted to analyze the social implications and challenges Chinese students and intellectuals faced in their continued residence in the United States. Though generally less concerned with the political ramifications or exigencies that led to their isolation from their homeland, these studies provide valuable qualitative and quantitative data on this cohort. Samuel Kung's 1955 Columbia University dissertation stands as the seminal work in this vein.<sup>5</sup> Kung, with the assistance of advisor Dr. Clarence Linton (who was an important advocate for Chinese students and helped direct government assistance programs toward them), sent surveys to over 400 Chinese students and former students living in the New York area between 1953 and 1955. The dissertation, based on the responses of 316 Chinese

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<sup>5</sup> Samuel Shi-shin Kung, "Personal and Professional Problems of Chinese Students and Former Students in the New York Metropolitan Area" (PhD diss., Teachers College, Columbia University, 1955).



students, covered the issues they faced ranging from immigration, employment and economic concerns, educational background, and family problems. Since New York had one of the highest percentages of Chinese students, Kung's dissertation can be seen as generally indicative of the realities faced by many Chinese students living in the United States. Kung's work was mainly exploratory and sought to highlight the problems Chinese students were facing, as well as provide general recommendations on how their situation could be alleviated. Yet, its compilation of statistical data, especially concerning Chinese student attitudes toward returning to China or remaining in the United States, vastly expanded an otherwise unknown and little explored topic.<sup>6</sup>

Expanding on Kung's work, Rose Hum Lee provided the definitive sociological parameters of the Chinese student and intellectual group by coining the term "stranded Chinese." Lee determined that 1950 served as a clear delineator for this cohort "because of their uncertain legal status and because their right to stay [was] based on belonging to the student group."<sup>7</sup> This group cultivated a unique identity, distinct from the rest of the Chinese then residing in the United States. Because most came from higher socio-economic backgrounds, many with connections to the Guomindang, and because of their advanced educational level, these Chinese faced uniquely different challenges in adapting to American society and life. Taken with Kung's work, these early sociological explorations form the foundational parameters on which this study defines Chinese students and analyzes their responses to the limiting political atmosphere in early 1950s America.

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<sup>6</sup> See also: Lucy Huang, "Dating and Courtship Innovations of Chinese Students in America," *Marriage and Family Living* 18, no. 1 (February 1956), 25-29. Huang explores how the isolation from the Mainland and their families led Chinese students and intellectuals to create innovative approaches to dating as a coping mechanism. Huang also finds that the gender-ratio disparity allowed Chinese women to become more selective in their partner choosing. Finally, Huang discusses the degree to which both Chinese men and women acculturated to American society and the effect this had on dating and courtship patterns.

<sup>7</sup> Rose Hum Lee, "The Stranded Chinese in the United States," *The Phylon Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr., 1958), 181.

One of the first historical approaches to the issues surrounding Chinese students in the United States during the early Cold War was Yelong Han's "An Untold Story." Written in 1993, Han focused on the interconnected imperatives of preventing scientifically and technically trained Chinese from returning to China and adjusting immigration legislation to legalize their permanent residence in the United States. These issues were connected to the objective of preventing China's modernization through utilization of information determined to be detrimental to American national security. In this way, the long-held notion that Chinese students could be utilized as cultural channels to effect modernization paradigms in China was shattered by Cold War considerations and their knowledge became a powerful diplomatic instrument. Perceptions of Chinese students, therefore, shifted from viewing them as "democratic forces," to measures of containment, and, finally, as expedients for a repatriation agreement with the PRC.<sup>8</sup>

While Han contextualizes American policy regarding Chinese students and intellectuals within the Sino-American Cold War, the focus only on bilateral Sino-American relations obscures other considerations that factored into the shifting perceptions toward this cohort. Retention of scientifically and technically trained individuals, which began as a measure to prevent Communist China's modernization, became quickly outdated as the CCP leaned heavily on the Soviet Union for scientific and technical training and knowledge. As entire industries and pedagogical models were reconfigured to conform to Soviet methodologies, the efficacy of preventing American-educated Chinese from returning diminished. Moreover, Han's argument that the utility of Chinese students and intellectuals as "cultural channels" was smashed by Cold War considerations is similarly obfuscating. Through Voice of America broadcasts, the American government continued to rely on cultural capital, albeit more for political propaganda

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<sup>8</sup> Yelong Han, "An Untold Story: American Policy toward Chinese Students in the United States, 1949-1955," *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 2, no. 1 (Spring 1993), 77-99.

than for modernization paradigms. Valuing Chinese students for their political merit was also not only limited to the American government. Domestically, the CCP started touting the return of American-educated Chinese as early as 1951. While this early promotion of their return was generally evidenced as legitimizing the Communist Party, it also highlights the political value that the CCP placed on them. By exploring the relationship between these individuals and the Communist Party, Han's argument that the shift in perception regarding students and intellectuals as political expedients for a repatriation agreement can also be shown to be problematic. This perception, while less prevalent in the early 1950s, was present much earlier than the Geneva Talks in 1954-55 as Han suggests.

More recently, Madeline Y. Hsu has focused on Chinese students and intellectuals and the role they played in liberalizing immigration policy. Hsu maintains that exigencies of the Cold War shaped American immigration policy away from racial considerations and slowly liberalized immigration policy based on considerations of class and cultural capital, which culminated in the 1965 Immigration Act. This was a result of their proven ability to be educated in Western styles and their demonstrated capacity to attain economic parity with their white counterparts; assuaging fears that removing race-based quotas to immigration would undermine American society or upset domestic racial hierarchies.<sup>9</sup>

Hsu, however, views Chinese students and intellectuals as an aggregate and fails to distinguish between the detained cohort - those who came from the Mainland prior to 1949 and were subsequently placed under close scrutiny by the American government for suspected communist sympathies or because of their advanced knowledge - and those escaping the

<sup>9</sup> Madeline Y. Hsu, "Befriending the Yellow Peril," *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 16, no. 3 (Fall 2009), 139-62; Madeline Y. Hsu, "The Disappearance of America's Cold War Chinese Refugees, 1948-1966," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 31, no. 4 (Summer 2012), 12-33.

communist regime and coming after 1950. Focus on the detained group greatly enhances understandings of immigration policy and reform and adds much needed nuance to Hsu's assessment. Principally, the fiduciary and administrative burdens of maintaining a large, stateless cohort of individuals, coupled with active pressure from these individuals for their clearance to return home, ultimately forced the Eisenhower Administration into relaxing immigration laws and passing measures to ease their plight.

Early efforts at education exchange between the United States and China occurred through a variety of private organizations. With the exception of the Qing government's ill-fated Chinese Educational Mission in the late-nineteenth century, prior to 1938, the American government generally remained aloof from institutions of education exchange. Chapter one explores the history of Sino-American education exchange and the increasing involvement of both the Chinese and American governments in processes and institutions of education exchange from the Qing education mission to the impending collapse of the Nationalist Guomintang regime in 1948. This chapter highlights the importance American policy makers placed on the value of returning American-educated Chinese. Hoping they would return to China to effect pro-American modernization campaigns, the United States government funneled resources into cultural and education exchange.

Chapter two explores China's competing modernization campaigns by looking at both Nationalist and Communist efforts. By focusing on China's domestic considerations, this chapter highlights the value both Chinese governments placed on American-educated Chinese. Following the Guomintang retreat from Mainland China and the Communist Party's subsequent victory, American models of education and industrial methodology were eschewed in favor of Soviet models. Communist reliance on the Soviet Union thus negated American attempts to

undermine the Communist Party's modernization efforts. This chapter serves to contextualize America's response to Chinese students and intellectuals between 1950 and 1955.

Chapter three illuminates America's financial assistance program to Chinese students studying in the United States during the final collapse of the Guomindang Party. In doing so, the continuity in America's desire to return Western-educated Chinese students and intellectuals to effect change is highlighted. It also demonstrates the shift in perception toward Chinese students. Prior to 1950, it was hoped that the returning Chinese students would occupy prominent positions in industry and government and promote pro-American ideals. This notion remained constant but with the added hope that these individuals would also help undermine the Communist Party. In order to ensure that Chinese students and intellectuals could fulfill this mission, the American government increasingly saddled the financial burden of their continued study in the United States.

As Chinese volunteers entered the Korean War against the United States, American policy makers formulated a new plan to deny China access to American scientific and technical knowledge by placing interdictions on the return of American-educated Chinese. Chapter four highlights this response and the domestic pressures and challenges Chinese students and intellectuals faced in the United States. The pressures of constraining these individuals also weighed on the American government. As a result, legislation was passed to ease the burden of maintaining these individuals and allow them to apply for permanent citizenship. These reforms mark an early liberalizing of immigration reform.

Chapter five explores the international context and the political utility of Chinese students and intellectuals, from both the American and Communist Chinese perspectives. Both governments attempted to utilize these individuals for domestic and international concerns

through propaganda. Their political value ultimately manifested in diplomatic negotiations at Geneva in 1954 and 1955. Using the Chinese student issue to effect ambassadorial-level negotiations, the People's Republic of China and the United States formalized a repatriation agreement exchanging American prisoners held in China for any Chinese student who wished to return to China.

## CHAPTER 2

## SINO-AMERICAN EDUCATION EXCHANGE, 1874-1948

At the close of the nineteenth century, when the ever-rising tide of industrial development has succeeded in sweeping over Europe, America, the better portion of Africa, Western Asia, and India, it is the Chinese Wall alone that resists its waves. The movement, however, is irresistible, and not even the exclusiveness of the Chinese and their extreme disinclination to change their ways will be a sufficient protection against it.<sup>10</sup>  
- William Barclay Parsons, 1900

While Parsons was correct in determining the recalcitrance on the part of Qing government toward Western-style modernization, the assessment that the Chinese were “disinclined to change” is a fallacy. Beginning in the 1870s, the Chinese government briefly sent to the United States a small contingent of students to learn skills that were desperately needed to bring China into modernity. Though this initial educational mission ended well short of its anticipated length, it set a precedent for increasing government involvement in education exchange that continued through the first half of the twentieth century. Between 1872 and 1949, both the American and Chinese governments increasingly transformed education exchange into a state function that was used to accomplish both short and long term political goals.<sup>11</sup>

The first major exchange of students between the United States and China occurred in the late nineteenth century. An exigency of the Qing self-strengthening movement (1861-95), the Chinese Educational Mission (CEM) to the United States was sent in 1872 in order to expand upon Wei Yuan’s assertion that China must “learn from the barbarians.” Under the direction of

<sup>10</sup> Wm. Barclay Parsons, *An American Engineer in China* (New York: McClure, Phillips & Co., 1900), 15.

<sup>11</sup> Li Hongshan, *US-China Educational Exchange: State, Society, and Intercultural Relations, 1905-1950* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 2. Li argues that over the course of the early twentieth century, the Chinese and American governments increasingly involved themselves in education exchange to accomplish both domestic and foreign political goals and solve crises in diplomatic affairs. Through the “visible hand,” education exchange became a state function and therefore influenced international relations between the United States and China.

Yung Wing, the first group of 120 Chinese students was sent to the United States for extended study. Ranging in age from ten to fifteen, their benefactors expected them to engage in the study of military and naval strategies, surveying, mining, and manufacturing; skills China desperately needed and would benefit from upon their return.<sup>12</sup> However, once in the United States, the boys rapidly acclimatized to the American lifestyle and became willing and active participants in the cult of masculinity prevalent in nineteenth-century America. Baseball and football soon eclipsed educational pursuits for many of the boys, who embraced the rough physicality of sports over the Chinese scholarly way of life. Baseball, in fact, became so popular amongst the CEM boys that they fielded their own team, the Orientals, in the summer of 1876.<sup>13</sup> Yet, sports were not the only distraction. A fellow student and, later, well-renowned professor of English at Yale, observed, "these boys not only excelled us Americans at athletics; you should have seen them cutting the double eight and the grapevine! They cut us out in other ways that caused considerable heart burnings...their manner to the girls had a deferential elegance far beyond our possibilities...the fairest and most sought-out belles invariably gave the swains from the Orient the preference."<sup>14</sup>

While the Qing government was concerned about the boys' increasing Americanization, they were mostly willing to overlook these minor transgressions. But some took the process too far and engendered the ire of the Qing court by cutting their queues and embracing Christianity, unequivocally forbidden acts according to the Qing government. This, combined with growing

<sup>12</sup> Michael H. Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and China to 1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 60.

<sup>13</sup> Edward J.M. Rhoads, *Stepping Forth into the World: The Chinese Educational Mission to the United States, 1872-81* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), 144-45.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted from *William Lyon Phelps: Autobiography and Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), 56-59 in *A Survey of Chinese Students in American Universities and Colleges in the Past One Hundred Years* (New York: China Institute in America, 1954), 15.



anti-Chinese sentiment across the United States and generally poor management of the education mission, led to the disbanding of the group and recalling of the mission in 1881.<sup>15</sup>

The recall of the Chinese Education Mission coincided with the passing of a flurry of conservative and harshly punitive anti-Chinese legislation. Domestically, in 1862, the United States prohibited the importation of Chinese workers aboard American vessels in an attempt to limit the spread of the ‘Yellow Peril.’ Eight years later, Congress approved the Naturalization Act, which disallowed Chinese from obtaining American citizenship. The Page Act of 1875 further limited immigration of Chinese, Japanese, and other peoples of Asia in an effort to stop the importation of forced laborers from the Asian continent. Finally, in 1880, the American and Chinese governments signed the Angell Treaty, with the express purpose of limiting the expansion of Chinese immigration to the United States. It stipulated that the American government withheld the right to regulate, limit, or suspend any Chinese immigration (though not completely prohibit it) when the immigration of Chinese workers threatened the ‘interests’ of the United States or any locality within.<sup>16</sup> However, the punitive measures of the treaty were strictly regulated to Chinese laborers and migrant workers and exemptions were enacted under Article II of the treaty, which allowed for the continuation of students, teachers, merchants, and “curious travelers” to come to the United States.<sup>17</sup>

Scarcely two years later, on May 6, 1882, less than a year after the Chinese Education Mission was recalled to China, the Forty-Seventh Congress of the United States passed, and President Chester A. Arthur signed into law, the Chinese Exclusion Act, which prohibited all immigration of Chinese laborers. Though not directly intended to do so, the act had the dual

<sup>15</sup> Rhoads, 168-69.

<sup>16</sup> “Treaty between the United States and China, concerning immigration,” November 17, 1880, *US Statutes at Large* 22 1881/1883, art. 1 (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1883), 826.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 827.

effect of severely curtailing education exchange with China as well. For the following twenty-three years, between the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act and the remission of the Boxer Indemnity Fund in 1905 (which was granted for the explicit use in education exchange), scarcely forty-nine Chinese students made their way to the United States to study.<sup>18</sup> It would take a coalition army storming Beijing to quell the anti-foreign Boxer Rebellion and the subsequent massive indemnities demanded of the Chinese government to reinstate education exchange between the United States and China.

Writing in the turbulent summer of 1900, Eva Jane Price, a missionary from Des Moines, Iowa, recorded her family's experience:

The whole province has been in a terrible state of unrest, for which the wicked Governor who did so much harm in Shan Tung [Shandong] last year is responsible. He is determined to exterminate the foreigners. In the latter part of June the place in Tai Yuen fu [Taiyuan] belonging to Dr. Edwards (English) was mobbed and burned. The foreigners fled to another place belonging to the English Baptist mission and on the street defended their lives by using firearms, killing a number of the mob, some say six, others say more. The Governor, who lives in that same city, vowed he would take three lives of foreigners for every Chinese killed. Miss Coombs lost her life at the time of the mob as she did not seem to escape when the others did. She was struck senseless and her body thrown in the burning building...Thirty-three of our friends, most of whom we know personally and including the two older children of Mr. Atwater of our mission who were in Shou Yang [Shouyang] in school, were beheaded in the presence of the Governor on July 8. Among the thirty-three lives were those of twelve children and two pregnant women soon expecting confinement.<sup>19</sup>

– Eva Jane Price, August 1, 1900

The Boxer uprising in 1900 exploded with violent force as a direct backlash against foreign aggression within China. The secret Chinese martial arts group known as the “Righteous Harmonious Fists,” or “Boxers,” as they were pejoratively named by foreigners in China, laid

<sup>18</sup> *A Survey of Chinese in American Universities and Colleges in the Past 100 Years* (New York: China Institute in America, 1954), 26.

<sup>19</sup> Virginia E. Phipps, Vernal L. Wilson, and Velma A. Caruth, *China Journal 1889-1900: An American Missionary Family During the Boxer Rebellion* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1989), 235, 241-42. On August 15, 1900 Eva Jane Price and her family were to be escorted to safety under a Chinese guard. Leaving Fenzhou they were escorted roughly twenty miles toward the small village of Nan'an Shih where a second contingent of soldiers lay in wait to ambush the unsuspecting missionaries. As the group arrived at the small village the escorting guards and second contingent of soldiers turned on the missionaries and murdered the entire party, leaving their stripped corpses in a ditch on the side of the road.

siege to the foreign legations in Beijing, Tianjin and other foreign institutions in the Chinese countryside in the summer of 1900. Believing the rebellion provided an opportunity to once again gain legitimacy for the Qing government, the Empress Dowager Cixi allied with and goaded on the rebels. Between June and August, the Boxers executed hundreds of foreigners, thousands of Chinese Christian converts, and harassed numerous others with constant barrages of rifle fire before an international coalition army was called in to quell the uprising.<sup>20</sup>

Following the destructive summer, the foreign powers met to extract from China indemnities for their respective expenditures during the march to Beijing and in commercial and private property damage and loss.<sup>21</sup> The Boxer Protocol, a harshly punitive “agreement” between the Qing and foreign nations was signed in 1901, forced large reparations onto the Chinese government, made them wholly dependent on foreign powers, and led to an enlargement, fortifying, and garrisoning of the legation in Beijing and along the railroads.<sup>22</sup> America’s share of the indemnity, personally dictated by Secretary of State John Hay, was nearly double its actual value. While Hay most likely claimed such a large number as a bargaining chip for other concessions, his failure to get them left China in considerable debt to the United States. Hay and President William McKinley immediately set forth a plan to remit the excess funds back to China. However, it took another seven years to do so.

<sup>20</sup> For a detailed account of the experience in the foreign legation in Beijing during the Boxer Rebellion see: Miner Luella, "Prisoners in Peking (1900)," in *American History Told By Contemporaries V.5* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929), 128-132. Originally published as "A Prisoner in Peking," in *Outlook*, November 10, 17, 24, 1900 (New York), 641-71. For a more detailed experience of missionaries in the Chinese interior during the uprising see:

<sup>20</sup> Virginia E. Phipps, Vernal L. Wilson, and Velma A. Caruth, *China Journal 1889-1900: An American Missionary Family During the Boxer Rebellion* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1989).

<sup>21</sup> For a more in depth analysis of the remission of the Boxer Indemnity Fund see Michael H. Hunt, "The American Remission of the Boxer Indemnity Fund: A Reappraisal," *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 31, No. 3 (May 1972), 539-59.

<sup>22</sup> John King Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution: 1800-1985* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1987), 137-38.

The task fell to Liang Cheng, Chinese Minister to the United States, in 1905. Between 1905 and 1909, Liang worked in Washington to prove that the United States claimed far more than its actual share of the indemnity and to have the excess remitted to the Chinese government, which was in desperate financial straits. In mid-1907, Liang convinced President Theodore Roosevelt to audit the Navy and Army accounts of their expenditures during the Boxer Rebellion. President Roosevelt quickly discovered that the Army had drastically inflated their claim and Liang moved to convince the Roosevelt Administration to move expeditiously toward resolving the indemnity question. Yet, the two sides soon reached another barricade as both had differing ideas of what the money should be used for.

For their part, the Chinese government believed that the money should be remitted without condition. Congress, concerned that the money would end up in someone else's hands, wanted the remitted funds used for education. This view was championed by William W. Rockhill, Commissioner to China during the Boxer Indemnity proceedings from 1900-1901. Americans favored this plan because it not only precluded the possibility that the money would be spent in Manchuria (China's burgeoning industrial center in the northeast), or other problem areas that would see the money squandered, but it would also give the United States "the intellectual and spiritual domination of its leaders."<sup>23</sup> Moreover, many believed that Western "education will sweep away the incrustations that hamper progress, and as each improvement in the ranks of the official class occurs, such addition will hasten the advance and spread of education. Thus the downfall of one will go hand in hand with the rise of the other."<sup>24</sup> For most

<sup>23</sup> Arthur H. Smith, *China and America Today: A Study of Conditions and Relations* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1907), 218.

<sup>24</sup> Parsons, 311-12.

in Washington, the remittance of the Boxer Indemnity Fund was a measure to ensure Beijing's submission to America's influence.

Many in the United States believed that the Chinese coming to America would "be studying American institutions, making American friends, and coming back [to China] to favor America for China in its foreign relations." It was also believed that Chinese students would "form a force in our favor so strong that no other government or trade element of Europe can compete with it." However, many in the Qing government recognized the American machinations and sought to protect traditional Chinese values by gaining relative autonomy over the selection of students and general application of the remitted funds.<sup>25</sup> Zhang Zhidong, member of the Qing court and proponent of controlled education reform, popularized his sentiments by claiming, "Western studies for practical affairs; Chinese studies for the essentials." Zhang's resistance to the State Department's desire to appoint an American to oversee Chinese students in the United States stymied American plans and ultimately, secured partial Chinese control over the selection of Chinese students sent abroad.<sup>26</sup>

On December 28, 1908 President Theodore Roosevelt, working with Secretary of State Elihu Root, signed and remitted a portion of the Boxer Indemnity back to the Chinese government. The remission provided funds, to be used at the discretion of the Qing government, to finance Chinese students' educations in the United States and for the construction and operation of Tsinghua University, which would act as a preparatory university readying Chinese students for their study in the United States. Though a second remission followed in 1924, it was given instead to the China Foundation, a private organization whose focus on education and

<sup>25</sup> Frank G. Carpenter, "The Awakening of China," *Daily Consular and Trade Reports*, no. 3636 (Nov. 15, 1909), 8-9, quoted in Michael H. Hunt, "The American Remission of the Boxer Indemnity: A Reappraisal," *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 31, No. 3 (May 1972), 557-58.

<sup>26</sup> Hunt, "The American Remission of the Boxer Indemnity," 557.

culture would ensure, in American opinions, better utilization of the funds since China's fractured political landscape during the mid-1920s increased the possibility that they would be squandered or lost.

Qing attempts to wrest at least partial control over the application of the indemnity fund away from the United States very clearly highlights the primacy that Americans early on gave to the role of education and the belief that increasing funding and bringing Chinese students to the United States would allow them serve as "democratizing forces" under American influence. American leaders, therefore, were operating under what Michael Hunt describes as an "ethnocentric conviction" in America's superiority in cultural, economic, and political values which discredited China's leaders and relegated them to past modalities incapable of protecting and securing China's future.<sup>27</sup> This precedent continued to influence Washington's policy toward China and Chinese students well into the mid-twentieth century. Moreover, China's acquiescence to American demands and participation in the process was fundamental in the expansion of educational exchange. The remission of the Boxer Indemnity Fund enhanced not only direct government intervention in the process of education exchange, but also education exchange itself and began the transformation of it as an official state function instead of a privatized initiative.<sup>28</sup>

The remission of the Boxer Indemnity and establishment of a dedicated fund to support education exchange between China and the United States brought thousands of Chinese to America for study. From 1909 (and especially after the overthrow of the Qing government in 1911) to 1944, some 8,400 Chinese students came to study in the United States. The end of the

<sup>27</sup> Hunt, "The American Remission of the Boxer Indemnity," 557-559.

<sup>28</sup> For a discussion of the increased influence of government involvement in education see Chapter 2 in Li Hongshan, *US-China Educational Exchange: State, Society, and Intercultural Relations, 1905-1950* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008).

Second World War further escalated the number of the Chinese coming to the United States. Between 1945 and 1949, almost 4,700 students fled China to further their education, fully half as many as had come in the three and a half decades prior to the cessation of the Second World War.<sup>29</sup>

During the war, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt enacted several policies which greatly facilitated the rapid postwar expansion in education exchange. Designed to increase cooperation between China and the United States, the first major initiative was the Cultural Cooperation Program. In 1938 the Cultural Cooperation Program focused solely on the American continents and Western Hemisphere. The goal of the program was to promote and foster friendly international relations between the United States and its neighbors on a basis of mutual appreciation and understanding through the dissemination of scientific and technological information and expansive cultural programs in the arts and education. From 1938 to 1943 American scientists, engineers, and technical advisors were sent throughout Central and South America to develop programs in tidal investigation, agricultural research and experiment stations, fish hatcheries, and numerous others, all with the explicit aim of augmenting the “economic and social life” of the recipient countries.<sup>30</sup>

The program with China began in earnest at the request of Secretary of State Cordell Hull, who, in November 1941, advised President Franklin D. Roosevelt that a program with China was “a matter of immediate concern since such a program could effectively undergird Chinese scientific and cultural activities during the period of national resistance and could build

<sup>29</sup> *A Survey of Chinese in American Universities*, 26-27. The sum of all Chinese coming to the United States for education between 1909 and 1944 is roughly 8,457, while those coming in the immediate postwar years, 1945-49, is roughly 4,675.

<sup>30</sup> Haldore Hanson, *The Cultural Cooperation Program, 1938-1943* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1944), 1-3.

closer understanding between China and the United States.”<sup>31</sup> As a result, in January 1942, allocations were made from the President’s Emergency Fund and a program was developed to revolve around four basic principles: 1) Sending of technical advisors at the request of the Chinese government, 2) Exchange of professors, 3) Award study grants to Chinese students, and 4) Sending microfilmed copies of American scientific and technical journals to Chinese universities.<sup>32</sup>

Though the allocations for the program were never large, roughly \$4.5 million split between China, the Western Hemisphere, and the Near East (Africa and the Middle East), the program provided some 550 Chinese students stranded in the United States with emergency financial aid to defray expenses incurred when assistance from the Chinese government and home dried up due to the outbreak of war.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the program was the first foray into active assistance on the part of the American government into education exchange and direct disbursement of financial aid from the federal government to individual Chinese students. The aid programs that emerged following the war, greatly expanded the government’s involvement in assisting Chinese students and provided them the financial resources to remain in the United States to complete their studies.

As the Cultural Cooperation Program with China wound down in 1943, Chinese students also received an indirect form of assistance from Congress, who, beginning in May 1943, began deliberating on the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act. Many who testified for repeal of the act were worried about the growing influence of Japanese propaganda that widely broadcast America’s punitive and restrictive immigration policies to her struggling wartime ally. Japanese

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 4-6, 12.



fables, such as the story of the two yellow cocks who, while in the middle of fighting themselves, were able to come together and turn on the white swan when it attempted to breakup the fight, resonated with members of Congress, who recognized the efficacy of the fascist and communist elements in China in swaying popular opinion against the United States.<sup>34</sup> Dissenters, however, pointed to the same growing influence of communism in China and indicated that if Chinese immigration were to be allowed, infiltration by even a small number of indoctrinated Chinese would present a serious political and economic threat to the United States.<sup>35</sup> Despite these protests, the Senate passed the act on November 26, 1943 and, less than a month later, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the repeal act on December 17.

Though largely symbolic, as adherence to the quota system, which allowed only a paltry 105 Chinese immigrants to come to America was strictly enforced, repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act did allow Chinese students to apply as immigrants with the intention of remaining in the United States instead of applying as specially designated nonimmigrant students. This ostensibly alleviated their position since those currently in the United States and those coming for study were eligible to apply for naturalization and, eventually, citizenship.<sup>36</sup>

Following the cessation of the Second World War, the United States markedly loosened the definition of what constituted a student in order to accommodate its erstwhile wartime allies. For China, this meant a drastic increase in the number of students sent abroad. The most important reason for this increase was the need for national reconstruction. The Nationalist

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<sup>34</sup> House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, "Statement of Reverend John G. Magee, Minister of St. John's Episcopal Church, Washington DC," in *Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts: Hearings Before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization*" 78<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess. (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), 15-19.

<sup>35</sup> Martin B. Gold, *Forbidden Citizens: Chinese Exclusion and the U.S. Congress: A Legislative History* (Alexandria, VA: The Capitol.Net, Inc., 2012), 471.

<sup>36</sup> "Exclusion Repeal is Law: President Signs Bill to Admit Chinese on Quota Basis," *The New York Times*, December 18, 1943, 2.

Guomindang government, from its inception, was concerned with industrialization and creating a new, modern China. To this end, the Chinese government focused on practical education to meet China's immediate needs and between 1931 and 1936 the number of Chinese students studying engineering and science more than doubled in state run institutions.<sup>37</sup> This shift clearly symbolizes the focus on practical education that would directly benefit Chinese industry and economy. Moreover, this shift in focus on the importance of technical and scientific knowledge was reflected in the fields of study of Chinese students coming abroad.

In 1946 the American government, through the Foreign Economic Administration and China Supply Commission, brought around 1,000 Chinese students to study in American factories and industries as technical trainees for a period of one year. In conjunction with various federal departments, these students received practical training in mechanical and electrical engineering, forestry, transportation, oil refining, and numerous other technical fields.<sup>38</sup> It was hoped that this practical technical training could then be directly applied to Chinese industry. This, however, was a short-term measure intended to work in conjunction with traditional university students, who came to the United States to study engineering, medicine, agriculture, and other scientific and technical fields.

To finance their education in the United States, many Chinese students benefited from a favorable exchange rate of Chinese yuan for American dollars. Chinese students, up to 1947, who were going abroad with the express purpose of education, were allowed to purchase American dollars at an exchange rate of 20 yuan to 1 dollar. This changed in February 1947, when inflation and economic downturn in China led to a sharp rise in the exchange rate. Through

<sup>37</sup> William C. Kirby, "Engineering China: Birth of the Developmental State, 1928-37," in *Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond*, ed. Yeh Wen-hsin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 146-47.

<sup>38</sup> Samuel Shi-shin Kung, "Personal and Professional Problems of Chinese Students and Former Students in the New York Metropolitan Area" (PhD diss., Teachers College, Columbia University, 1955), 58-60.

the rest of 1947 exchange rates remained near 12,000 yuan to 1 American dollar. This again changed drastically in 1948 when, in August, exchange rates jumped to 12,000,000 yuan to one dollar and in November 60,000,000 yuan to one dollar.<sup>39</sup>

The collapse of the GMD in 1948 precipitated financial hardship for the several thousand Chinese students and scholars in the United States. Many who had been recipients of Chinese government scholarships and grants now found themselves isolated and cut off from financial resources. Yet, many American policymakers sympathized with the plight of these Chinese scholars and enacted financial assistance policies to alleviate their burden. Many Americans still believed that these Chinese constituted the best hope for dissuading the expansion of communism in China since, upon completion of their studies, they would return to take prominent leadership positions within the Chinese government.<sup>40</sup>

The first educational mission to the United States was aborted rather shortly in the face of growing anti-Chinese sentiment and the poor performance of the Chinese students sent abroad. However, after the Boxer Rebellion and the return of the Boxer Indemnity Fund, the United States increasingly became an educational destination for thousands of Chinese. The faltering Qing attempted briefly to stymie the flow and ensure that only highly qualified students were sent abroad but the overthrow of the Qing government in 1911 silenced this opposition. For the next 39 years Chinese students came by the hundreds every year to learn crucially needed skills to assist in the construction of a modern China. While the United States still strictly enforced exclusionary laws against Chinese laborers and immigrants, Chinese students found more and

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 62-64.

<sup>40</sup> Benjamine Fine, "U.S. Grant to Ease Crises for Foreign Students Asked," *New York Times* (January 27, 1949), 1.

more doors being thrown open for them to come and study, provided they promptly returned to China after their studies.

Yet, it was not until the late 1930s and the advent of the Second World War that Chinese students found themselves highly sought after by the American government. The rise of global fascism and communism, ideologies interpreted as directly antithetical to the American way of life, focused American politicians, educators, missionaries, and businessmen on the role that Chinese students could play as democratizing forces – turning them into “unofficial ambassadors” for the United States.

Between 1938 and 1950 the American government increasingly involved itself in education exchange as a way to ensure that postwar global affairs evolved along the American line. Chinese scholars and students found new opportunities opening for them every year and financial assistance in myriad forms. Both the Guomindang and American governments were dedicated to ensuring that a highly trained cadre of Chinese scholars and students were able to return to China and develop the war torn country into a modern, industrialized nation. Yet, in 1948, the illusory dream of creating a pro-American modern China came crashing down as the Guomindang government repeated military setbacks against Chinese Communist forces. The beginning of the end came in 1948 as Nationalist forces were routed and the government fled to Taiwan, stranding several thousand Chinese students and scholars in the United States.

Over the first half of the twentieth century, the American and Chinese governments increasingly relied on utilizing education exchange to achieve both short and long term political goals. The Nationalist Guomindang government sent students to the United States in order to learn scientific and technical skills that were desperately needed to modernize the Chinese economy and industry. These students returned to China with the hope of being able to apply

their knowledge to the Chinese reality but the exigencies of both the civil war and war against Japan meant they seldom had the opportunity to enact meaningful change with the full support of the government. The United States sought to direct the development of Chinese modernization by utilizing educational exchange and believed that bringing students and scholars to the United States would instill in them an appreciation of the American way of life and make them sympathetic to the American cause in China. From the remission of the Boxer Indemnity Fund through the Second World War, the American government consistently instituted programs with this express purpose in mind. The impending collapse of the Nationalist government in 1948 did little to dissuade American policymakers from striving toward this goal. It was not until the establishment of the People's Republic of China in October 1949, and their subsequent involvement in the Korean War in late 1950, that the American government terminated exchange programs with China as a measure of denying them access to scientific and technical knowledge.

## CHAPTER 3

COMPETING MODERNITIES:  
NATIONALIST AND COMMUNIST VISIONS OF NEW CHINA

Increasing education exchange between the United States and China coincided with a concerted effort on the part of the Chinese government to rapidly modernize and industrialize. Yet, the fractured political situation in China often thwarted most efforts at full-scale industrialization. Parallel patterns of economic, social, and industrial development were common for most of the early twentieth century in China as the Communists and Nationalists competed for control over the future of China's development.

The Nationalist Guomindang government, oscillating between varying degrees of partial control over eastern China, attempted to modernize the Chinese economy and industry by seeking help from the United States. Their focus was on practical scientific and technical education that could rapidly meet the demands of the Chinese reality. The Communists, relegated to the sparsely populated and technologically backward area of northwestern China, focused on agricultural development and reform for much of the early twentieth century. Though Mao Zedong and other communist leaders recognized the importance of scientific and technical education, it would not be until they gained control over Mainland China that they could institute policies, not drastically dissimilar from the Guomindang, to increase the scientific and technical literacy of China and rapidly modernize the nation, albeit along Soviet, not American, lines.

After receiving the first Boxer Indemnity remission check in January 1909, the Qing court, over the protestations of many in the Ministry of Education, decided that it would send to America a large contingent of students to study engineering, science, agriculture, and business.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in conjunction with the American government, determined that students studying in these fields would comprise roughly 80% of the cohort sent to the United States, with the other 20% studying in the humanities and non-scientific or technical fields.<sup>41</sup> This basic pattern of focusing on scientific and technical studies at the expense of China's social necessities remained unchanged after the establishment of the Guomindang government and drew sharp criticism from Chinese contemporaries in the 1920s.

Basing his ideas off Soviet engineer Peter Palchinsky's notion of a "Tekhintern," Sun Yat-sen envisioned for China an industrial revolution, led by a scientific and technocratic elite, which would transform the Chinese nation into a fully industrialized global economic power.<sup>42</sup> However, Sun's death in 1925 stifled his ideas of a technocracy and left development of China's industrial future to Chiang Kai-shek. Under Chiang's tutelage, the Nationalist government engaged in a program of nationalization that placed responsibility for national economic development firmly within the purview of the government. This policy, not unlike the CCP's policy after 1949, constricted the private sector and relegated national construction to "bureaucratic superagencies" run by engineers, who focused more on building and "getting things done," regardless of what the country could afford.<sup>43</sup> For the Nationalists, scientific and technical education was seen as a panacea for China's problems. Ostensibly, American trained engineers and scientists would return from abroad to assist in the national construction of New

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<sup>41</sup> Li Hongshan, *US-China Educational Exchange*, 61.

<sup>42</sup> William C. Kirby, "Engineering China: Birth of the Developmental State, 1928-37," in Yeh Wen-hsin ed. *Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 137-39. For a discussion of Palchinsky's ideas see: Loren R. Graham, *The Ghost of the Executed Engineer: Technology and the Fall of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993). Especially chapters 1 – 3, which focus on Palchinsky's ideas of a technocratic elite leading the nation and with a focus on the needs and concerns of the laboring classes.

<sup>43</sup> Kirby, 152-53.

China. Yet, the ambivalent attitude toward Western educated Chinese presented a duality for many.

The Nationalist policy, decried Shu Xingcheng, suffered from a lack of direction and purpose, failed to coordinate policies amongst institutions sending students abroad, failed to adequately screen students before sending them abroad, concentrated students too heavily in the United States and Japan, and recruited unevenly from the coastal provinces instead of from China's interior.<sup>44</sup> The most damning critique of study abroad, however, was the overt Westernization of students who received foreign educations and their disinterest in helping modernize China upon their return.<sup>45</sup> Despite the criticisms, the Guomindang continued to send students abroad with the intention of increasing China's scientific and technical modernization programs, which were at the heart of their national construction schemes.

A vast majority of students who returned from the United States were often marginalized by the Guomindang and usually found positions in education rather than government. This was facilitated by the adoption of the American educational model throughout most of China in 1922. As a result, by 1937, sixty-nine out of ninety-four full professors at Tsinghua University had received their education in the United States. This was also reflected in the prestigious Academia Sinica, which, by 1948, employed eighty-one research fellows, fifty-two of whom received education in the United States.<sup>46</sup>

Despite the higher propensity for many to retreat into education, most returning Chinese students desired to find jobs in their fields of study. However, many large projects required funding from the government, funding that was being squandered on factional warfare. The large

<sup>44</sup> Chiang Yung-chen, "Chinese Students in American in the Early Twentieth Century," 42-43.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 43; For a discussion on the reception many received upon their return and why many failed to reincorporate themselves back into Chinese society see: Stacy Bieler, "*Patriots*" or "*Traitors*"?, 322-38.

<sup>46</sup> Bieler, 318.



projects that did receive funding were usually financed by foreign corporations that preferred to hire foreign engineers, not Chinese. The result was that many returning Chinese students had little choice but to fall into education.<sup>47</sup>

Regardless of the Guomindang's ambivalence toward American educated Chinese students, they continued to send students abroad in unprecedented numbers. As previously mentioned, the most concerted effort on behalf of the Chinese government came during and after the Second World War. Once the Japanese threat to United States reached a critical point, the Roosevelt Administration focused its attention on alleviating China's domestic turmoil and keeping them in the fight. Increased American support and money thus facilitated the Guomindang's ability to send students overseas. Financial aid and education exchange programs such as the Cultural Cooperation Program and the Fulbright Act of 1946 injected much needed capital into the Chinese economy and allowed Chinese students to study abroad. These programs also diminished the financial burden on the Guomindang in sending students abroad. Yet, by 1948, as the Guomindang's stewardship over Mainland China began to falter and yield to the Communists, so too did American prestige and influence.

The declining American presence in China coincided with the rise of Soviet influence as the Chinese Communist Party gained control over Mainland China. Like Chiang, Mao adopted an often oscillating and contradictory stance toward modernization along foreign paradigms.<sup>48</sup> He was at once intensely nationalistic, favoring and advocating self-reliance and finding a "Chinese road," but was also a pragmatist who realized the importance of foreign aid and

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid. 319-20.

<sup>48</sup> For further discussion on Mao's ambivalence toward foreign aid see: Stuart Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-tung* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Arif Dirlik, "Modernism and Antimodernism in Mao Zedong's Marxism," in *Critical Perspectives on Mao Zedong's Thought* ed. Arif Dirlik, Paul Healy, Nick Knight (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 1997); Liao Kuang-sheng, *Antiforeignism and Modernization in China, 1860-1980: Linkage Between Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1984).

assistance in constructing a New China. The contradiction between dependence and independence was a central theme in Mao's thought through the 1950s and manifested itself most prevalently in the PRC's relationship with the Soviet Union.

Interparty relations between the Chinese Communist Party and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) had a long and torrid history. Stalin's recalcitrance in fully supporting the CCP left a lasting impression on the Chinese Communists. Regardless, Mao and the CCP consistently declared their loyalty and adherence to the Soviet Party line. Mao elucidated this clearly on the eve of the Second World War when he stated that the constitution adopted at the first All-China Soviet Congress "declares its readiness to form a revolutionary united front with the world proletariat and all oppressed nations, and proclaims the Soviet Union, the land of the proletarian dictatorship, to be its loyal ally."<sup>49</sup> However, while outwardly adhering to the Soviet Party line, the Chinese communists were fostering self-reliance within the Chinese Soviets.

During the First Revolutionary Period, as Chiang's Nationalist forces besieged the Chinese Communists, the CCP developed isolated spheres of influence. These independent Soviets were the CCP's first test at implementing socialist policies. It was during this period, in the early 1930s, that Mao first wrote about the importance of economic work. Against popular sentiment within the CCP, Mao advocated for a viable, independent economic base. Self-reliance, argued Mao, was the only way to prevent unscrupulous merchants from exploiting the Chinese Soviets who were forced to pay exorbitant prices for goods due to the Nationalist blockade of the Soviet base areas.<sup>50</sup> This policy of self-reliance, though initially meant to apply

<sup>49</sup> Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1961), 353. Italics omitted.

<sup>50</sup> Mao Zedong, "Pay Attention to Economic Work, 20 August 1933," *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* 1 (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), 129-36.

to the local base areas, would later be adapted for use on the national stage in the latter half of the 1950s and justify the reduction of Chinese dependence on Soviet aid.

Mao's espousal of self-reliance also served to differentiate the Chinese Communist Party from the Nationalist Guomintang because, according to Mao, "under the [Guomintang] government there is dependence on foreign aid countries for everything."<sup>51</sup> For Mao, this meant that the Guomintang was subject to the whims of foreign governments and conducted a "consistently wrong policy of compromise in foreign affairs."<sup>52</sup> Overreliance on foreign aid was detrimental to the Chinese economy and served only to retard China's economic and industrial development.<sup>53</sup> Mao, instead, resolved to lean toward the Soviet side and claimed, "solidarity with our foreign friends will enable us to accomplish our work of construction rapidly...as long as we keep to our style of plain living and hard struggle, as long as we stand united and as long as we persist in the people's democratic dictatorship and unite with our foreign friends, we shall be able to win a speedy victory on the economic front."<sup>54</sup> Leaning to the Soviet side meant economic, military, and educational assistance, as well as an "upsurge of construction in the cultural sphere," which ended "the era in which the Chinese people were regarded as uncivilized."<sup>55</sup>

In 1948, as the Communist Party was making significant gains toward control over Mainland China, the Soviet Union abandoned their aloof stance toward the CCP and sent a small contingent of advisors to China. As such, when Mao formally declared the formation of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949 around 600 Soviet advisors were already

<sup>51</sup> Mao Zedong, "The Policy of the Chinese Communist Party: The Problem of Industry," *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* Vol. 3, 302.

<sup>52</sup> Mao Zedong, "A Statement on Chiang Kai-shek's Statement," *SW* Vol. 1, 255.

<sup>53</sup> Mao Zedong, "The Policy of the CCP..." *SW* Vol. 3, 302.

<sup>54</sup> Mao Zedong, "The Chinese People Have Stood Up!," *SW* Vol. 5, 17-18.

<sup>55</sup> Mao Zedong, "The Chinese People Have Stood Up!," *SW* Vol. 5, 18.

stationed in China. As the decade progressed, the Soviet advisory campaign intensified and assisted the Chinese Communist Party in reestablishing their economic base. This campaign became one of the most critical aspects of Soviet assistance to the PRC. Between 1949 and 1960 an estimated 10,000 to 12,000 *nonmilitary* advisors served in China.<sup>56</sup>

Relegated to small, rural Soviet base areas since the 1920s, the Chinese Communist Party had little practical experience in managing a national economy. In order to rectify this, Mao formulated a plan in 1948 to begin devoting resources and time to train Chinese economists in management of the national economy. In June 1949 Mao proclaimed that the Chinese “must learn what we do not know. We must learn to do economic work from all who know how, no matter who they are...At first some of the Soviet Communists also were not very good at handling economic matters...under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin, [they] learned not only how to make the revolution but also how to carry on construction. [They have] built a great and splendid socialist state. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union is our best teacher and we must learn from it.”<sup>57</sup> Between 1950 and 1953, roughly 1,000 to 1,200 Soviet advisers were sent to the PRC to assist with economic reconstruction. Due to the lack of qualified individuals in the PRC, many of these Soviet experts actually ended up directly managing economic affairs for a short period.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Zhihua Shen and Danhui Li, *After Learning to One Side: China and Its Allies in the Cold War* (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2011), 118; Baichung Zhang, Jiuchun Zhang, and Fang Yao, “Technology Transfer from the Soviet Union to the People’s Republic of China, 1949-1966,” *Comparative Technology Transfer and Society* 4 No. 2 (August 2008), 141-42. Including military advisors, some estimates place the number closer to 20,000 Soviet advisors serving in China over the course of the 1950s. Furthermore, this estimate does not include the various visiting guests that came as cultural attachés under the Sino-Soviet Friendship Society, which organized lecture series and cultural performances. The Chinese Academy of Sciences also hosted visiting Soviet dignitaries and guest lecturers.

<sup>57</sup> Mao Zedong, “On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship,” *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* 4 (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1961), 422-423.

<sup>58</sup> Shen and Li, 119.

After the signing of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance on February 14, 1950, additional technical and scientific advisory groups streamed into China. Furthermore, the Soviet Union, as a result of the treaty, extended a line of credit to the PRC. Over the next five years, a US \$300 million loan was given to the Chinese at an annual interest rate of one percent.<sup>59</sup> While generous,<sup>60</sup> Mao perceived these loans with a negative connotation, believing they would make the CCP too reliant and susceptible to Soviet influence.<sup>61</sup> However, these loans made it possible for the PRC to import desperately needed construction and engineering materials from the Soviet Union. The treaty also outlined the establishment of three Sino-Soviet joint stock companies in 1950 - The Sino-Russian Civil Aviation Corporation, the Sino-Russian Petroleum Corporation of Xinjiang, and the Corporation for the mining of non-ferrous and rare metals. Both the CCP and CPSU had equal rights, shares of stock, and respect for sovereignty rights in these companies.<sup>62</sup>

While intended to help both the Chinese and the Soviets, Mao and the CCP were convinced these were further indications of Soviet insincerity and examples of Soviet “chauvinism.”<sup>63</sup> The Soviet press, however, heralded this as just another example of Soviet magnanimity towards their Chinese comrades. Claiming that the Soviet Union, through selfless, genuine aid, provided the planes, aviation equipment, and all the industrial materials for the joint ventures. The aid provided so selflessly, they claimed, was another further distinction between

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<sup>59</sup> “Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance Between the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China, 14 February 1950,” in *The People’s Republic of China 1949-1979: A Documentary Survey* 1 ed. Harold Hinton (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1980), 123-126.

<sup>60</sup> Han To-fu, “Soviet Assistance and the Development of Chinese Economic Reconstruction in the Past Two Years,” in *Chung Su Yu Hao*, No. 2, 1952, reprinted in *Soviet Press Translations* 7, no.9, (1 May 1952), 237-240; Loans given to Taiwan from the United States during this time were given at 4% interest rather than the 1% interest between the PRC and USSR.

<sup>61</sup> Zhang, *Economic Cold War*..., 64.

<sup>62</sup> Han To-fu, *SPT* 7, no. 9, 237-240.

<sup>63</sup> Zhang, *Economic Cold War*..., 66.

the truly fraternal aid socialists provided one another and the aid given by the imperialists of the West and the United States.<sup>64</sup> The Soviet Press further claimed that, in order to aid in the construction and establishment of the joint ventures, 200 Soviet experts were sent to the PRC with explicit instructions from Stalin to teach the Chinese everything they knew.<sup>65</sup> To do this special education centers were established and staffed by Soviet personnel. These technical centers were focused on teaching the Chinese workers advanced Soviet production techniques. In addition, a select number of Chinese workers were permitted to go to Moscow to learn in technical schools, while Chinese students, provided they had the proper political pedigree, were sent to the Soviet Union to study.<sup>66</sup>

The impact of Soviet advisers was immediate and within a year of their arrival, numerous demonstrations were staged to display the effect Soviet knowledge and aid had on China's industrialization effort. Chinese state media focused intently on the increases in efficiency that Soviet techniques rendered. Toolmakers in Beijing publicly demonstrated the 12-30% increase in efficiency that Soviet techniques produced.<sup>67</sup> The adoption of the Kovalev Method, which had "workers on the same operation study the differences in their methods, select the most skilled aspects of each, and combine these into a standard method which is then popularized among all who do similar work,"<sup>68</sup> led Chinese workers to innovate new techniques, achieve higher efficiency, and engage in competition with other factories and workers. With more efficient

<sup>64</sup> Han To-fu, *SPT* 7, no. 9, 237-240.

<sup>65</sup> G. Yefimov, "The Soviet Union – The Great Friend of the Chinese People," in *Soviet Press Translations* Vol. 6 No. 11, (15 June 1951), 333-337; Also in Liu Shaoqi "Report to the Inaugural Meeting of the Head Office of Sino-Soviet Friendship Association, 5 October 1949," in *Collected Works of Liu Shaoqi* Vol. 2 (Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1969), 161-167.

<sup>66</sup> O.B. Borisov and B.T. Koloskov, *Sino-Soviet Relations 1945-1973: A Brief History*, trans. Yuri Shirokov (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), 46.

<sup>67</sup> "High Speed Metal Processing by Carbide Cutters Introduced in China," in *Survey of China Mainland Press* No. 105 (16-20 May 1951), 56.

<sup>68</sup> "Workers in Northeast Studying Kovalev Method," in *Survey of China Mainland Press* No. 106 (21-23 May 1951), 36.

means of production came big yields. By the end of 1950 the Chinese Communist Party claimed steel production had surpassed 1936 levels (the year before Japan invaded Manchuria).<sup>69</sup> More examples of Soviet production techniques can be seen across numerous areas of the Chinese economy.

By the middle of 1952 Soviet experts had “generously sent the most experienced specialists and technical experts to China.”<sup>70</sup> Soviet experts helped not only increase production but also helped establish “a most modern technical foundation.” Agricultural specialists helped the Chinese adopt new logging methods, which lowered the cut point and saved over 300,000 cubic feet of lumber annually. Introduction of the dense-plant method of cotton cultivation allowed for a cotton harvest four times larger than usual. Animal husbandry experts introduced artificial insemination in 1951 and tripled procreativity. Blast furnace production rose from 250 tons to 376 tons in 1950.<sup>71</sup> Flood protection and the building of dams led to a roughly 16% decrease in flood areas along the Yellow River, while construction of Hydroelectric dams harnessed electricity from both the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers.<sup>72</sup> The Chinese railway system also received a complete overhaul. Between 1950 and 1952, the Chinese and Soviets worked to restore thousands of miles of track. Soviet experts also helped redesign railway cars with an increased carrying capacity and distance. Special education centers were set up along the railways to teach the Chinese how to operate the railway.<sup>73</sup> In 15 months the Xingang (Tianjin) Port in North China was built, allowing ships up to 10,000 tons to import and export goods into

<sup>69</sup> Su Chung-yu, “The First Year of the Sino-Soviet Treaty,” in *People’s China* Vol. 3 No. 4 (16 February 1951), 6; 27.

<sup>70</sup> Han To-fu, *SPT* 7, no. 9, 239.

<sup>71</sup> Han To-fu, *SPT* 7, no. 9, 237-240; The blast furnace production example was from the Shihchinghan Steel Works Plant.

<sup>72</sup> “Highlights of China’s Achievements,” in *People’s China* No. 1 (1 January 1953), 28-29.

<sup>73</sup> Borisov and Koloskov, 52-53.

Northern China.<sup>74</sup> According to Chinese and Soviet state media, these “outstanding achievements would have been quite impossible but for the equipment and materials furnished by the Soviet Government and particularly the invaluable technical advice given by the Soviet experts working in China.”<sup>75</sup>

Within the first three years of Soviet technical assistance, the Chinese economy had been drastically altered. Soviet specialists introduced new methods of production and efficiency into almost every aspect of the Chinese economy. The Chinese, for their part, took learning from the Soviet advisers very seriously. The Soviets were seen as infallible and the Chinese were willing to bend over backwards in order to placate them. During the first few years of the aid campaign, problems were attributed to inattentiveness on the part of the Chinese or their translators; never to the Russians.<sup>76</sup> The Chinese often found the Soviet advisers to be very demanding but, despite their exasperation, did not dare criticize the Soviets. Instead, their instructions were followed to the letter.<sup>77</sup> The importance of learning from the Soviet Union was tantamount to the construction of New China and, therefore, became the responsibility of each and every person to learn everything they could.

The industrial and economic sectors were not the only areas in which Soviet influence penetrated. Higher education was reorganized along Soviet models to facilitate the industrialization and modernization process. Typically, Chinese education followed a Western (i.e. American) style model, which stressed broad education in not just the sciences, but the arts and humanities as well. Attention was given to electives and students were expected to graduate

<sup>74</sup> Liang Chen-ming, “Hsinking – North China’s New Port,” *People’s China* No. 2 (January 16, 1953), 32-33.

<sup>75</sup> Su Chung-yu, 27; Han To-fu, *SPT* 7, no. 9, 240.

<sup>76</sup> Douglas Stiffler, “Three Blows of the Shoulder Pole: Soviet Experts at Chinese People’s University, 1950-1957,” in *China Learns From the Soviet Union: 1949-Present* ed. Thomas P. Bernstein and Hua-Yu Li (New York: Lexington Books, 2010), 307-308.

<sup>77</sup> Stiffler, 309.



with a broad, well-rounded knowledge of several subjects, with specialized training obtained on the job. In many ways this was similar to traditional Chinese education, which focused almost exclusively on the humanities. Criticism of American-style education focused on its inability to achieve China's immediate demands and rapidly produced engineers, scientists, and technicians who could contribute to the industrialization process. Though the Guomindang initially began the shift toward focusing China's higher education on training engineers and technicians, in line with Sun Yat-sen's borrowed notion of a "tekhintern" as discussed at the beginning of the chapter, it was the Communists who brought this to fruition. Education under Communist rule was made to serve the state and, therefore, needed to be practical and applicable to the construction of new China.

Reorganization of higher education was adopted in the middle of 1950 and, on November 7, 1950, the CCP formally announced that reforms to simplify curriculum and reorganize departments within universities were well underway. Reorganization focused on technical education, which was complemented by a shift away from "knowledge for knowledge's sake." Instead, the CCP favored and adopted highly specialized degrees and programs that would function to immediately benefit the Chinese people.<sup>78</sup> In the field of agriculture, courses in plant pathology were added to help fulfill the agricultural demands of the new state, while language instruction courses in Russian were also added to facilitate the transfer of information between Soviet advisors and Chinese students. Attention was also given to creating a unified teaching style. Adoption of Soviet pedagogical methods resulted in the implementation of collective study and teaching groups.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, "The Reorganisation of Higher Education in Communist China, 1949-61," *The China Quarterly*, no. 19 (July-September, 1964), 137-38.

<sup>79</sup> "Higher Education Institutions in East China Make Further Progress in Reform," *Survey of China Mainland Press*, no. 6 (November 8, 1950), 6-7. Hereafter referred to as *SCMP*.

Believing that the Guomindang educational structure focused too much on theory at the expense of practical experience, Communist education reforms intended to link theory with practice. Thus, American implemented educational models and general universities, those focusing on electives and broad education, were elided in favor of Soviet-style polytechnical and technical institutes. These were designed to maximize and streamline the education process and churn out engineers and technically qualified individuals as fast as possible. Reliance on Soviet educational models also meant that professors and educators were compelled to adopt Soviet textbooks and utilize as much Soviet material in their courses as possible.<sup>80</sup>

The overt reliance on Soviet experts for reorganizing Chinese higher education manifested in a more or less wholesale adoption of Soviet pedagogy during the first several years of the People's Republic. This changed in 1956, especially once Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev made his 'secret speech' denouncing Stalin at the CPSU's 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress.<sup>81</sup> The decline in Sino-Soviet relations, at least in the educational sphere, resulted in a withdrawal of Soviet advisors and education experts at the end of the 1956-57 academic year.<sup>82</sup> The following year, Mao Zedong initiated the Anti-Rightist Campaign and purged all non-loyal intellectuals who had mistakenly criticized the government during the Hundred Flowers Campaign in 1956.

Beginning in the 1920s, both polities sought assistance from foreign nations (predominantly the United States and Soviet Union) but remained ambivalent about the efficacy

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<sup>80</sup> Hsu, "The Reorganisation of Higher Education...", 138-42; Chiang Yin-en, "Yenching – the Rebirth of a University," *People's China* 3, no. 10 (May 16, 1951), 20.

<sup>81</sup> In Khrushchev's secret speech he denounced Stalinism and Stalin's "cult of personality." Mao took great offense to Khrushchev's speech and interpreted the criticism of Stalin as a criticism of himself and the Chinese Communist Party.

<sup>82</sup> Stiffler, "Three Blows of the Shoulder Pole," 304-15.

of foreign education. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, leader of the Nationalist Guomindang government, and Mao Zedong were first and foremost nationalists, who, pragmatically, recognized the necessity of relying on outside help but did not want to compromise the essential Chinese character of the nation and favored modernization along a Chinese path. Wholesale importation of foreign ideas and methods remained a constant issue for both governments throughout the twentieth century but, within the Chinese context, ultimately fell to the Communists to rectify.<sup>83</sup>

After 1949, the Chinese Communist Party leaned heavily on the Soviet Union to rapidly modernize and industrialize the nation. The policy of “leaning to one side” dictated the CCP’s early industrial efforts and, regardless of their ambivalence, permeated nearly every facet of China’s mid-century modernization campaigns. The United States’ policies regarding Chinese students can only be understood within this context. The overt reliance on the Soviet Union made China, in American minds, a mere satellite of the communist giant and, therefore, a threat to American security. Policies instituted to disallow Chinese students from returning (or influence them to stay) were partially a response to the CCP’s close allegiance to the Soviet Union and an attempt to deny the newly formed communist nation access to scientific and technical information.

The Communists, however, relied principally on Soviet expertise and, by adopting Soviet methodologies for industrial development and pedagogies for education reform, mitigated any effect that denying the return of American-trained Chinese students may have had. Moreover, the overt reliance on the Soviet Union led to a reorganization of higher education, which shunned

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<sup>83</sup> For a discussion on the ambivalence of many in China toward Western education see: Chiang Yung-chen, “Chinese Students in America in the Early Twentieth Century: Preliminary Reflections on a Research Topic,” *Chinese Studies in History* 36, no. 3 (Spring 2003), 38-62.

American-style education models, marginalized Western-educated intellectuals, and relegated them to a peripheral status within the People's Republic of China. As such, those who chose to return in 1949-50 found few outlets for their knowledge, while those who were disallowed from returning until 1955 faced even more dire consequences since they returned just in time to encounter the anti-Rightist Campaign in 1957. Though some high profile intellectuals, such as Qian Xuesen, were fortunate enough to escape the Communist purge, most American-educated Chinese found a less than hospitable environment for their knowledge.

## CHAPTER 4

## FROM ASSISTANCE TO ARREST, 1948-50

The last ten days have been an endless series of riots in Canton and Shanghai, both bad spots for such things. There has been a lot of burning in Canton, and in Shanghai the Mayor, a very good and gutsy guy, was badly beaten up while the taxi dancers tore shops and restaurants to pieces. No one incident has much meaning in itself, but the piling up does. Even the cheeriest and blindest of souls now find an uneasy souging in the wind. Not least of the contributory factors is the vacillation and ineptitude of the Government at a time when it should be decisive and strong if it would avoid even worse trouble...military developments of the past few weeks have put the Communists in a position where they have practical control over all China north of the Yangtze except for a few urban enclaves and some lines of communication; parallel economic deterioration continues despite all remedial action; paralysis within the Government prevents formulation of effective remedies, to say nothing of implementation; and, despite the presence of a number of good and able men who know what needs to be done, there is growing conviction that any amount of American aid will be useless in turning the tide.

– John F. Melby, February 3, 1948<sup>84</sup>

The impending collapse of the Nationalist Guomindang regime in 1948 left the financial burden of supporting Chinese students in the United States almost completely on the American government. The Truman Administration, beginning in 1948, diverted allocations from the China Area Aid Act toward this goal, while also developing contingencies for their China policy. Disbursement of these allocations was left to the discretion of the State Department. Over the next seven years the Department of State developed a financial assistance program to ease the financial burden of stranded Chinese students and scholars. It was also hoped that this assistance would influence their decision to remain in the United States. Assisting Chinese students and scholars living in the United States, however, was only one aspect of a comprehensive plan designed to deny access to scientific and technical information to the Chinese Communist Party.

<sup>84</sup> John F. Melby, *The Mandate of Heaven: Record of a Civil War, China 1945-49* (New York: Anchor Books, 1971), 302-303.

The domestic situation in China had reached a critical point by the beginning of 1948. The Nationalist army, though superior in manpower and hardware, suffered near constant defeat at the hands of the People's Liberation Army, riots were breaking out in the major urban areas, and rampant inflation devastated the Chinese economy. Not yet ready to abandon the Guomintang, Congress appropriated \$338 million in April under Title IV of the Economic Cooperation Act of 1948 specifically for economic assistance to Nationalist China. Yet, the aid came too late to save the Guomintang. Moreover, it barely managed to feed "several millions of people who otherwise would have been hungrier than they were," and allowed a handful of industries to continue production longer than they otherwise would have.<sup>85</sup> By the end of that summer, Secretary of State George Marshall and his director of policy planning, George Kennan, recognized the hopelessness of the situation in China and estimated that roughly 35% of the Chinese people and nearly a quarter of Chinese territory were already under communist control.<sup>86</sup> Believing that Chiang and the Guomintang had "exhausted the Mandate of Heaven," Kennan and others in the State Department recommended a gradual withdrawal of American financial support to the Nationalist regime and adoption of a "wait-and-see" policy toward the situation in China.<sup>87</sup>

It was within this context that, on September 22, 1948, the Chinese Embassy in the United States issued a circular to Chinese students and scholars imploring those who had completed all or a stage of their education to immediately return to China. An extension would be granted to those students whose education required another semester to complete, but those who had finished were desperately needed to place their "special talent at the disposal of the

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid. 304.

<sup>86</sup> "United States Policy Toward China, September 7, 1948," *The State Department Policy Planning Staff Papers, 1948 II* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1983), 418.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. 421.

country.”<sup>88</sup> The Chinese Embassy also provided a subsidy for those who required financial assistance in securing return passage to China. This appeal was primarily aimed at the “second group” of Chinese students who had passed the qualifying exams in 1946 and came to the United States during the 1947-48 academic year. The remaining Chinese studying in the United States still faced a desperate financial situation and the Guomindang was more or less powerless to assist them. Moreover, as the Communists gained ground many Chinese students studying in America became isolated from their families. This isolation, and subsequent termination of financial support from their families, forced an increased dependence on the American government for continued financing of their education.<sup>89</sup>

While American policy makers in the postwar era hoped to drastically increase the number of foreign students choosing the United States as an education destination, they maintained a deferential attitude in regards to providing financial assistance for foreign students. Official policy in Washington held foreign governments responsible for the financial concerns of their respective students. However, the rapidly deteriorating situation in China precipitated direct government intervention on behalf of Chinese students and scholars. Toward the end of September, \$13,000 was made available to the China Institute in America in New York City from the Office of Education for alleviation of financial hardship for students from the Eastern Hemisphere. Students requesting assistance needed to provide an application and a letter from the foreign student advisor at their college or university that stated how a one time grant of \$100 would help stave off financial trouble. Not intended to act as a stopgap measure, the one time grant was awarded only to students who could prove that the award would completely solve their

<sup>88</sup> “Financial Problems of Chinese Students,” *News Bulletin* 24, no. 1 (October 1, 1948) (New York: Institute of International Education, Inc. 1948), 21-22

<sup>89</sup> Chih Meng, “Chinese Students in Need,” *News Bulletin* 25, no. 2 (November 1, 1949), (New York: Institute of International Education, Inc. 1949), 17-18

financial problems and was ineligible for covering travel expenses.<sup>90</sup> Though disbursements were made through the China Institute in America, few Chinese students actually benefited from this fund since it was intended to encompass students from all over the Eastern Hemisphere. Most Chinese applicants were in such a desperate financial situation that they were disqualified from receiving the grant, since a \$100 remittance would not completely solve their financial difficulties. As a result, only a few Chinese students were able to take advantage of this assistance program.

While beneficial for some, the small allocation was quickly depleted and, by January 1949, the situation for Chinese students was as critical as ever. Recognizing the desperate financial issues that numerous foreign students faced, Dr. Clarence Linton, Professor of Education at Columbia University, along with Chih Meng, Director of the China Institute in America, Harry H. Pierson, Program Director for the Institute of International Education, and several other leading educators in the New York area, met and drafted a memorandum for the State Department. In the memorandum, they appealed to the State Department to provide emergency financial aid to help the nearly 5,000 foreign students whose financial situation had deteriorated to the point that many were unable to afford tuition and would be forced to withdraw from school. Fully half of the 5,000 in desperate need were Chinese students, whose financial situation was among the worst. Dr. Linton and his colleagues placed the minimum amount of financial support at \$2,500,000 to cover these students through the spring semester but recognized that millions more would be needed over the next several years.<sup>91</sup> Less than a month later, on February 10, the Board of Trustees for the China Institute in America received a similar

<sup>90</sup> "Emergency Fund Provided for Students," *News Bulletin* 24, no. 1 (October 1, 1948), (New York: Institute of International Education, Inc. 1948), 20.

<sup>91</sup> Benjamine Fine, "US Grant to Ease Crisis for Foreign Students Asked," *New York Times* (January 27, 1949), 1.



report. This report, which concerned only the 3,610 Chinese students in America, claimed that assistance for *only Chinese students* in the United States would cost around \$2,500,000.<sup>92</sup>

Despite the small and sporadic allocations from the American government, the responsibility for Chinese students in 1948 and early 1949 typically fell to private entities and the universities themselves. Some, like the University of Michigan, took steps to alleviate financial hardship by offering Chinese graduate students assistantships and long-term loans that held students' degrees as collateral until repayment of the loan. For undergraduates who did not qualify to receive an assistantship, local community leaders often hosted lecture series or public speaking forums for which Chinese students would be compensated for speaking at.<sup>93</sup> The problem encountered by many Chinese students were restrictive immigration laws. Because many Chinese students had come to the United States on a student visa, they were expressly disqualified from obtaining any form of employment. Barred from working legally and financially isolated from familial assistance, the growing number of Chinese students facing financial destitution placed a heavy burden on the supportive structures of universities and private enterprises; a financial responsibility they simply could not bear.

The Chinese government, which had encouraged students in the United States to return to China, appealed to Roger Lapham in early February for assistance in dealing with the students struggling financially in the United States. Lapham, Director of the Economic Cooperation Administration's (ECA) China mission, agreed and recommended on February 16 that \$500,000 be reappropriated from the ECA's budget and directed toward alleviating the financial burden of

<sup>92</sup> "\$2,500,000 Needed to Assist Chinese Students," *News Bulletin* 24, no. 6 (March 1, 1949) (New York: Institute of International Education, Inc., 1949), 27. – see also "Students helped by Emergency Fund" on the same page in this issue.

<sup>93</sup> Robert B. Klinger, "Michigan Faces Chinese Financial Problem," *News Bulletin* 24, no. 7 (April 1, 1949) (New York: Institute of International Education, Inc. 1949), 34.

Chinese students. Shortly after making this statement, Lapham left from Shanghai for Washington DC where he met with members of The Committee on Foreign Affairs in Congress.<sup>94</sup> From March 15-25 the Committee heard testimony from Lapham and other officials in the ECA and Department of State. Due to the fluid and uncertain situation in China in early 1949, the Committee recommended, on March 28, to amend the China Aid Act of 1948.

Under Title IV of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1948, a separate program for assistance to China was developed. This program was originally appropriated \$338,000,000, of which \$275,000,000 was made available to the ECA's China mission. Aid to China consisted primarily of a commodity program to finance importation of foodstuffs and other goods, industrial replacement and reconstruction programs, and a Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction with the Guomindang government, but the civil war in China stifled any serious enactment of these programs. As a result, roughly \$54,000,000 of the \$275,000,000 appropriation remained unobligated. The Committee's recommendation to Congress, therefore, was to allow the President to use, at his discretion, the unexpended funds in order to meet the demands of the Chinese situation. As chief of the ECA's China mission, Lapham's recommendation that \$500,000 be appropriated to assist Chinese students in the United States was also taken under advisement. On March 30, the ECA officially announced that they would turn over \$500,000 to the Department of State for emergency aid to Chinese students.

At the discretion of the State Department, Chinese students could apply through their university for assistance from the program. Awards would cover tuition, maintenance, and travel, but were limited only to the amount necessary to cover the completion of an "immediate and approved educational objective" and, upon completion of this objective, the student was required

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<sup>94</sup> "Will Ask Student Aid," *New York Times* (February 17, 1949), 11.

to return immediately to China to make their knowledge and skill available to the Chinese government.<sup>95</sup> As with the fund made available in September 1948, aid was limited only to students currently enrolled in a university or college program but carried a further stipulation that made this aid available only to Chinese students who were pursuing a degree in scientific or technical fields. Any Chinese student enrolled in a program in the arts, languages, religion, or the humanities was disqualified from receiving assistance under this program. This qualification was enacted in order to ensure that the \$500,000 from the ECA fund could be “construed as assisting in the reconstruction of China.”<sup>96</sup> Despite the curtailment of assistance to only students seeking degrees in the sciences and technical fields, applications for financial aid came in at such a volume that the appropriated fund was exhausted by August and had only been able to award 266 Chinese students financial aid.<sup>97</sup> State Department and ECA officials had severely underestimated the need of Chinese students and quickly came to realize that in order to enact any meaningful program, more funds would be required.

In early July, Minnesota Representative Walter H. Judd put forward a bill recommending a further appropriation of \$4,000,000, to be taken from the unexpended \$54,000,000 ECA fund under President Truman’s discretion, to be used for assisting Chinese students. Judd, an avowed anti-communist, lived in China as a medical missionary between 1925 and 1930 and again in 1933 before being forced from China by the encroaching Japanese army. Believing that the United States could make Chinese students “advocates of our system as opposed to the Communists [sic] if we can give them the education they have started,” Judd’s bill proposed to

<sup>95</sup> “US Grant for Chinese Students,” *News Bulletin* 24, no. 8 (May 1, 1949) (New York: Institute of International Education, Inc., 1949), 30.

<sup>96</sup> International Education Exchange Service, Department of State, *The Program of Emergency Aid to Chinese Students, 1949-1955* (Washington DC: 1956), 6; “US Grant for Chinese Students,” 30.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* 7.

cover the financial burden of nearly 4,000 Chinese students stranded in the United States.<sup>98</sup> The proposal to divert another \$4,000,000 was well received and passed in the House of Representatives on August 1 and written into the Foreign Aid Appropriation Act, 1950. Under this act, President Truman was authorized to allocate \$4,000,000 to the Secretary of State to be used for tuition, subsistence, and return passage to China until the fund was exhausted.<sup>99</sup>

Intensely concerned over Chinese Communist propaganda, which had been excoriating the United States for their actions in China, many Americans believed that passage of the Judd bill would help foster goodwill on the part of the Chinese toward America and counter Communist claims of imperial aggression. As such, the Judd bill was presented as yet another example of the Sino-American “special relationship” and “an action that is manifestly unselfish, obviously moved by no design more sinister than the wish to help those who are in need.”<sup>100</sup> However, not five months earlier, George Kennan recommended to newly minted Secretary of State Dean Acheson to abandon the State Department’s “wait-and-see” policy. Kennan instead proposed a program of clandestine interference through “indigenous channels” designed to “discover, nourish and bring to power a new revolution” if the United States could not “in the meantime so modify the composition and character of the Chinese Communists that they become a truly independent government, existing in amicable relations with the world community.”<sup>101</sup> Chinese students in the United States represented the “indigenous channels” that Kennan and others in the State Department sought to influence.

<sup>98</sup> “Aid for Chinese Students,” *New York Times* (August 2, 1949), 12.

<sup>99</sup> Senate Committee on Appropriations, *Foreign Aid Appropriation Act, 1950*, 81<sup>st</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., July 30, 1949, Report No. 812, 3.

<sup>100</sup> “Help for Chinese Students,” *New York Times* (July 4, 1949), 12.

<sup>101</sup> “United States Policy Toward China, February 25, 1949,” *State Department Policy Planning Staff Papers, 1949* Vol. III (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1983), 27-28.

The notion that the United States could indirectly influence socio-political developments in China was not new. Since the remission of the Boxer Indemnity Fund, American leaders had believed that the Chinese studying in the United States would become acquainted with American customs and ideals and this would influence them upon their return to China. However, the rapid spread of communism across Eastern Europe and Asia in the immediate postwar years precipitated a renewed emphasis on ideology since communism was considered directly antithetical to American values. As such, it was hoped, Chinese students who had lived in and experienced the American way of life would, upon their return to China, work as a pro-American cohort and combat the anti-American rhetoric of the Chinese Communist Party, as well as strengthen pro-American Chinese sentiment. These ideas were clearly written into the Judd bill, which was designed to “strengthen and encourage democratic forces in China.”<sup>102</sup>

The Judd bill presupposed that returning Chinese students would continue to enjoy the “traditional position of scholar-leadership” upon their return to China. Therefore, assisting them during their time of need was in the United States’ best interest. Moreover, their close association and experience with the American “democratic way of life” would, in conjunction with the magnanimity of the American assistance programs, engender their favorable view of the United States.<sup>103</sup> Unlike the \$500,000 ECA fund allocation made in March, which was limited only to applicants in the scientific and technical fields, the Judd bill proposed to aid the approximate 4,000 Chinese students then studying in America, regardless of their field of study. Instead, the bill proposed that a student’s attitude toward democracy be taken under consideration as a qualification for receiving aid. Because the bill was intended to support

<sup>102</sup> House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Relief of Chinese Students*, 81<sup>st</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, July 13, 1949, Report No. 1039, 1.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.* 2.

democracy in China, it was necessary that “stringent precautions be taken so that this program shall not be exploited by students not in sympathy with its broad purpose to strengthen and encourage the democratic way of life.”<sup>104</sup> The proposal also maintained the qualification that Chinese students would agree to return to China after completion of their education.

Written into the Foreign Aid Appropriations Act, 1950 (Public Law 327, 81st Congress), an allocation of \$4,000,000 was made to the State Department to assist needy Chinese students in October 1949. Confident of the bill’s passage, many universities and colleges in the United States accepted Chinese students without requiring them to pay tuition and, once the allocation was made, applied for restitution under the new program. Once enacted, 2,164 new grantees were awarded financial aid under this program but, as with the earlier ECA fund allocation, the enormity of the Chinese problem was soon apparent. Though significantly larger than any previous assistance act, the \$4,000,000 allocation was only enough to fund Chinese students through June 1950 before it was completely exhausted. This was in part due to the final collapse of the Nationalist Guomindang and the coalescence of Chinese Communist control over the mainland on October 1, 1949. The final collapse of the GMD isolated the Chinese students in the United States and cut off any remaining financial resources from the mainland that some Chinese students still had access to. The other drain on the allocation was due to the removal of the stipulation that aid could only be granted to those pursuing scientific or technical degrees. This greatly expanded the scope of the assistance program. Recognizing the immediacy of the problem, Representative Judd, on March 16, 1950, proposed allocating a further \$6,000,000 to the State Department for continued assistance of Chinese students studying in the United States.

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid. 7.

Due to the communist takeover of Mainland China, however, new stipulations on assistance grants were required.

Judd's March 16 proposal was written into Title II of the Foreign Economic Assistance Act of 1950, also known as the China Area Aid Act of 1950 (Public Law 535, 81st Congress), which was passed on June 5, 1950. Under Title II, the State Department, at the discretion of Secretary of State Dean Acheson, was allocated \$6,000,000:

...to remain available until expended...for necessary expenses of tuition, subsistence, transportation, and emergency medical care...for study or teaching in accredited colleges, universities, or other educational institutions in the United States...or for research and related academic and technical activities in the United States, and the Attorney General is hereby authorized and directed to promulgate regulations providing that such selected citizens of China who have been admitted for purpose of study in the United States, shall be granted permission to accept employment upon application filed with the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization.

Under Public Law 535, Chinese students were still required to sign a pledge to return to China upon termination of their studies, a formality that continued until January 1951, but were no longer required to do so. A drastic change from the qualifications placed on earlier assistance acts, Public Law 535 now permitted Chinese students to remain in the United States for a period of three years after completion of their studies, or failure to maintain full-time student status. Until China's involvement in the Korean War, the State Department continued to fund any Chinese student who wanted to return to China but required assistance in securing passage. Yet, allowing Chinese students to remain in the United States for three months was not meant to garner them any special favors. Those who wished to remain in the United States indefinitely or apply for citizenship, were still required to qualify for visas and immigration status like any other foreign national.

Public Law 535 also expanded the scope of assistance and offered financial aid to not only students, but researchers and other scholars as well. The previous financial allocations made to the State Department were designed to alleviate the financial burden on Chinese

undergraduate and graduate students but did not extend to professionals in teaching or research that were recent graduates and, therefore, unable to receive assistance. In widening the scope of the aid program it was anticipated that around four hundred individuals would qualify for assistance. That anticipation proved to be an overestimation and only 104 grants were actually given. Qualifications for this grant were high since it was aimed specifically at teachers, professors, or research scholars who were currently working at an established educational institution.<sup>105</sup>

Finally, Public Law 535 allowed Chinese students and intellectuals in the United States to apply for, and accept, employment. Under the Immigration Act of 1924, which still dictated and extremely limited Chinese immigration and work eligibility, any Chinese student in the United States on a student visa was not allowed to accept any kind of work. This restriction placed a significant strain on Chinese students, whose financial remittances from China had ceased to come with the establishment of the People's Republic and were more or less dependent on the American government for assistance. The decision to allow students to work prevented them from becoming a "relief problem" and allowed the State Department remittances to be treated as supplemental income rather than complete welfare.<sup>106</sup> Though passed in June 1950, it would be another year before the Attorney General published regulations regarding a student's ability to work.

While the China Area Aid Act of 1950 did greatly expand the assistance program for Chinese students, it also created a host of other problems. Chinese students and professionals were still subject to restrictive and discriminatory immigration laws that prevented many from

<sup>105</sup> *The Program of Emergency Aid to Chinese Students*, 18-19.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.* 8.



accepting employment without first becoming a citizen. However, due to the Communist advance and subsequent victory in the Chinese Civil War, many were unable to return home and the State Department was dissuaded from forcing their return, since it would be considered inimical to not only the United States, but to the Chinese students themselves. After the Communist victory in China, Chinese students found themselves “neither quite legal aliens nor illegal ones.”<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Yelong Han, “An Untold Story,” 82.

## CHAPTER 5

SAVANTS OR SABOTEURS?  
THE CHINESE IN AMERICA DURING THE KOREAN WAR, 1949-53

Passage of Public Law 535 coincided with the North Korean invasion of South Korea in June 1950. Though many facets of the aid program were designed to alleviate the plight of the Chinese students in the United States, growing anti-communist sentiment in 1950 led to a disjunction between various governmental agencies and their implementation of the law. The amendments to aid qualifications under Public Law 535 represented a drastic change from previous iterations of assistance and reflected the changing perception of the role of Chinese students. The Sino-Soviet alliance in February 1950 and the subsequent dismantling of Western institutions and influences in China led many to question the efficacy of returned Chinese students as “democratic forces.” Instead, they now represented sources of knowledge that needed to be retained in order to deny the Chinese Communist Party access to sensitive scientific and technical information. This situation was compounded by the North Korean invasion of South Korea and China’s vocal support for the war and anti-American rhetoric. Through the war years, the domestic experience of Chinese students in the United States was constantly dictated by anti-communist paranoia and fear.

Immediately preceding the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in October 1949, a flurry of pro-Communist Chinese publications appeared in various cities across the United States. Aimed at a wide spectrum of Chinese living in America, these publications attempted to bring news and information about the Chinese Communist Party to potentially sympathetic Chinese. Newspaper publications, such as San Francisco’s *China Weekly* and New

York's *China Daily News*, were easily identifiable with their pro-communist sentiments and the Federal Bureau of Investigation took their formation and continued operation seriously.<sup>108</sup> Less conspicuous, however, were the numerous Chinese student groups and organizations, several of which had been in operation for several decades prior to the Communist ascension to power in China. Despite their long-standing existence, these organizations engendered the suspicion of the FBI. Aware that many of these student groups formed as "reading groups," which dedicated themselves to the study of Marxism-Leninism in order to prepare returning Chinese students by affiliating them with groups that were sympathetic to the Communist Party, federal agents closely monitored their activities. These groups existed at many of the major American universities that enrolled significant numbers of Chinese students such as Columbia University, New York University, the University of Chicago, and Harvard.<sup>109</sup> Ji Chaozhu, who at this point was mere months away from returning to China, noted that in the reading groups at Harvard, discussion was "focused on Chairman Mao's writings, which were just becoming widely available." Moreover, conversation increasingly turned to how and when to return to China and what they would do upon their return.<sup>110</sup>

The question of "what to do upon their return," was of particular interest and concern to bureau agents who increasingly recognized the importance of Chinese students with scientific and technical training. Formed in Chicago in 1949, the Association of Chinese Scientific Workers in the United States was a 500-member group dedicated to cooperation with, and

<sup>108</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Potentialities of Chinese Communist Intelligence Activities in the United States*, May 1954, Box 13, Records of the White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, FBI Series, FBI Publications Subseries, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library. For specific list of publications regarding non-student groups see pages 60-70.

<sup>109</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Potentialities of Chinese Communist Intelligence Activities in the United States*, May 1954, Box 13, Records of the White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, FBI Series, FBI Publications Subseries, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, 74.

<sup>110</sup> Ji Chaozhu, *The Man on Mao's Right...*, 54.

advancement of, Chinese scientists and scientific work in China. Working in conjunction with a sister-organization within the People's Republic, the group began, in March 1950, to advocate for its members and other Chinese scientists to return to China to assist in the scientific development of the PRC. The sister organization in Beijing was prepared to receive incoming American-trained scientists and scholars and had a detailed plan for where the returning scholars would best be utilized.<sup>111</sup>

For the FBI, the troubling proliferation of pro-Chinese Communist groups in early 1950 was exacerbated by the start of the Korean War and resulted in closer monitoring of Chinese students and scholars whose backgrounds indicated they may be sympathetic to the communist cause.<sup>112</sup> Ji Chaozhu, while never intimating that he was under direct suspicion, did indicate that several members of his Chinese study group spoke plainly about being followed by government agents. Additionally, rumors began circulating amongst Chinese students that certain Chinese with backgrounds in scientific and technical fields were being interrogated about their political affiliations and, in some instances, detained by government officials.<sup>113</sup> These rumors were not unfounded.

Perhaps the most well known example of FBI intrusion began in June 1950, when two agents visited the office of Qian Xuesen at the Guggenheim Institute of the California Institute of Technology. Qian, who had recently delivered a well-publicized presentation on the feasibility of a transcontinental "rocketliner" in December 1949 and made predictions in *Popular Mechanics* in May 1950 about the possibility of landing a manned mission on the moon within thirty years,

<sup>111</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Potentialities of Chinese Communist Intelligence Activities in the United States*, May 1954, Box 13, Records of the White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, FBI Series, FBI Publications Subseries, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, 78-79.

<sup>112</sup> Yelong Han, "An Untold Story...", 82-83.

<sup>113</sup> Ji Chaozhu, *The Man on Mao's Right*, 58.

was questioned about his affiliation with several suspected communists during the 1930s. Though he repudiated the charges and maintained that he was “philosophically opposed to the idea of Communism,” the American government, over the protests of his colleagues and university officials, stripped Qian of his security clearance.<sup>114</sup> Denied the ability to work on sensitive research projects, Qian made the decision in mid-June to return to China but, after three months of preparations, was stopped by immigration authorities in September and barred from leaving the country. Qian’s experience denotes the beginning of the American government’s systematic retention of any Chinese with knowledge deemed prejudicial to American national security. It should be noted that this was before China’s entry into the Korean War.

Concern over the political sympathies of Chinese students also dictated their access to financial aid allocations. Beginning in August 1950, students requesting extensions of stay or assistance as provided by Public Law 535, were subjected to investigation by Immigration and Naturalization authorities who demanded sworn statements to a series of seven or eight “very tough” questions. Opinions and statements were taken in regards to: 1.) their opinion of the Nationalist Government; 2.) their opinion of the Chinese Communist Party; 3.) which government would they choose; 4.) did they agree that the Communist Party of China should be seated at the United Nations; 5.) did they favor an overthrow of a government by force; 6.) whether or not they had ever been affiliated with a communist organization before coming to America; and, 7.) were they a communist or affiliated with a communist organization in the United States. Additionally, inquiries were made of several students regarding their affiliation with Chinese study groups that had suspected pro-communist sympathies. If a student failed to answer all questions successfully, or to the satisfaction of the investigating INS officer, they

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<sup>114</sup> Iris Chang, *Thread of the Silkworm* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 148-50.

were threatened with arrest and deportation to Taiwan, where they would be subject to Chiang Kai-shek's methods of "dealing" with communists.<sup>115</sup>

The intense scrutiny under which Chinese students and scholars found themselves in mid-1950 was not simply an exigency of the Korean War, but was reflective of broader political trends at the time. Senator Joseph McCarthy and his anti-communist witch-hunt, which, according to Dr. John King Fairbank, was worth "ten divisions to the Chinese Communists and many more to the Soviet Union," embroiled the Chinese students in the United States in a political struggle that many cared nothing about.<sup>116</sup> Moreover, the overt politicization of the Chinese student issue, especially in the case of Qian Xuesen, served only to foster anti-American sentiment among the Chinese by suspecting them of being Communist agents and sympathizers. It also served as perfect fodder for Chinese Communist propaganda. In April 1950, the Communist Party published an open letter, ostensibly written by Hua Luogeng, former Professor of Mathematics at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, which denounced the United States for its restrictive immigration policies and systemic patterns of injustice toward the Chinese people. Additionally, it was claimed that the United States was detaining China's "extraordinary individuals" for their own purposes and that "Chinese students, scientists, and technical experts residing in America" should "follow his example and return to the side of brightness, the side where the interests of the majority lie."<sup>117</sup>

Despite the protestations of some like Dr. Fairbank and the propaganda value provided by the politicizing of Chinese students and scholars, Congress passed in September the Internal

<sup>115</sup> "Clarence Linton to Ernest G. Osborne, March 8, 1951" Box 42, White House Central Files: Confidential File, State Department File Series, Correspondence File Subseries, Folder 3, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>116</sup> "McCarthy Called Aid to China Reds: End of 'Fantasy' in Viewing Far East Urged by Harvard Historian at Nation Session," *New York Times* (April 30, 1950), 4.

<sup>117</sup> "Professor Hua Lo-Keng," *People's China* Vol. 1 No. 7 (April 1, 1950), 25.

Security Act of 1950. Harshly punitive and hysterically anti-Communist, the act allowed for the detention and deportation of any alien found harboring pro-Communist sympathies. Though never used outright, the Internal Security Act strengthened the powers of the Attorney General and highlighted the paranoid and suspicious nature of the early 1950s. Furthermore, and more important to Chinese students and scholars, many tenets of the Internal Security Act were later written into the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, which, when enacted, served as the legal basis for the forced retention and disallowance of many Chinese students and scholars to return to China.

Fearing continued degradation of the political climate in the United States would prevent their ability to return to China, many Chinese students who had the ability, such as Ji Chaozhu, made travel arrangements to return before they were considered “too valuable to hand over to Red China...”<sup>118</sup> Value, however, was primarily considered for students whose degrees were conferred in the fields of science and technology and whose departure could be construed as inimical to American national security. This justification was utilized when American officials boarded the *SS President Wilson* on September 14 in Yokohama, Japan and removed four Chinese students. The two men and two women removed were claimed to have connections with Qian Xuesen and, therefore, were not eligible to return to China. The remaining 115 Chinese students on board the vessel were left unmolested and continued to their journey to Hong Kong, where all but seven eventually returned to Mainland China.<sup>119</sup> This case, however, remained the exception. According to the State Department, which continued to provide monetary assistance to Chinese students who wished to leave the United States but were too financially destitute to do so of their own accord, an estimated 633 students (roughly 80% who received State Department assistance) left for China by mid-1950, before the People’s Republic of China entered the

<sup>118</sup> Ji Chaozhu, *The Man on Mao’s Right...*, 58.

<sup>119</sup> “US Seizes 4 Chinese in Jet Document Case,” *New York Times* (September 21, 1950), 10.

Korean War.<sup>120</sup> It was not until after the People's Republic entered the war that Chinese students, especially those with scientific or technical knowledge, were denied the ability to leave the United States.

China's entrance into the Korean War on October 1, 1950 brought new considerations to the Chinese residing in the United States. Where before, the State Department claimed, it helped finance the return of any Chinese student who wished to go back to China, once Chinese Volunteers entered the war, the State Department was instructed to prevent the departure of those whose technical qualifications were considered antithetical to American national security.<sup>121</sup> Operating under this new edict, the State Department, in early November, received information that a large number of Chinese students were attempting to return to China on board a Canadian Pacific Airlines flight bound for Hong Kong. Claiming that leaders of the organization that had made the travel arrangements were closely associated with communist entities, the State Department blocked the flight and denied exit to the Chinese students on board.<sup>122</sup>

The State Department's interdiction on technically and scientifically trained Chinese students leaving was soon muddled by the Department of Justice and INS authorities. Operating under the new Internal Security Act, which demanded the deportation of any alien with communist associations, INS officials were prepared to deport any Chinese student with communist ties. For many qualified Chinese students and scholars, such as Qian Xuesen, this led to a complicated and confusing situation where they were served deportation orders by the INS but were denied exit by the State Department. The disjunction between the two departments led

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<sup>120</sup> *The Program of Emergency Aid to Chinese Students*, 17. – It should be noted that the State Department calculation was based on Chinese students using funds to return to Mainland China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan, and no exact figure is given for the returnee's ultimate destination. No figure can be found for the exact number departing of their own accord or on private funds.

<sup>121</sup> *The Program of Emergency Aid to Chinese Students*, 17-18.

<sup>122</sup> Yan Helong, "An Untold Story..." 81.



to an uneven implementation of the law but did manage to effectively deny exit to nearly all the Chinese students remaining in the United States.

The confusion between the two departments was soon rectified on December 16, 1950, when President Truman declared a state of emergency in the United States due to the expansion of “communist imperialism” (Presidential Proclamation No. 2914). As a result, the detention of Chinese students and scholars became a direct exigency of the war since their return to the People’s Republic of China would be directly benefitting a war enemy of the United States. Further clarification of this policy was made in November 1951, when a wartime law of 1917, designed to prevent “seepage into enemy territory” of information or knowledge considered pernicious to American security, was reinterpreted to apply to the Chinese student situation. However, by December 1950, Chinese students were effectively barred from leaving the country and left stranded in the United States.<sup>123</sup>

Growing anti-Communist hysteria in 1950 embroiled Chinese students in American domestic politics, not as actors but as pieces. Reminiscent of the anti-Chinese hysteria that gripped the United States in the 1870s and 1880s, INS and the Department of Justice, enabled by the Internal Security Act of 1950, targeted Chinese students as potential subversives. Furthermore, it was not only high profile Chinese students and scholars, such as Qian Xuesen, who were targeted by anti-communist crusaders. Unable to find legal employment without first reporting to a local INS office, Chinese students had to endure relentless questioning of their political loyalty, beliefs, and their motivations for remaining in the United States. This was the case with Rosaline Bien, a student at Columbia University in New York, who, on March 5, 1951, went to the New York branch of the INS to apply for an extension of stay. In her hearing she was

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<sup>123</sup> Kung, 23-24.

asked about her attitude toward the Chinese Communist regime. Bien stated that she had come to the United States in 1947 and remained in school for the past four years. Though she had heard both positive and negative things about the Communist Party of China, she felt she could not take a definite stance since she had never experienced firsthand the way the regime functioned. This statement quickly turned the hearing into an interrogation. The inspector urged Bien to take a definite stand because her prior comment intimated that she held pro-Communist sympathies. Without taking a definite stand, threatened the inspector, Bien could be subject to an FBI inspection, which had the potential for her to be dragged out of her house in the middle of the night and incarcerated at Ellis Island for her pro-Communist attitude. Moreover, if she were found to harbor pro-Communist sentiment, she would not be sent to Mainland China, she would instead be sent to Taiwan, where Chiang Kai-shek and the Guomindang had become quite adept at “dealing” with communists. Bien again reaffirmed that she had no opinion either way of the Chinese government and, after receiving several more threats, was released from the interrogation and allowed to continue with her studies.<sup>124</sup>

Other students were not so lucky. Kao Lin-ying, a fellow student of Bien’s at Columbia University, was also forced to appear before an INS hearing. Kao, “who by no stretch of the imagination could be suspected of being a communist or security risk,” according to the foreign student advisor at Columbia, Dr. Clarence Linton, was issued a Warrant for Arrest and ordered to report to the New York INS branch in writing every month. Allowed to continue with her studies, Kao was released on parole and told that when INS wanted her, they would come arrest her.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>124</sup> “Clarence Linton to Ernest G. Osborne, March 8, 1951” Box 42, White House Central Files: Confidential File, State Department File Series, Correspondence File Subseries, Folder 3, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>125</sup> “Clarence Linton to Ernest G. Osborne, March 8, 1951” Box 42, White House Central Files: Confidential File, State Department File Series, Correspondence File Subseries, Folder 3, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.

Threats of deportation and arrest were not the only problem that Chinese students faced in 1951 due to suspicion of their political affiliation. Many who remained in the United States after 1950 did so because they were still on scholarships or financial assistance from the State Department, without which they would not have been able to afford tuition and living expenses. The predication of financial aid allocations on an individual's political disposition, which began around mid-1950, caused many to suddenly have their grants terminated by the State Department. This was especially perturbing to Dr. Clarence Clinton who, in a letter written to Dr. Ernest G. Osborne for transmittal to the White House, named four students at Columbia University and three from New York University, who were in good academic standing but had been dropped from government assistance for "administrative reasons."<sup>126</sup> Furthermore, Linton stated that these cases were not unique to Columbia University or New York University and were occurring at other colleges as well. Linton's concern was that, in their application of the Internal Security Act of 1950, the Department of Justice was "defeating in a ratio of about 10 to 1 every constructive international understanding of the Department of State."<sup>127</sup>

New York was not the only city adopting these policies. The FBI, which was already concerned over the potential infiltration of Chinese student groups by communists, arrested eleven Chinese students at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in early 1951. Led from campus in handcuffs, the students were transported to Chicago where they were incarcerated at an INS detention facility. The reason given was that these students belonged to the Chinese Student Christian Association (CSCA). The CSCA was one of the first Chinese student groups in the United States and, since its incorporation by the YMCA in 1909, was ran under their

<sup>126</sup> "Clarence Linton to Ernest G. Osborne, March 8, 1951" Box 42, White House Central Files: Confidential File, State Department File Series, Correspondence File Subseries, Folder 3, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>127</sup> "Clarence Linton to Ernest G. Osborne, March 8, 1951" Box 42, White House Central Files: Confidential File, State Department File Series, Correspondence File Subseries, Folder 3, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.

auspices. The FBI began monitoring CSCA activities in late 1949 and received “reliable information” that the organization had disseminated pro-communist literature to members and, in 1950-51, was emphasizing the need for members to return to China to aid the new regime.<sup>128</sup> The students were later remanded to the “technical custody” of University of Illinois officials who were deeply concerned over the arrest and threats of deportation made to Chinese students.<sup>129</sup>

Through early 1951, educators with a close association to Chinese students remained the only ones who were concerned with their plight. Outside of academia and the requisite governmental agencies dealing with Chinese students, most Americans remained ignorant of the challenges they faced. After hearing about the discriminatory and prejudicial treatment of Chinese students, particularly those in Chicago, James Reston wrote an article for the *New York Times* in March 1951 that opened the case to the American public. In Reston’s estimation, there were roughly 3,600 Chinese students in the United States, most of whom were doing graduate work at a smattering of large universities across the country, who were encountering “obsolete and harsh” policies from the regional offices of the INS. This was a result of two primary causes. First, which has already been discussed, was the involvement of some in student groups, such as the CSCA and the Scientific Workers Association of Engineering and Chemistry, which had been infiltrated at the top by pro-communist sympathizers. This led to an overly simple governmental policy of branding them all as subversives and attempting to deport them. However, Reston’s second and more scathing critique, was the failure of the Executive Branch to promulgate the provisions made in Public Law 535 that would allow Chinese students to legally accept employment in the United States after their graduation. Due to the Attorney General’s

<sup>128</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Potentialities of Chinese Communist Intelligence Activities in the United States*, May 1954, Box 13, Records of the White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, FBI Series, FBI Publications Subseries, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, 76-77.

<sup>129</sup> Yelong Han, 85.

failure to do so, many Chinese students were unable to find legal employment after graduating and were living illegally in the United States. Moreover, those who were forced to withdraw from classes due to financial constraints were also no longer legally able to remain in the United States since they were on student visas that required them to remain enrolled in a university or college program and prohibited them from working. The problem was compounded by the confused policies between the Justice Department and the Department of State. Since many were living illegally in the United States on student visas, and because in order to be granted an extension of stay, most Chinese students had to report to the regional offices of the INS, which, operating under the provisions of the Internal Security Act, served them with warrants of deportation, whether they wished to go or not. The State Department, however, maintained that no student wishing to remain in the United States would be deported. As a result, once a Chinese student graduated or left school, they could not find legal employment and thus were subject to harassment by the INS.<sup>130</sup>

Reston's article engendered the ire of the Departments of State and Justice, both of whom agreed that information regarding the detention of Chinese students should not be made public.<sup>131</sup> Regardless, it was well timed and coincided with the Foreign Students Advisor Association (FSAA) meeting in Denver, Colorado on April 11. The intent of the meeting was to resolve the issues surrounding the treatment of Chinese students by INS authorities.<sup>132</sup> The Department of Justice appointed Allen C. Devaney, Assistant Commissioner of Immigration, to represent both the Department of Justice and INS at the meeting. Over the course of a few days,

<sup>130</sup> James Reston, "Chinese Students in Country Stir Fight of US Agencies: State Department Wants Law Used Allowing Full-time Jobs – Deportation is Opposed," *New York Times* (March 9, 1951), 3.

<sup>131</sup> Yelong Han, 85.

<sup>132</sup> "John R. Steelman to Dr. Ernest G. Osborne, April 6, 1951," Box 42, White House Central Files: Confidential File, State Department File Series, Correspondence File Subseries, Folder 2, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.

he and Dr. Clarence Linton, along with representatives from universities across the country and from the Department of State, worked to develop a comprehensive plan to mitigate the situation Chinese students were facing. Writing to John R. Steelman, Assistant to the President, on April 17, Dr. Linton reported that the FSAA recommended to the Departments of State and Justice that they make provisions for “(1) consultation with foreign student advisers or other appropriate officials of educational institutions before decisions are made on extensions of stay in the United States and/or termination of grants; and (2) a review by a competent body at the Washington level, on request of the educational institution concerned.”<sup>133</sup> It was believed that these two provisions would mitigate the prejudicial treatment Chinese students faced and that those whose grants had been terminated may be reinstated in order to conclude their studies. Moreover, these measures would help provide a uniform pattern of treatment and remove the arbitrary application of the law that was being enforced at the local level.

The combination of the Reston article exposing the prejudicial treatment of Chinese students and the recommendation of the FSAA pushed United States Attorney General J. Howard McGrath to quickly promulgate the regulations made under Public Law 535. On April 13, 1951, almost a full year after Congress had approved the act, Chinese students were allowed to legally accept employment. In the promulgation, McGrath stipulated that Chinese students may remain indefinitely but were required to report to their regional branch or District Director of Immigration and Naturalization Service every three months regarding their whereabouts and nature of their employment.<sup>134</sup> Though Chinese students were now allowed to accept employment, either while they were still enrolled in school or after graduation, many still found

<sup>133</sup> Dr. Clarence Linton to John R. Steelman, April 17, 1951,” Box 42, White House Central Files: Confidential File, State Department File Series, Correspondence File Subseries, Folder 2, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.

<sup>134</sup> “Chinese Get Haven Here: Students May Take Jobs and Avoid Return to Red Area,” *New York Times* (April 15, 1951), 151.

it difficult to find employment in their chosen fields. China's participation in the Korean War meant they were considered potential security risks. Because of this, many Chinese with engineering degrees were barred from employment at large engineering firms.<sup>135</sup> Others, such as those in the medical fields or education, were also barred from accepting employment because they were not citizens of the United States.<sup>136</sup> Overall, however, Chinese students with backgrounds in engineering, the sciences, or medicine found it much easier to find employment than their peers with degrees in the humanities. In May 1952, Chih Meng, Director of the China Institute in America, released a statement that revealed the enormity of the problem. In it, Meng claimed that recent graduates with master's degrees and Ph.D's in English, philosophy, and economics were washing dishes in restaurants, working in laundries, or "peddling chop suey wholesale."<sup>137</sup> This was corroborated by a State Department study, which found that nearly 94 percent of students with technical degrees were employed within their own fields, whereas only 57 percent of students with non-technical degrees had found satisfactory employment within their specialization.<sup>138</sup> For those who were able to find employment, problems soon arose over mobility, appropriate compensation, and prejudice within the workplace.

Many of the students who came to the United States to study came from privileged classes in China. The cost of study abroad was inherently discriminatory toward those without the financial ability to send a son or daughter abroad and support them while they were away. As a result, many had pretensions of class and found their substandard existence humiliating.<sup>139</sup> Additionally, many who came to the United States were already well accomplished in their own

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<sup>135</sup> Kung, 81.

<sup>136</sup> Kung, 81-82.

<sup>137</sup> Benjamine Fine, "6,000 Students Stranded, Stranded in US, Resist Red Lures to Return to China," *New York Times* (May 11, 1952), 1.

<sup>138</sup> Kung, 86.

<sup>139</sup> Rose Hum Lee, "The Stranded Chinese in the United States," *The Phylon Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, 1958), 188-189.

right. Beginning in 1943 the United States government and the Guomindang made specific overtures to recruit well-qualified Chinese government officials to receive advanced training in the United States. Ranking officials in the Guomindang Party, such as the Secretary of the Kwangtung Provincial Branch, members of the Agricultural Research Institute of the Executive Yuan, and Commissioner of Education in Anhwei Province, were some of the early recipients of this exchange program.<sup>140</sup> This policy continued through the Second World War and lasted until the collapse of the Guomindang Party in 1949, which left a significant number of highly trained and formerly powerful individuals stranded in the United States. The reduction in status and discrimination these individuals faced constituted a significant degradation of morale. These factors were exacerbated by the restrictive immigration policies that Chinese had to navigate in the United States and the systemic racism they encountered. Many individuals reported that it was not uncommon to be passed over for promotion in favor of less educated, less experienced, and less qualified white subordinates. As a result, many felt they had jobs but not careers and the possibility for upward mobility within a company or corporation was nonexistent.<sup>141</sup>

Though pretensions of class and systemic racism were certainly major factors delimiting the Chinese experience in the United States, one of the toughest obstacles that Chinese students and scholars faced was the outdated and prejudicial immigration laws enforced against Asian immigrants. The United States, well into 1965, continued to operate under the 1924 National Origins Act, which heavily favored immigration from Europe and more or less denied immigrants legal citizenship from any Asian nation.<sup>142</sup> In mid-1952, however, the National

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<sup>140</sup> *The Cultural Cooperation Program*, 12-13.

<sup>141</sup> Rose Hum Lee, 191.

<sup>142</sup> The National Origins Act remained in effect until 1965 when, as a measure of Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society Program, the Hart-Celler Act replaced the quota system with one based on familial relationships and job skills. Though not directly intended to open immigration from Asia, this act, nonetheless, allowed for large waves of immigrants from China, Korea, and other Asian nations to immigrate to the United States.



Origins Act was slightly amended by the passage of the McCarran-Walter Act (Public Law 414). Proposed by Senator Pat McCarran from Nevada and Senator Francis E. Walter from Pennsylvania, the act originally passed in Congress in late May 1952, but was quickly vetoed by President Truman, who declared it “nothing in the world but approval of all the mistakes the State and Justice [Departments] have made in the last ten years of the administration of the immigration laws.”<sup>143</sup> Despite Truman’s veto, the act was passed in Congress on June 27 and went into effect on December 24. It severely affected Chinese students in two major ways – 1.) By ostensibly allowing Chinese immigrants to apply for citizenship under a quota system, and, 2.) By legally codifying the forced arrest, detention, and deportation of any alien suspected of having communist associations.

Well-qualified Chinese residing in the United States sought employment in their respective fields. For those with technical degrees, jobs were more easily obtained, as has been shown. However, many with degrees in the humanities, the fine arts, and even medicine remained unable to find suitable employment within their fields. Seeking jobs in public education, state universities, civil service, and private corporations (many of which worked on government contracts), remained a struggle since most were considered nonimmigrant aliens, unable to apply for citizenship, and, therefore, disqualified from accepting employment in their fields, which required citizenship or an active application toward citizenship. Additionally, those who needed a license to practice, such as doctors, dentists, and lawyers, were similarly disqualified since the same prerequisites on citizenship were enforced in the procurement of licenses.<sup>144</sup> The McCarran-Walter Act ostensibly alleviated this problem by placing Chinese

<sup>143</sup> Robert H. Ferrell ed., *Off the Record: Private Papers of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Penguin Books, 1980), 258.

<sup>144</sup> Rose Hum Lee, 190; Kung, 81-82.

immigrants on the same quota system that applied to immigrants from Europe and the Western Hemisphere. Yet, quotas for Asian immigration were still prohibitively prescribed and, under the provisions of section 201 and 202 of the act, set at 1/6<sup>th</sup> of 1 percent of the total Chinese immigrant population in the United States in 1920.<sup>145</sup> This resulted in a paltry minimum of 100 Chinese immigrants per year, effectively upholding the tenets of the 1924 National Origins Act and making the provisions of immigration symbolic rather than practical.<sup>146</sup>

While the placement of Chinese immigration on the quota system was largely ineffectual, and morally repugnant to many of its critics,<sup>147</sup> the true purpose of the act was to severely curtail the expansion of Communism by limiting the ability of immigrants with pro-Communist sympathies to come to the United States. Any person who was deemed by an immigration inspector or official to have any affiliation with Communism, whether in the United States or abroad, was denied permission to enter the country. Already suspicious of the Chinese students and scholars residing in the United States, this policy further hindered the ability of many potential Chinese immigrants to apply for citizenship. Furthermore, the act also denied citizenship for anyone who, in the opinion of immigration officials, was likely to become, *at any time*, a public charge or ward of the state. This again had the effect of limiting Chinese students' ability to apply for citizenship since many were already recipients of federal assistance and, effectively, were public charges.<sup>148</sup>

<sup>145</sup> "Public Law 414," June 27, 1952, *United States Statutes at Large, 1952* chp. 477 (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1953), 175-77.

<sup>146</sup> For a counter argument see: Madeline Hsu, "The Disappearance of America's Cold War Chinese Refugees, 1948-1966," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 31, no. 4 (Summer 2012), 19; Hsu argues that the provisions enacted in the McCarran-Walter Act were circumvented by American officials in Hong Kong and Taiwan who specifically recruited well-educated Chinese refugees to immigrate to the United States. However, Hsu's focus is on the post-1955 era and legislation. Moreover, Hsu's analysis rests on Chinese living abroad and coming to the United States, not those already in the country and denied exit from departing.

<sup>147</sup> "Senator Lehman on the McCarran-Walter Act," *Social Service Review* 27, no. 1 (March 1953), 102-104.

<sup>148</sup> "Public Law 414," June 27, 1952. *United States Statutes at Large, 1952* chp. 477 (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1953), 182-86; Twenty-nine different classifications of "undesirables" were

Section 215 of the McCarran-Walter Act was most damning for Chinese students but brought little change to their current situation. Rather, section 215 reinforced and legally codified the forced detention and retention of Chinese students and scholars by stating:

When the United States is at war or during the existence of any national emergency proclaimed by the President, or, as to aliens, whenever there exists a state of war between or among two or more states, and the President shall find that the interests of the United States require that restrictions and prohibitions in addition to those provided otherwise than by this section be imposed upon the departure of persons from and their entry into the United States, and shall make public proclamation thereof, it shall, until otherwise ordered by the President or the Congress, be unlawful<sup>149</sup>

Moreover, the law denied the ability for any individual, under the above provision, to depart or attempt to depart from the United States without approval of the government. Those who were found to be in violation of this act could be fined \$5,000 or imprisoned and anyone attempting to assist in the departure from the United States of a person deemed ineligible to leave, was subject to the same provisions of incarceration and monetary fines, as well as forfeiture of their vehicle or vessel to the United States.<sup>150</sup> Therefore, section 215 of the McCarran-Walter Act legally reinforced the detention of any Chinese student or scholar who wished to leave the country and was supported by President Truman's Presidential Proclamation of December 16, 1950, which had declared a state of emergency due to the war in Korea with China.

President Truman was not the only critic of the act. Four days after the act went into effect, on December 28, 1952, Senator Herbert H. Lehman, New York Democrat and vocal opponent of Senator Joseph McCarthy, delivered a scathing assessment of the McCarran-Walter Act at the annual meeting of the Jewish War Veterans. Lehman remarked that the act "directly and cruelly denies all that America is and stands for. That act bristles with hostility against the alien and foreign-born. It is a law conceived in suspicion and brought forth in fear...the

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promulgated under this section, most of whom were denied based on "moral weakness" and any perceived connection to communism.

<sup>149</sup> *United States Statutes at Large*, 1952, 190.

<sup>150</sup> *United States Statutes at Large*, 1952, 190.

underlying assumption of the McCarran-Walter Act is that every alien is a potential saboteur and criminal, and every potential immigrant must remain so branded unless and until he can prove otherwise...If he is foreign-born, the McCarran-Walter Act regards him as suspect until he dies.”<sup>151</sup>

The promulgation of Section 215 of the McCarran-Walter Act was further codified and reinforced on January 17, 1953, when President Truman delivered Presidential Proclamation 3004. One of his final acts in office, the proclamation reaffirmed the existence of the state of emergency as declared in his Proclamation of 1950 and restricted immigration into and out of the United States without a valid passport. Though unpopular, and steeped in anti-communist paranoia, the conjunction of the McCarran-Walter Act and Truman’s Presidential Proclamation served as the legal basis for which Chinese students and scholars were subject to arrest and detention in the United States. It also legally prevented Chinese students from departing the United States and allowed for the legal incarceration of those who wished to leave.<sup>152</sup> Yet, these post hoc legalities proved to be mere formalities and simply reaffirmed the policies and procedures instituted by the State Department and Justice Department (i.e. INS) beginning in late-1950.

Under the legal provisions provided by the McCarran-Walter Act and Truman’s Presidential Proclamation, the Departments of State and Justice continued to detain any Chinese whose technical or scientific knowledge were deemed prejudicial to American national security or would provide much needed sources of information to the Chinese Communist Party. Qian Xuesen, already placed on trial to defend himself against allegations of supposed pro-Communist sympathies in 1952, was, under these provisions, again told he was not allowed to leave the

<sup>151</sup> “Senator Lehman on the McCarran-Walter Act,” *Social Service Review* Vol. 27 No. 1 (March 1953), 103.

<sup>152</sup> Yelong Han, 83-84.

country and had his deportation order stayed.<sup>153</sup> Yet, high profile scholars such as Qian were not the only ones denied permission to leave the United States. Dr. Liang Mun Wang, physician at Shore Memorial Hospital in Somers Point, New Jersey, indicated to Immigration authorities in early 1954 that he desired to return to China in order to get his wife and daughter out of the PRC. In March 1954, his request to leave the country was denied by INS officials on the basis that his knowledge and training, should he fall into the hands of the Chinese Communists, would be contrary to American security interests. Dr. Liang Mun Wang, it was reported, was only one of several physicians and scientists denied permission to depart from the United States in March.<sup>154</sup> This policy of detaining technically and scientifically trained Chinese students and scholars continued well into 1955, when the United States and the People's Republic of China finally reached an agreement on the exchange of individuals detained in each country at Geneva.

Through 1953 Chinese students and scholars had limited options in regards to their situation. Those who wished to return to Mainland China found their exit blocked by the State Department for fear that they would return to the People's Republic and assist the Communists. Conversely, those who wished to stay in the United States also had few options open to them since the McCarran-Walter Act so limited their ability to legally apply for citizenship. Many were unable to find suitable employment because they were either considered security risks or because the jobs they were seeking required American citizenship or proof that they were working toward that goal. Others, especially those with degrees in the humanities, encountered a drought of available positions. In his 1955 study of Chinese students and former students in New York, Samuel S. Kung noted one individual who received a Ph.D. from Columbia University in May 1953 in International Affairs with a specialization in Oriental History who had sent

<sup>153</sup> "Deportation is Stayed as 'Inimical' to the United States," *New York Times* (March 6, 1953), 7.

<sup>154</sup> "Chinese Doctors Denied Permission to Leave US," *New York Times* (March 24, 1954), 29.

applications to over 200 small universities and colleges and had received no word from any of them. Instead, this individual found the only source of employment available to them was working as a desk clerk at the university library.<sup>155</sup> For many Chinese students who were recent graduates and unable to find employment, this forced them to report to their regional division of INS every three months and subject themselves to intrusive questions and investigations since they were technically living in the United States illegally on expired visas. As a result, and due to continued funding through the State Department, numerous Chinese students simply decided to remain in school and pursue a second or third degree.<sup>156</sup>

Others were more fortunate and found local benefactors to represent their cases to INS officials. Dr. Liu Hsi-yen, Professor of Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases at the University of Michigan Medical School, was one such recipient. Dr. Liu came to the United States in 1940 and studied at Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa before going to medical school at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Dr. Liu graduated from medical school in 1948 and took an internship at Harper Hospital in Detroit before applying for permanent residency in 1949. Due to extenuating circumstances, it took her several years to acquire the requisite paperwork, which was voided after the passing of the McCarran-Walter Act, resulting in INS ordering her to be deported in March 1953. Believing her case to be “exceptionally meritorious,” Michigan Representative George Meader introduced a private bill into Congress on her behalf to have her deportation stayed.<sup>157</sup> Dr. Pak Chue-chan was another who greatly benefitted from community support. Dr. Pak studied medicine in the United States between 1919 and 1923, first at Emory College in Atlanta, Georgia and then at George Washington University in Washington, DC. He

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<sup>155</sup> Kung, 87.

<sup>156</sup> Yelong Han, 86.

<sup>157</sup> “Bar on Deporting Physician is Urged,” *New York Times* (March 11, 1953), 13.

spent almost the next thirty years practicing medicine in China before fleeing from the communists in 1949, and then two more years in Hong Kong. Dr. Pak came back to the United States in 1953 and accepted two jobs at Iowa State College (now Iowa State University), one as physician at Iowa State College Hospital and the other as Professor of Hygiene. However, due to his inability to practice medicine legally in the United States, Immigration authorities threatened him with deportation in mid-1953. Local church and community leaders successfully rallied on his behalf and wrote to INS to stay his deportation.<sup>158</sup>

Finally, some Chinese students also benefitted from a flurry of private assistance programs in early to mid-1953 that allowed them to remain in school. In late March, Chinese students at Cornell University were recipients of a private fund, originally established to assist Chinese students at Nankai University in Tianjin, which was repurposed to assist them by defraying their university costs and keeping them enrolled in the university.<sup>159</sup> The China Institute in America enacted a similar assistance program in July, which financed nine fellowships for top performing Chinese students in the United States. Yet, like the earlier aid programs in 1948 and 1949, three of the fellowships were for students studying medicine, public health, or engineering, and the remaining six were for students studying the natural sciences. Again, no provisions were made for those studying in the humanities or fine arts. Though these aid programs were able to assist a small percentage of Chinese students, Chih Meng, director of the China Institute, declared that in order to assist all the Chinese living in the United States, nearly \$5,000,000 would be needed in order to help students complete their studies over the following three years.<sup>160</sup> Restriction, restitution, subsistence survival; these were the realities that

<sup>158</sup> Box 19, Folder 2, Promise, Inc., Records MS 585, Special Collections Department, Iowa State University.

<sup>159</sup> "Fund to Aid Chinese Students," *New York Times* (April 1, 1953), 36.

<sup>160</sup> "Fellowships Won by 9 Chinese in US," *New York Times* (July 25, 1953), 12.

Chinese students faced through 1953 living in the United States. These realities were soon ameliorated, to an extent, when President Eisenhower signed the Refugee Relief Act (Public Law 203) into law on August 7, 1953.

The Refugee Relief Act of 1953 amended the prejudicial McCarran-Walter Act by allowing refugees to immigrate to the United States as non-quota immigrants, thereby circumnavigating the prejudicial limits enforced in the 1952 act. For the Chinese, an allotment of 2,000 immigrants was made for those possessing visas endorsed by the Guomintang, which most of the stranded Chinese in the United States held. Further, the act granted an adjustment of status to any Chinese who:

Establishe[d] that prior to July 1, 1953, he lawfully entered the United States as a bona fide nonimmigrant and that because of events which have occurred subsequent to his entry into the United States he is unable to return to the country of his birth, or nationality, or last residence, because of persecution or fear of persecution...may, within one year after the effective date of this Act, apply to the Attorney General of the United States for an adjustment of his immigration status.<sup>161</sup>

If the Attorney General, Herbert Brownell Jr., found that the applicant was “of good moral character,” physically present in the United States at the time the law was enacted, and “otherwise qualified under all other provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act” but was disqualified because the quota for their country was already oversubscribed, then he was permitted to present their case before Congress in order to have their immigration status amended to allow for their legal residence within the United States. Those whose cases were not approved by Congress, or who failed to apply before the August 1954 deadline, would be deported in accordance with the law.<sup>162</sup>

Though the law was conceived with a humanitarian goal in mind, several conceptions written into the McCarran-Walter Act found their way into the Refugee Relief Act. Assurances

<sup>161</sup> “Public Law 203,” August 7, 1953, *United States Statutes at Large*, 1953 67, chp. 336, sec. 4 (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1953), 402-03.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid*, 403.



from immigrants had to be made that they would find suitable employment, without displacing those currently employed, and the immigrant would not become a public charge.<sup>163</sup> Additionally, the provisions of section 212 of the McCarran-Walter Act were upheld, which required screening to ensure that no one with pro-Communist sympathies was admitted into the United States.<sup>164</sup> These provisions drew pointed criticism from New York Representative Emanuel Celler, who claimed that, in administration of the law, it had been “prostituted” and turned into a “dismal failure,” since potential immigrants and refugees had to “surmount an obstacle race of reports and investigations by a...bureaucracy run riot in a mystic maze of enforcement.”<sup>165</sup> Eisenhower too had his doubts on the efficacy of the act due to the limiting provisions and proposed Congress further amend it in May 1955.<sup>166</sup> Regardless, for the Chinese students and scholars residing in the United States, promulgation of the Refugee Relief Act finally allowed many to apply for an amendment to their immigration status and accept legal residence. However, in Yelong Han’s estimation, while “one need not be reticent about the humane spirit of the act,” it did essentially *force* those remaining in the United States to apply for citizenship by *removing their freedom not to*. Any Chinese who did not apply would be subject to deportation. Yet, lacking diplomatic relations between the United States and People’s Republic of China, and the State Department’s interdiction on allowing scientifically and technically trained individuals to depart for China, those who did not would continue to remain in the same precarious position they currently occupied and endure the hardships therein conferred by nature of their

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid, 403.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid, 406.

<sup>165</sup> “Celler Assails Refugee Relief: Declares McLeod, by ‘Savage’ Tactics, ‘Prostitutes’ Law – Tells Aim for Changes,” *New York Times* (December 14, 1954), 50.

<sup>166</sup> House of Representatives, Message from the President of the United States of America, *Refugee Relief Act of 1953*, 84<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., Document no. 173, May 27, 1955, 1-4.

nonimmigrant status. Therefore, “applying for permanent resident status in America seemed the only choice for those who were unlikely to be granted an exit permit.”<sup>167</sup>

It remains an intransigent fact that the forced detention of Chinese students was never widely known among the general American population. A smattering of news articles covered some instances but most remained brief, if covered at all. Perhaps the most sensational was the high profile case of Qian Xuesen, who was arrested and placed on trial shortly after making several well received postulations about transcontinental rocket travel and landing manned missions on the moon. For the majority of Chinese students and scholars though, little attention, outside of academic circles, was given to their plight. For most Americans, the Chinese in Korea were far more important than the Chinese living in the United States. Moreover, the sensationalism and paranoia of American politics in the early 1950s, combined with China’s entrance into the Korean War, served to relegate Chinese students to second-class status and, for those possessing advanced degrees and technical knowledge, label them as potential enemy agents and security risks. During the Korean War, the Chinese experience in the United States was, at best marginal, and at worst frustrating and humiliating. Those who wished to remain in the United States found their options severely limited by restrictive legislation, so too did those who wished to return to China. Between 1950 and 1953, Chinese students and scholars in the United States had little choice but to attempt to navigate, as best they could, the prescriptive confines of a prejudicial American society.

Despite attempts to enforce a standard, institutionalized policy towards Chinese students and scholars, the Departments of State and Justice remained at odds with one another over their

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<sup>167</sup> Yelong Han, 87.

treatment, with the Department of Justice and INS consistently serving orders of deportation while the State Department adamantly refused exit to any Chinese with knowledge deemed inimical to American security.

The end of the Korean War and changing of Presidential administrations brought a modicum of fair treatment to Chinese students and scholars with the passage of the Refugee Relief Act in 1953. Though limiting in its own way, the act did finally allow the Chinese stranded in the United States to apply for permanent residence and, to a degree, alleviated their situation in regards to employment and quarterly check-ins with the INS. Not wanting these individuals to become “public charges,” which many already were, the Refugee Relief Act allowed for them to apply for citizenship and eased the burden many encountered in attempting to find legal employment within their fields. Introduced as humanitarian legislation, the financial and administrative burdens of maintaining the large cohort of stateless Chinese students provided more legislative and bureaucratic inertia than the humanitarian spirit behind the act.

While their domestic situation began to ameliorate in 1953, Chinese students soon became embroiled in the larger international Cold War conflict between the United States and People’s Republic of China when the two countries sat down at Geneva to discuss a de-escalation of tensions in the Far East.

## CHAPTER 6

FACE-TO-FACE: THE GENEVA CONFERENCE  
AND THE CHINESE STUDENT ISSUE, 1949-55

The stranded Chinese in the United States navigated a series of discriminatory and prejudicial laws during the early 1950s. Though once seen as potential pro-American democratic forces, with the United States devoting roughly \$10,500,000 in financial assistance allocations to help these students and scholars remain in school and complete their university educations through 1955, their treatment changed drastically once Chinese volunteers entered the Korean War. The Department of Justice and Immigration and Naturalization Service, operating under the reactionary and suspicious interdictions authorized by the Internal Security Act of 1950 and the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, harassed as potential subversives and served orders of deportation to many Chinese students. Conversely, the Department of State, recognizing the potentiality that scientifically and technically trained Chinese students and scholars would return to the People's Republic of China and provide them much needed assistance, refused deportation orders and disallowed the exit from the United States of any Chinese student or scholar. Between 1950 and 1955, Chinese students and scholars were effectively stranded in the United States. Disallowed from leaving the country, and, until mid-1953, unable to apply for permanent residence in the United States, many endured a semi-legal subsistence existence as public wards. For the American government, Chinese students and scholars residing in the country needed to be retained in order to deny the People's Republic access to advanced scientific and technical knowledge that might help them modernize and (according to American officials at the time) challenge American national security at home and abroad.

While the United States attempted to keep this information secret from the American public, and certainly from their Cold War enemies, it did not take long before the Chinese Communist Party discovered these policies and utilized them in anti-American propaganda campaigns. In 1951 the domestic issue of retaining Chinese students and scholars became an international affair and politicized the Chinese student issue as an exigency of the broader Sino-American Cold War conflict. Through pro-communist Chinese newspapers and magazines disseminated in the United States and Voice of America broadcasts aimed at China, both countries attempted to influence Chinese students at home and abroad. The early Cold War conflict over Chinese students was mostly limited to these types of propaganda campaigns. However, by 1954, following the conclusion of the Korean War, the Chinese student issue developed into an international issue, resulting in a series of face-to-face meetings between American and Chinese representatives in Geneva, Switzerland.

Chinese students in the United States were acutely attuned to the political developments in China. Numerous Chinese-language publications kept Chinese students apprised of the Communist Party's growing strength and military gains by the People's Liberation Army in the late 1940s. Dissidents and pro-Communist Chinese living in the United States disseminated propaganda through publications such as *China Weekly* and the *China Tribune*. Moreover, Communist infiltration of Chinese student organizations, like the Chinese Student Christian Association (CSCA) and the Association of Chinese Scientific Workers in America, spread pro-Communist messages to members in an attempt to compel them to return to China. Though not officially endorsed by the Chinese Communist Party, these efforts nonetheless proved effective in aligning with the CCP's attempts to reach out to students and scholars living in the United

States.<sup>168</sup> In August 1949 the Committee for Higher Education in North China called for Chinese students studying overseas to “return to the homeland at the completion of their studies to serve the new and glorious fatherland” and established the Committee for Returned Student’s Affairs to welcome them and put them to work in China’s industries. Many, however, first needed to attend the People’s University for political education before they could be employed.<sup>169</sup>

Domestically, the CCP trumpeted the return of overseas Chinese as a great success and lambasted the United States for attempting to block their return. The search and seizure of four returning Chinese students in Yokohama, Japan toward the end of November 1950 proved especially useful, since among that cohort was high profile scholar Zhao Zhongyao (Chao Chung-yao), nuclear physicist at the California Institute of Technology. Chinese newspapers excoriated the United States for their “brutal seizure” and “illegal detention” of the scientists, as well as the retention of their personal belongings after they were remanded from American custody and allowed to return to China.<sup>170</sup> Chinese newspapers followed Zhao’s return closely as he and his fellow returned Chinese cabled Chairman Mao to “pay...highest respects...” and “pledge[d] to stand...at our post and do our utmost for revolutionary reconstruction.”<sup>171</sup> Zhao’s participation in an anti-imperialist meeting in Shanghai on December 8, 1950 was similarly covered, as he and other returned Chinese students attacked America’s participation in the Korean War and policies of detaining Chinese students.<sup>172</sup>

High profile scholars, however, were not the only returned Chinese students utilized as propaganda. In many instances articles and “open letters” were simply published under the name

<sup>168</sup> Him Mark Lai, “The Chinese-Marxist Left, Chinese Students and Scholars in America, and the New China: Mid-1940s to Mid-1950s,” *Chinese America: History and Perspectives* Vol. 18 (January 2004), 12-13.

<sup>169</sup> “Chinese Students Return to Fatherland,” *Survey of China Mainland Press* No. 11 (November 16, 1950), 7-8; Hereafter referred to *SCMP*.

<sup>170</sup> “Chinese Scientists Detained by MacArthur Arrive Canton,” *SCMP* No. 21 (December 1-2, 1950), 7-8.

<sup>171</sup> “Returned Physicist and Students Pay Highest respect to Chairman Mao,” *SCMP* No. 23 (December 5, 1950), 13.

<sup>172</sup> “Professor Chao Chung-yao Welcomed at Meeting In Shanghai,” *SCMP* No. 29 (December 13, 1950), 6-7.

of an average returned student. This list of grievances against the United States varied but all castigated American policies and treatment of Chinese students. In some instances, the crimes were simply arbitrary, such as FBI interdictions on Chinese students being allowed to check out books from the library or requiring a special agent to be onsite in the event of a party or gathering of Chinese students. Other incidents were more severe. Accusations of INS agents entering, searching, and seizing personal papers and belongings were reported. Even allegations of rape, which resulted in suicide or insanity, were made.<sup>173</sup>

Returned students and scholars from the United States were utilized, from the outset, as political mouthpieces. Chinese newspapers in 1950 and 1951 consistently ran stories of large contingents of American-trained professors, researchers, and scholars denouncing the United States for their “imperialist aggression” and “exploitation” of the American people by “Wall Street Capitalists.” Concerned with establishing their control over China, the Communist Party utilized the Chinese student issue to increase their prestige and highlight the necessity that they combat the United States, by proving that America had adopted aggressive measures against individual Chinese students and scholars. However, most of these excoriations were aimed at Chinese living within the newly established People’s Republic and were not meant to directly confront the United States on the policy of detaining Chinese students and scholars or barring them from exiting. Instead, Chinese students residing in the United States were often subject to appeals from the Chinese Communist Party to return and assist in national reconstruction. Though these appeals often parroted the Communist Party’s anti-American rhetoric, they

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<sup>173</sup> “16 More Chinese Students Return Came Back In Spite of US Obstruction,” *SCMP*, no. 13 (November 19-20, 1950), 6-7; Fo Ling, “A Report by an American Returned Student,” *SCMP*, no. 158 (August 21, 1951), 22-23.

generally appealed to Chinese students by speaking of the Communist Party's "glorious" accomplishments and successes in rapidly rebuilding the country.<sup>174</sup>

The Chinese Communist Party was not the only entity politicizing the Chinese student issue. In the United States, pro-Guomindang (or, at least anti-communist) and Chinese student organizations excoriated the People's Republic for their treatment of returned Chinese students and their role as mere satellites of the Soviet Union. In December 1950 the Society of Chinese Students and Professionals released a public manifesto, which denounced the Chinese Communist Party and claimed they "vigorously protest [the PRC's] attempt to turn China into a battleground for the sake of the Soviet imperialists' selfish desire for world conquest."<sup>175</sup> In May 1952, Chih Meng, Director of the China Institute in America, advocated for increased funding for Chinese students in the United States to counteract Communist overtures toward them. In his appeal, Meng cited the tragic story of an unnamed University of Illinois Professor of Mathematics who left for China in 1950. After arriving in China the Communist Party forced him to broadcast anti-American statements and praise the virtues of communism. The professor's treatment at the hands of the Communist Party was so bad that he attempted to commit suicide by leaping from his window. According to Meng, the professor's case was not unique and numerous other instances could be recounted that spoke to the lengths individuals would go in order to escape harsh treatment by the Chinese government.<sup>176</sup>

In addition to publishing articles about the actions of Chinese organizations in the United States and their denunciations of the Chinese Communist Party, American news outlets also ran stories that spoke of the horrors in China that many Western educated Chinese faced. Again, in

<sup>174</sup> For an example see the editorial on Hua Lo-keng's open letter in *Peoples China* Vol. 1 No. 7 (April 1, 1950), 25; see also "An Open Letter to Overseas Chinese in America," *SCMP* No. 42 (January 5-6, 1951), 12-13.

<sup>175</sup> "Chinese Society Assails Reds," *New York Times* (December 20, 1950), 38.

<sup>176</sup> Fine, "6000 Chinese Students," 56.



May 1952, the *New York Times* ran an article covering the purge of two American educated Chinese professors at Yenching University. Originally founded and funded by Western missionary groups and religious organizations, Yenching continued to receive American support prior to 1949. In 1952, during the reorganization of higher education in China, the university was closed and incorporated into Tsinghua University and Peking University. It was during the reorganization that Dr. Lu Zhiwei (Lu Chih-wei), President of Yenching University and University of Chicago graduate, and Dr. Zhao Zezhen (Chao Tse-chen), Professor of Theology and graduate of Vanderbilt University, were purged for failing to adequately confess and adopt the “correct” line of thinking. For three days, the two professors were forced to undergo criticism by students and faculty of Beijing’s universities. Their situation, it was reported, was not unique and Chinese students and scholars who returned to China could expect similar treatment.<sup>177</sup>

The American government also utilized the Chinese student issue and recruited Chinese students residing in the United States to assist in disseminating propaganda. In June 1951, at the behest of Borden, Inc., Kwan Zunxian was invited on a five state tour of the American Midwest to experience firsthand the workings of the Borden Company. Originally from Shanghai, and a student of nutrition at Cornell University, Kwan met Borden stockholders, employees, farmers, suppliers, and customers in order to understand how each part played a role in American capitalism. After the five state tour, Kwan “got a chance to tell her home folks” about how the company (and capitalism) worked over the Voice of America (VOA).<sup>178</sup> Utilizing Voice of America broadcasts, the United States also attacked China for their state sanctioned extortion campaign, which threatened overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia and the United States with violence against their families if they did not pay a heavy ransom. VOA broadcasts claimed that

<sup>177</sup> “Educators Purged in Red China Drive,” *New York Times* (May 26, 1952), 2.

<sup>178</sup> “Student Describing Capitalism to Chinese at Home,” *New York Times* (June 30, 1951), 20.

the Chinese Communist Party had threatened that if money was not forthcoming, “their aged mothers or other members of their families in China [would] be tortured” by having them crawl over broken glass, “hopping and barking like dogs,” or be subject to “the so-called ‘water treatment’.”<sup>179</sup>

Evocations of the Chinese student issue were constantly made by both the American and Chinese propaganda machines but rarely amounted to more than that. Through 1954, the Chinese student issue remained, in terms of the international Sino-American conflict, a bullet point in a long list of grievances each held against the other. For the American government, a more pressing issue between the two nations was China’s forced retention of American missionaries, businessmen, and, after the Korean War, downed pilots and other soldiers.

During the waning days of the Chinese Civil War, roughly 5,000 Americans, ten percent of whom were government officials, rather than flee before the approaching Communist army, opted instead to remain with their homes, businesses, and missions.<sup>180</sup> Many, however, found the Communists less than receptive to their continued residence in China and were incarcerated or placed under house arrest. The State Department worked tirelessly to obtain exit visas for Americans detained by Chinese authorities and was generally successful. Though there were a few high profile instances of capture and detainment, such as the siege of the American Consulate in Shenyang and the subsequent arrest of Consulate General Angus I. Ward and his staff, or the continued incarceration of Master Sergeant Elmer C. Bender and Chief Electrician William C. Smith, most non-official Americans were free to leave with minimal harassment

<sup>179</sup> “US Accuses Peiping of Torture Threats to Extort Money From Chinese Abroad,” *New York Times* (July 8, 1951), 6.

<sup>180</sup> “US Information Service in Shanghai and Hankow Ordered Closed,” *Department of State Bulletin* Vol. XXI No. 526 (August 1, 1949), 152-53. – State Department estimate puts just over 500 American officials working in various locations throughout China and 4,500 non-officials.

from the Chinese government. Sensing that Chinese officials may be receptive to a continued American presence in China, the Department of State, around June 1950, sought to strengthen the non-official position of American businessmen and missionaries in the country.<sup>181</sup> The outbreak of the Korean War changed that.

America's participation in the Korean War instigated a massive anti-American propaganda campaign in China and the remaining Americans in China suffered for it. Missionaries still in the country were arrested and imprisoned or placed under house arrest after the Chinese Communist Party promulgated regulations in February 1950 of death or life imprisonment for subversive acts. One of the first Americans "martyred" at the hands of Communist authorities was Southern Baptist Missionary Dr. Bill Wallace. Originally from Knoxville, Tennessee, Dr. Wallace left for China in 1935 and ran a medical mission in Wuzhou (Wuchow) for the following fifteen years. On December 19, 1950, Communist officials arrested Dr. Wallace and charged him with espionage. Forced to sign a confession, he was held "incommunicado" in a Wuzhou prison for the next two months. On February 10, Everley Hayes, a fellow missionary and Superintendent of Nurses at Stout Memorial Hospital in Wuzhou, witnessed Communist officials carrying Dr. Wallace's corpse from the prison. Their official explanation was that Dr. Wallace had committed suicide. The sketchy details surrounding his death led State Department officials to presume that Dr. Wallace had died violently while in prison and engendered concern for the welfare of the other Americans remaining in the People's Republic of China.<sup>182</sup> Over the next three years, the Department of State sought, through various intermediaries, to affect the release of Americans

<sup>181</sup> "Memorandum by Mr. Charlton Ogburn of the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, June 2, 1950" *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950* VI (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1976), 352-56; Hereafter referred to as *FRUS*

<sup>182</sup> "The Consul General at Hong Kong to the Secretary of State, February 23, 1951," *FRUS 1951* VII (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1983), 1581-82.

detained in China.<sup>183</sup> By May 1954, however, thirty-two Americans were still listed as incarcerated in the People's Republic of China. The continued detainment of Americans stymied Chinese efforts to obtain recognition by the United States or in the United Nations. President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles consistently raised this point in defense of America's policy of non-recognition of the People's Republic.<sup>184</sup>

By April 1954, with the opening of the Geneva Conference to settle outstanding issues over Korea and Indochina (Vietnam), the American government turned to Britain for assistance. Acting as intermediary for the United States, British Charge d'Affaires Sir Humphrey Trevelyan, negotiated with Chinese representatives for the release of incarcerated Americans on May 17, 1954. Chinese officials admitted to detaining American pilots downed over Chinese territory but claimed this was within their rights since the pilots had violated Chinese airspace. Reporting to the American delegation at Geneva, Trevelyan indicated that the Chinese appeared willing to negotiate over the return of Americans but reciprocity was demanded in the release of Chinese students and scholars detained in the United States.<sup>185</sup> Following this initial contact, the State Department recommended to the Attorney General and Department of Justice that the cases of detained Chinese in the United States be reexamined to determine if they wished to leave. The following day, Trevelyan was instructed to inform the Chinese delegation at Geneva that the United States may be "flexible on this matter" depending on their attitude regarding the release of Americans imprisoned in China.<sup>186</sup> After consultation between the Departments of State,

<sup>183</sup> "List of Americans Under Arrest in Red China," *New York Times* (April 22, 1952), 3; "Chinese Reds Still Hold 34 US Civilians, Seized Sine Intervention in Korean War," *New York Times* (July 30, 1953), 2; *FRUS, 1951 VII*, 1625-26; *FRUS, 1952-54 XIV* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1985), 63-65, 246-48. Department of State estimates placed roughly 60 Americans as incarcerated in China in April 1952. By July 1953 this number had dwindled to 34 due to efforts by British, Russian, and Indian officials.

<sup>184</sup> "Memorandum of Conversation with the President, March 24, 1954," Box 1, John Foster Dulles Papers, White House Memoranda, Meetings With the President 1954 (4) Folder, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>185</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54 XIV*, 417-18.

<sup>186</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54 XIV*, 419-21.

Justice, and Defense, Dulles informed the American delegation at Geneva on May 21, that it had been “ascertained that very few if any of the small number of Chinese who still wish to return to Mainland [China] would have to be held on [the] grounds that their departure would be detrimental to the security interests of the United States.” As such, Trevelyan was instructed to utilize this information as best he could to bargain with the Chinese delegation.<sup>187</sup>

Trevelyan continued negotiating with the Chinese delegation over the following week and, on May 27, informed the American delegation of the results of their talks. According to Trevelyan, the Chinese delegation was first to raise the issue of Americans detained in China and claimed that only 80 remained in the country. The 30 Americans detained in Chinese prisons or under house arrest were so held because they had committed and been convicted of crimes or entered the country illegally. These Americans, therefore, would be subject to Chinese law and their release was non-negotiable. Moreover, the United States had detained between 5,000 and 6,000 Chinese residing in the country and refused to allow them to depart. Trevelyan corrected the Chinese delegation by furnishing State Department figures, which showed that only 120 students were under strict orders not to depart and of those, many had changed their minds about returning to China. Trevelyan recommended to the American delegation and the State Department that further talks would be unproductive if carried out only through an intermediary and suggested that the United States, possibly with his accompaniment, speak directly with the Chinese delegation. Dulles, however, was convinced that the Chinese were simply using the “prisoner issue” as a means to precipitate direct talks and enhance their prestige in Asia by propagating the talks as a step toward American recognition of China.<sup>188</sup>

<sup>187</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54 XIV, 427.*

<sup>188</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54 XIV, 434-37.*

The Chinese delegation intended to make the most of this opportunity and issued a statement to the press on May 28, claiming that the United States had been holding illegally 5,000 Chinese students but they would be willing to negotiate on the release of Americans detained in China for reciprocity on the students detained in the United States. The Department of State quickly followed this statement with a report, which claimed that only 120 students were being denied permission to leave the country due to security concerns and, despite their disallowance to leave, were still free to travel within the country, whereas the Americans in China were not.<sup>189</sup> Despite Dulles' antipathy toward direct negotiations with the Chinese, mounting public pressure in the United States and China's refusal to continue negotiations through an intermediary, forced his hand. Against concerns that the Chinese would construe the talks as a political victory and a step toward recognition, Dulles recommended that Ural Alexis Johnson, American Ambassador to Czechoslovakia, be appointed to accompany Trevelyan in talks with the Chinese delegation on June 3.<sup>190</sup>

Johnson and Trevelyan scheduled the first direct negotiations with the Chinese delegation for June 5 in a small sitting room in the Palais de Nations. Having served on the American delegation at Panmunjom, Johnson hoped that an informal meeting room would prevent the type of acrimonious negotiations he had encountered in Korea and create a relaxing and informal atmosphere conducive "for the kind of free-wheeling exploratory discussion that might actually lead to progress."<sup>191</sup> Despite the attempt to create an easy atmosphere, the first meeting produced nothing substantive but a following meeting was scheduled, at Wang Binnan's discretion. Wang, appointed as the leader of the Chinese delegation, chose a more formal conference room for the

<sup>189</sup> "US Refuses Exit for 120 Chinese: State Department Denies Red Report of 5,000 Students Detained Since 1951," *New York Times* (May 29, 1954), 2.

<sup>190</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54 XIV*, 442-43.

<sup>191</sup> U. Alexis Johnson, *The Right Hand of Power* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1984), 234-35.

next meeting. Though discouraging to Johnson, the meeting produced solid results.

Arrangements for American prisoners to receive mail were made and the Chinese accepted a list of people that the State Department believed were being held in China.<sup>192</sup>

Over the next few weeks Johnson and Wang discussed the repatriation of Chinese students and American prisoners. Though the Chinese delegation did attempt to use the talks to open negotiations on broader issues, Johnson was instructed to negotiate only on the student issue. By June 12, with the declining success of the talks in relation to Korea and Indochina, as well as repeated attempts by Wang to open and prolong dialogue on different issues, Johnson suspected that the Chinese delegation was unlikely to release any detained Americans.<sup>193</sup> However, at their next meeting on June 15, Wang made several concessions and revealed that the Chinese would allow Americans in prison to receive mail and packages and consider commutation of prison sentences for Americans with records of good behavior. In exchange Johnson offered to look into the cases of the 120 Chinese students detained in China and would inform Wang of those who were able to depart. While promising, Wang soon demanded that the two sides make a joint statement regarding nationals' ability to return home but claimed that this would not apply to "law violators."<sup>194</sup> Wang's adamant adherence to releasing a joint statement ended the meeting on a vituperative note and no follow-up meeting was scheduled.

Believing that the release of a few students would facilitate the return of Americans from China, Dulles requested to Attorney General Brownell that the United States should, "on the basis of a trickle," allow ten to fifteen of the 120 to leave the country if they wanted. However,

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid, 235.

<sup>193</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54 XIV*, 466-67.

<sup>194</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54 XIV*, 468-71.

Dulles had no desire to enter into a “position of bargaining as with hostages.”<sup>195</sup> This release, therefore, would be done with no implication of exchange for American prisoners. The preliminary reexamination of the cases of detained Chinese students and scholars, as of June 17, had revealed only one person whom the Justice Department claimed was still ineligible to go back – Qian Xuesen. The rest, according to the Department of Justice, were free to leave if they so wished.

Despite having ended their June 15 meeting on a sour note, Wang Binnan agreed to meet with Johnson on June 21 at the Palais des Nations. Johnson opened the meeting by furnishing a list of fifteen Chinese students whom the State and Justice Departments agreed were now cleared to return to China and that the others who wished to return would soon be notified pending further review of their cases. Johnson further informed Wang that of the 120 who had been denied permission to leave, roughly half of them now preferred to remain in the United States. Grateful for the information, Wang revealed the results of the preliminary investigation on Americans detained in China and claimed that of the thirty-two names on the list given earlier, thirty were in custody and their cases were pending further review. No further results were obtained during the June 21 meeting, except that both sides agreed to continue meetings at the consular level. Johnson returned to Prague, expecting his part in the issue to be resolved.<sup>196</sup>

Following the first meeting in Geneva, many Chinese students who wished to return to China now found their path unblocked. Over the next two months 430 Chinese students applied to the State Department for exit visas and, by mid-August, twenty-two had been approved, 124 provisionally denied, and the remaining 284 pending further review.<sup>197</sup> By December 14, the

<sup>195</sup> “Telephone Call to Mr. Brownell, June 17, 1954,” Box 2, John Foster Dulles Papers, Telephone Conversations, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library; *FRUS, 1952-54 XIV*, 475.

<sup>196</sup> *FRUS, 1952-54 XIV*, 477-79; Johnson, 236.

<sup>197</sup> “US and Red China Discuss Captives,” *New York Times* (August 12, 1954), 2.



number of cases still under review dwindled to just thirty-five. Wanting to press the issue, Beijing released a statement over the radio offering to enter into negotiations for the release of eleven captured American airmen for the release of the thirty-five remaining students in the United States. The State Department, still emphatically opposed to the idea of “hostage negotiations,” released a statement on December 14, which vigorously denied that the two issues were interrelated and that the remaining cases under review would be completed as expeditiously as possible.<sup>198</sup>

For some this was not soon enough. The sentiment among the Chinese students still disallowed from leaving mounted over the several months between the June announcement that they would soon be able to leave and the end of the year. On the same day that the State Department announced that only thirty-five cases remained pending, the *New York Times* reported that two Chinese students living in Pasadena, California, Zheng Benhao (Cheng Penhau) and Han Yinggu (Han Ying-ku), had petitioned the United Nations asking that they be allowed to return to China.<sup>199</sup> Four days later, eight more Chinese students, four in Cambridge, Massachusetts and four in Chicago, “volunteered” to be traded for the eleven United States airmen in China; all but one indicated they were ready to leave immediately.<sup>200</sup> The following day Dag Hammarskjold, Secretary General of the United Nations, received an appeal signed by thirty-one Chinese students in the United States asking that their case be placed before the Human Rights Commission in the United Nations.<sup>201</sup> However, not all Chinese students in the United States were in favor of releasing the thirty-five who still wished to leave. The Chinese Catholic Students Society, which was composed of roughly 1,000 Chinese undergraduate and

<sup>198</sup> “US Bars Trading Chinese Students for Jailed Airmen,” *New York Times* (December 4, 1954), 1.

<sup>199</sup> “Two Petition UN: US Bars Trading Fliers, Students,” *New York Times* (December 14, 1954), 1, 3.

<sup>200</sup> “Chinese Students Seek Exchange for US Airmen,” *New York Times* (December 18, 1954), 3.

<sup>201</sup> “Students Appeal to UN Chief,” *New York Times* (December 19, 1954), 9.

graduate students, appealed to President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles not to initiate a trade for the thirty-five.<sup>202</sup>

Despite the State Department's attempts to dissociate the return of imprisoned Americans in China with the return of Chinese students and scholars in the United States, public pressure was mounting to resolve the issue and bring the Americans home. Massachusetts Representative, and retiring Speaker of the House, Joseph W. Martin, Jr., and Senators John J. Sparkman of Alabama and Homer Ferguson of Michigan, concurred that if thirty-five more Chinese students wished to return, there should be no impediment to their departure if it could lead to the exchange of imprisoned Americans.<sup>203</sup> This sentiment continued to build through early 1955, and was exacerbated by Communist officials, who, in January, offered to let relatives of the imprisoned Americans visit them in China.<sup>204</sup> Various United Nations missions to China, led by Hammarskjold, between January and March, further kept the prisoner issue firmly on the minds of Americans back home.

While the Hammarskjold missions helped to dispel some of Beijing's suspicions and facilitated an understanding of American arguments concerning imprisoned Americans, they failed to produce concrete results toward commuting the prison sentences. As a result, in March, the Eisenhower Administration began to give "serious study" toward lifting the ban on issuance of exit visas to Chinese students in the United States. On March 3, acting Secretary of State Herbert Hoover, Jr. sent a memorandum to President Eisenhower to outline the problem. According to State Department estimates, roughly 4,800 Chinese students had come to the United States between 1946 and 1950. Of those, approximately 800 left before the outbreak of

<sup>202</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>203</sup> "Exchange Sentiment Mounts," *New York Times* (December 17, 1954), 2.

<sup>204</sup> Lindsay Patterson, "Red China Offers to Let Relatives Visit US Airmen," *New York Times* (January 22, 1955), 1.

the Korean War and returned to China before President Truman declared a state of emergency and denied their departure from the United States. Between the outbreak of the Korean War and the talks at Geneva in June 1954, 434 Chinese students had applied for permission to exit the country and 310 had been allowed. The remaining 124 were “provisionally denied” for security purposes but, following the Geneva talks, were re-canvassed to determine whether they still preferred to leave for China or stay in the United States. Sixty-four of the 124 indicated they still wished to return to China and twenty-seven were notified they could leave the country, fifteen of whom had left immediately after being notified. This left a remaining thirty-five students and scholars still under orders not to depart from the country due to security purposes. After the State Department and Attorney General publicly removed the ban on Chinese exiting the country at the end of June, a further thirty-six students and scholars had applied for exit visas but their cases remained pending as of March 1955, leaving seventy-one Chinese students and scholars still technically disallowed from departing the country. In light of China’s adamant demands that the student and prisoner issues were inextricably linked, Hoover informed Eisenhower that the State Department would soon have a policy recommendation.<sup>205</sup>

The following month, after “thorough consideration,” Dulles informed President Eisenhower that the State Department had concluded, “in light of [American] discussions with the Chinese Communists at Geneva, UN Secretary General Hammarskjold’s negotiations at Peiping [Beijing], and other evidence, that detention in the United States of students who have been found eligible for departure by the Immigration and Naturalization Service under existing regulations would not contribute to the release of the imprisoned Americans. On the other hand,

<sup>205</sup> “Memorandum for the President, March 3, 1955,” Box 5, Dulles-Herter Series, March 1955 Folder, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library. See also *FRUS, 1955-57 VII* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1986), 442-43.

release of the students would enable the U.S. to press its case against the Chinese Communists more effectively in the United Nations and elsewhere.” Dulles thus concluded that the State Department would no longer stop Chinese students who wished to leave the country and *were found eligible to do so* by INS. Citing section 215 (a) of the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, Dulles did, however, retain the right to continue screening those whose scientific and technical training could be considered prejudicial to the United States; though he anticipated that “few, if any, applicants are likely to be denied permission to depart.”<sup>206</sup>

Dulles’ reversal in position was announced on April 3 by State Department spokesman Henry Suydam, who reiterated that the students were never held as hostages, as China had claimed, and the decision was made to lift the ban in the hopes of “prodding [Beijing] to reciprocate by turning loose the fifteen United States airmen and forty-one civilians imprisoned or refused exit permits by the Chinese Communists.” Moreover, the release of the students would strengthen the United States’ moral position in negotiations with Beijing. It was also announced that the State Department program of emergency assistance to Chinese students was set to expire on June 30 and that any student who wished to return to China but lacked the funds to do so needed to apply for assistance before then.<sup>207</sup> Ten days later, on April 13, the *SS President Cleveland* set sail from San Francisco for Hong Kong with several of the seventy-six on board.<sup>208</sup>

Those who remained to complete their education, however, soon engendered the ire of INS officials. In June 1955, it was reported that many of seventy-six who decided to stay and complete their education were being harassed by INS officials with threats of arrest and

<sup>206</sup> “Memorandum for the President, April 1, 1955,” Box 5, Dulles-Herter Series, April 1955 Folder (2), Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>207</sup> Elie Abel, “Chinese Students Free to Go Home as US Ends Curb: Release of 76 Specialists is Aimed to Spur Peiping Action on Detained Americans,” *New York Times* (April 3, 1955), 1.

<sup>208</sup> “Chinese Sail for Home,” *New York Times* (April 13, 1955), 5.

deportation, as well as arbitrary immigration procedures and even notices to leave the country that provided only two or three weeks forewarning. J.M. Swing, Commissioner of Immigration, denied the allegations but a series of litigations against the INS dispelled his claims.<sup>209</sup> These arbitrary deportation notices soon became a sticking point in the consular talks at Geneva in July, when Shen Ping, Chinese consul, claimed that the Chinese government had received numerous letters and complaints from Chinese students in the United States claiming they were told to be out of the country before September or they would be arrested by INS.<sup>210</sup> This point would later emerge again in August at the ambassadorial talks in Geneva.

While the State Department announcement in early April rescinded the restraining orders against seventy-six Chinese students and scholars, six still found their cases under review. On May 4, President Eisenhower's Operations Coordinating Board (OCB) met to discuss, among other things, the cases of Qian Xuesen and David Kahsin Wang. The OCB, designed to coordinate and implement national security policy across several government agencies, recommended that their cases not be approved and they not be granted permission to leave. Wang, like Qian, possessed advanced scientific knowledge in physics, and his employment at the Aerojet Engineering Corporation in Azusa, California convinced the OCB that his return would be inimical to national security.<sup>211</sup> Eisenhower disagreed.

On June 10, Eisenhower and Dulles met to discuss the repatriation of Americans still imprisoned in China and the release of Chinese students. Dulles, still adamant that the student and prisoner issues be dissociated from one another, recommended that the United States take a strong stand on the return of the Americans in China. The President countered with his belief that

<sup>209</sup> Harrison E. Salisbury, "US Pledge Given in Chinese Cases," *New York Times* (June 4, 1955), 3.

<sup>210</sup> *FRUS 1955-57 VII*, 656-58.

<sup>211</sup> "Staats to Swing, May 9, 1955," Box 27, OCB Central Files, 1948-61, OCB 091.China File 4(4) [January–November 1955], Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

the United States simply was not in a strong moral position to take this stance. The Chinese students had come to the United States, stated Eisenhower, with the implied understanding that they would be able to return home after their education was completed. Dulles countered by stating that Americans had similarly entered China under the same understanding. Regardless, over the course of the meeting, Eisenhower informed Dulles that he did not think the technical or scientific knowledge, acquired in the United States by those still detained, was as valuable as commonly believed. In the President's estimation, the United States should no longer continue to deny their exit and should allow any who wished to depart the freedom to leave. Citing two cases that the Department of Defense was "dubious" about due to their knowledge of "highly classified material," Dulles claimed he would look into the matter further.<sup>212</sup>

By mid-June Eisenhower made it clear to Dulles that the United States should no longer prevent the return to China of any Chinese student who desired to leave. Still intensely concerned with regaining Americans held prisoner in China, Dulles finally gave in on the dissociation of the student and prisoner issues and on June 11 informed the Department of Defense that the restriction on Qian Xuesen and David Wang should be lifted. Colonel Andrew Jackson Goodpaster, Staff Secretary for the Department of Defense and Liaison Officer to the President, met with Eisenhower on June 13 and the two agreed that no impediment to the release of Qian or Wang would be enforced.<sup>213</sup>

With the restriction lifted, Dulles agreed to conduct ambassadorial-level talks with the People's Republic at Geneva beginning August 1, 1955. U. Alexis Johnson was again appointed

<sup>212</sup> "Memorandum of Conversation with the President, June 10, 1955," Box 3, John Foster Dulles Papers, White House Memoranda Subseries, Meetings with the President 1955 (4) Folder, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>213</sup> "Note to the Secretary of State, July 29, 1955," Box 11, John Foster Dulles Papers, Subject Series, Wang-Johnson Talks-Prisoners of War 1955 (2) Folder, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

to represent the United States, while Wang Bingnan was reappointed as representative of the People's Republic of China. On July 29, Dulles provided Johnson with a list of eighteen points to direct the negotiations. Since the primary purpose of the August Geneva talks were to settle "the matter of repatriation of civilians who desire to return to their respective countries..." other issues were considered ancillary and, therefore, should not be discussed until a satisfactory conclusion was reached on the issue of repatriation.<sup>214</sup>

While the first meeting on August 1 was little more than a formality, with Johnson and Wang agreeing to terms of the negotiations, the next meeting on August 2 produced concrete results. Wang opened the meeting by announcing that the People's Republic had released the eleven airmen held as prisoner and he furnished a list of names of the remaining Americans in China for the American delegation. In return, Wang asked that the United States furnish a list of names of the seventy-six Chinese students and scholars who had been granted permission to leave the United States in order for the Chinese government to follow up on their status and ensure that they had, in fact, arrived in China, as well as a list of all Chinese nationals residing in America. Wang further suggested that India act as mediator in the resolution of the student issue by checking on the status of Chinese nationals within the United States. Johnson replied that he would look into these propositions and the second meeting ended amicably.<sup>215</sup>

Johnson and Wang eventually met fourteen more times over the course of the month before an agreement was reached, on September 10, 1955. The United States agreed that, "The United States recognizes that Chinese in the United States who desire to return to the People's Republic of China are entitled to do so and declares that it has adopted and will further adopt appropriate

<sup>214</sup> Dulles to Johnson, July 29, 1955," Box 11, John Foster Dulles Papers, Subject Series, Wang-Johnson Talks-Prisoners of War 1955 (2) Folder, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>215</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57 VIII* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1986), 1-3, 7-10.

measures so that they can expeditiously exercise their right to return.” The Republic of India was also granted permission to act as intermediary for any Chinese student who felt that their departure was being obstructed by American officials. The People’s Republic of China made an identical statement in regards to Americans in China and permitted the Government of the United Kingdom to act as intermediary on behalf of any Americans who felt that their exit was being prevented.<sup>216</sup>

On September 17, 1955, Qian Xuesen stood at the Los Angeles harbor with his wife and children and prepared to board the *SS President Cleveland* bound for Hong Kong. Surrounded by reporters, Qian was quoted as saying, “I do not plan to come back. I have no reason to come back. I have thought about it for a long time. I plan to do my best to help the Chinese people build up their nation to where they can live with dignity and happiness.”<sup>217</sup> Qian and two other Chinese scientists were the last of the Chinese students and scholars to return to the People’s Republic of China.<sup>218</sup>

Both the United States and People’s Republic of China had, from the very beginning, politicized the issues surrounding Chinese students in the United States. The Chinese Communist Party, in their calls to combat ‘American imperialism’ and foster anti-American sentiment during the Korean War, utilized Chinese students in their propaganda claims by proving that the United States forcibly detained and refused to allow them to return to China. Those who did return were heralded as heroes, survivors of American mistreatment, and firsthand witnesses of the ‘imperial’ policies of the United States. However, their utility in China was limited mostly to their

<sup>216</sup> *FRUS, 1955-57 VIII*, 85-86.

<sup>217</sup> Iris Chang, 199.

<sup>218</sup> “Last Chinese Students Go,” *New York Times* (September 21, 1955), 12.



propaganda value, especially during the Korean War. Chinese propaganda ran several open letters and editorials from Chinese students who had returned from the United States, eager to aid China and proud to fight against America in the Korean War. Conversely, the United States attempted to dissuade Chinese students from returning to the People's Republic by highlighting the brutal policies of torture and murder that the Communist Party had enacted against the Chinese people. Through Voice of America broadcasts, the American government used Chinese students to disseminate pro-American messages and information. Concurrently, Chinese student organizations were themselves involved in politicizing the student issue by writing to the American and Chinese governments, as well as the United Nations.

That Chinese students and the Chinese student issue became the principal political precipitant for direct negotiations between the People's Republic of China and the United States, when viewed in this context, is unsurprising. Both countries had politicized the students since 1949 and their use as political pawns in the hopes of affecting better Sino-American relations at Geneva was part of a process that had begun with the inception of the People's Republic. However, their importance to both the United States and China was peripheral at best. This is evidenced by the marginal position in the People's Republic of those who returned and the American government's slow and haphazard response to the realities of the Chinese situation in the United States. Moreover, had China not conducted the same policy in regards to American nationals, it is unlikely that the United States would have agreed to such high-level talks, especially in the mid-1950s. This is clearly evidenced by Dulles' view of the Geneva talks, which were viewed as an expedient to recover Americans detained in China; all other issues were secondary.<sup>219</sup> For China, the use of the student issue opened the United States to direct talks and allowed the

<sup>219</sup> "Memorandum of Conversation, August 5, 1955," Box 3, John Foster Dulles Papers, White House Memoranda, Meetings with the President 1955 (3) Folder, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library; Yelong Han, 96.

People's Republic to gain another propaganda victory in Asia. Having first fought America to a stalemate on the Korean Peninsula, the Geneva talks were viewed as a chance to work toward recognition and a seat at the United Nations. Yet, the students were never important in and of themselves. While some, such as Qian Xuesen, did go on to contribute significantly to China's atomic program, or other scientific breakthroughs, the overt reliance on the Soviet Union and Soviet practices during the mid-1950s diminished any chance that the students and scholars would return and contribute anything meaningful to the People's Republic of China.

## CHAPTER 7

## CONCLUSION

Following a long-established, yet unofficially endorsed precedent, the American government initially attempted to utilize Chinese students as subversive, pro-American agents of democracy to influence and direct modernization paradigms in China. This policy continued to dictate American action toward the early People's Republic of China with the intent of destabilizing the Chinese Communist regime. Yet, following China's intervention in the Korean War, the American government adopted a more active policy regarding Chinese students in an effort to deny the PRC access to scientific and technical information. Considered national security risks, the American government denied Chinese students exit permits and forcibly retained those with scientific and technical knowledge. By 1955, however, the political value of these Chinese students again shifted. Between 1948 and 1955, the United States politicized Chinese students and actively attempted to utilize them to destabilize the CCP and deny the PRC access to scientific and technical information before, ultimately, utilizing them as political capital for exchange of American citizens similarly detained in China.

Sino-American education exchange, from its inception, consistently focused on technical training for Chinese students. Both the Qing and Guomindang governments were cognizant of China's need for engineers, scientists, and technicians, and viewed education exchange with the United States as an expedient for producing these highly trained specialists. Though ambivalent about overt reliance on Western education, the exigencies of modernization programs took precedence and the Chinese government dispatched large contingents of students to the United States, especially following the cessation of the Second World War. Conversely, American

conceptualizations of education exchange focused on the utility of Chinese students as agents of democracy. Following the remission of the Boxer Indemnity Fund in 1905, the United States government became more actively involved in education exchange and sought to utilize Chinese students as political pawns, believing them to be pro-American “forces for democracy.” Convinced that they would fulfill influential roles in government and business, the American government hoped that by acquainting Chinese intellectuals with the American socio-economic system they would promote a pro-American agenda, thereby providing the United States influence over Chinese patterns of development. This conception of the role of education exchange remained unaltered until China’s intervention in the Korean War.

Li Hongshan argues that beginning in 1900, with the remission of the Boxer Indemnity Fund, both the American and Chinese governments actively engaged in education exchange, wresting it away from private enterprises and transforming it into a state function for domestic and foreign politics. Termination of education exchange, therefore, was useful to achieve short-term political and diplomatic goals.<sup>220</sup> Yet, while abrogation of institutional mechanisms for exchanging students with China ended in 1950, a large cohort of Chinese students and intellectuals remained in the United States. Initially inclined to allow these students to return to their homes on the Mainland, the American government provided monetary assistance for their return upon completion of their studies. This policy conformed to long-standing American conceptualizations of education exchange and the role of Western-educated students and intellectuals. The utility of Chinese students, however, shifted around 1948. Still considered democratic agents, it was hoped that their return to China would have a subversive and destabilizing effect on the Chinese Communist regime.

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<sup>220</sup> Li Honshan, *US-China Educational Exchange: State, Society, and Intercultural Relations, 1905-1950* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 2.

Intervention by the Chinese People's Volunteer Army in Korea altered American perceptions of the utility of Chinese students once again and the American government came to view their knowledge as potentially damaging, not to the PRC, but to American national security. An overly hostile Chinese Communist regime with access to specialized scientific and technical knowledge presented a threat to the United States and the State Department enacted interdictions against Chinese intellectuals on departure from the country. In the case of Sino-American relations, the mechanisms of education exchange were deemed less important than the individuals themselves. By emphasizing the utility of scientifically and technically trained intellectuals to prevent dissemination of information to the PRC, the American government expanded its war against China to the intellectual front as well as the traditional battlefield. Even after signing the ceasefire agreement at Panmunjom, American officials continued waging an intellectual Cold War against the People's Republic.

Mitigating the efficacy of this policy, however, was the Communist Party's overt reliance on the Soviet Union. In the economic, industrial, and educational sectors, the CCP elided all Western influence in favor of Soviet models of development. Moreover, the Chinese Communists and Mao were intensely concerned over the political pedigree of intellectuals in China during the 1950s and enacted numerous "reforms" designed to "correct" their thinking and achieve political homogeneity. Had the American government allowed Chinese students and intellectuals to return, it is therefore unlikely that many would have been granted positions which allowed them to utilize their knowledge in a prejudicial manner against the United States.<sup>221</sup> Instead, the CCP generally utilized returning students as political propaganda pieces against the

<sup>221</sup> There is, of course, the obvious exception of those with highly specialized scientific and technical knowledge such as Qian Xuesen, who returned to China and was put to work on China's nuclear weapons and rocketry programs. However, these individuals were few and represent exceptions to the rule.

United States during the Korean War and the Geneva talks in 1954 and 1955. Substantiating Chinese excoriations was the discriminatory treatment Chinese intellectuals received while in the United States.

Disallowed from returning to the Mainland, many Chinese students and intellectuals endured harsh treatment from the Department of Justice and Immigration and Naturalization Services officials. Since most Chinese students came to the United States on student visas, their continued residence after graduation was technically illegal. Though the Department of State enacted policies designed to accommodate and alleviate the Chinese student's situation, they were sporadic and slowly implemented. Compounded by the anti-Communist paranoia during the early to mid-1950s, many Chinese students received contradictory orders from the Departments of State and Justice. While officials from the State Department told Chinese students they could not leave, Department of Justice and INS officials repeatedly served Chinese students with orders of deportation. In some instances, INS officials, projecting suspicions of pro-communist sympathies onto Chinese students and intellectuals, forcefully interviewed them to ascertain their political loyalties. Thus, many found themselves under intense scrutiny and were forced to report their whereabouts and occupational statuses to government officials every three months.

The institutional confusion between the Departments of State and Justice, besides providing the Chinese Communist Party with polemical ammunition, also intensely concerned American officials. In response to both foreign and domestic pressure, often from the students themselves, Congress introduced newly restructured immigration policies designed, in part, to alleviate the Chinese student problem. While not a panacea, the Refugee Relief Act of 1953 did allow for students to apply for permanent residence. Though, as Yelong Han argues, the choice

to do so was effectively removed since Chinese students were still disallowed from leaving.<sup>222</sup> Moreover, the decision to partially remove barriers to immigration was made by the considerable administrative and financial burdens that encumbered the American government in their decision to retain such a large cohort of individuals. Regardless, restructuring of immigration policy to accommodate Chinese intellectuals and students highlights the shift in emphasis away from utilizing the institutional mechanism of education exchange in favor of individuals. Furthermore, it allowed the United States to retain well-educated Chinese intellectuals and continue a policy of denying the PRC advanced Western scientific and technical knowledge.

Retaining Chinese intellectuals and students also provided the American government with a source of propaganda material for its own purposes. While the CCP utilized returning students and their stories of harsh treatment while abroad to vituperate the United States, the American government utilized them to promote a pro-American image of democracy and freedom to the Chinese people over Voice of America broadcasts. In this way, small threads of the long-standing notion of Chinese students as subversive democratic forces continued into the mid-1950s. However, by 1954-55, with increasing Sino-American conflicts in the Taiwan Straits and elsewhere, the two governments agreed to bilateral negotiations at Geneva and Chinese students finally came to the foreground in both American and Chinese political and diplomatic thinking.

Disparaging the Chinese Communists for detaining downed American pilots, American negotiators determined to secure their release through diplomatic channels. Though initially rebuffing Chinese offers to exchange American pilots for detained Chinese students and intellectuals, President Eisenhower soon came to see the utility of these individuals as political

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<sup>222</sup> Yelong Han, "An Untold Story," 77-99.

capital and, over the protestations of John Foster Dulles, advocated for the exchange. In August 1955, the United States and People's Republic of China formally agreed to the exchange and allowed those Chinese remaining in America who wished to return permission to do so.

In tracing the shifting American perceptions of education exchange, it can be seen that the American government, beginning in 1905, continually attempted to direct and influence modernization paradigms in China. First through a soft power approach, which viewed Chinese students as potential democratic forces who would work behind the scenes to implement policies conducive to American interests. The rise of the Chinese Communist Party did not alter this basic concept and through late-1950, the notion of subversive democratic forces continued to dictate American rationale regarding Chinese students. However, following China's intervention in the Korean War, the American government adopted a more active policy to physically restrain Chinese students and intellectuals from returning to the Mainland in an effort to deny the PRC access to scientific and technical information. Utility thus shifted from the institution of education exchange to the individual and their knowledge. Throughout the early 1950s this policy of waging an intellectual Cold War against the People's Republic continued. In diplomatic affairs this also resulted in utilizing students and intellectuals as propaganda pieces to wage a polemical war. Domestically, retention of Chinese students and intellectuals forced a restructuring of immigration policies to alleviate their situations. Finally, following increasingly hostile relations and a desire to return Americans imprisoned in China, the American government viewed Chinese students as political capital, useful to exchange for Americans. The Sino-American Cold War thus politicized Chinese students and increased American governmental attention toward them, especially in the early Cold War era between 1948 and 1955.



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