

**Chinese American Activism**  
**in the Cold War-Civil Rights Movement Era, 1949-1972**

by

Zhenxing Zhu

Professor Yayo OKANO, Supervisor

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**DEDICATION:**

To my parents:  
Zhu Zhongxiao and Bai Xia  
And to my wife:  
Hu Hongyang

In memory of Him Mark Lai and Laura Lai

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATION

AAPA	Asian American Political Alliance
AASU	Afro-American Student Union
APA	Asian Political Alliance
BAASC	Bay Area Asian Students Coalition
BPP	Black Panther Party
BSU	Black Student Union
CAA	Chinese for Affirmative Action
CADYL	Chinese American Democratic Youth League (also known as Min Qing)
CADC	Chinese American Democratic Club
CAYC	Chinese American Youth Club
CACA	Chinese American Citizens Alliance
CCBA	Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (also known as the Chinese Six Companies)
CCF	Chinese Culture Foundation
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
<i>CDN</i>	<i>China Daily News</i>
CHSA	Chinese Historical Society of America
CHLA	Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance of New York
CPUSA	Communist Party of USA
CWMAA	Chinese Workers Mutual Aid Association
CYL	Chinese Youth League
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
ICOC	Inner City Organizing Committee
ICSA	Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action
INS	United States Immigration and Naturalization Service
JACL	Japanese American Citizens League
KMT	Kuomintang
LASO	Latin American Student Organization
MASC	Mexican American Student Confederation
NASU	Native American Student Union
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
OCFPD	Overseas Chinese Federation for Peace and Democracy in China
PLA	Chinese People's Liberation Army (also known as Chinese Red Army)
PACE	Pilipino American Collegiate Endeavor

PRC	People's Republic of China
RAM	Revolutionary Action Movement
ROC	Republic of China
RGP	Red Guard Party
SCLC	Southern Christian Leadership Conference
SFGCCSA	San Francisco Greater Chinatown Community Service Association
TWLF	Third World Liberation Front
USIA	United States Information Agency



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## **Introduction**

On November 20, 2014, a 28-year-old African American man, Akai Gurley was fatally shot by a New York City Police Department (NYPD) officer named Peter Liang, when Liang was patrolling the stairwells of a public housing project in Brooklyn in New York City with his white colleague, Shaun Landau. Peter Liang was a Chinese American, and he had been in the New York City Police Department for only one and a half years before this shooting occurred. Although the shooting was recognized as an accidental discharge, Officer Liang was accused of not immediately giving medical care when he found Gurley was shot and bleeding. Later Liang was indicted on manslaughter and other criminal charges. On February 11, 2016, Liang was found guilty of manslaughter, official misconduct, and two other crimes.

According to the charges towards Liang, he might be sentenced to jail for over 15 years. The court's decision shocked the whole Chinese American community in the United States. Many Chinese Americans thought Peter Liang became a "scapegoat" to be targeted while the relations between American police and minority groups (especially African Americans) were tense. In fact, before Liang's case, there were several white police officers, who had killed unarmed African Americans (including Daniel Pantaleo who killed Eric Garner by using a chokehold, and Darren Wilson who shot Michael Brown), and were previously found no guilty. Some Chinese American activists organized

protests due to feeling that Asian Americans had been too “passive” or “indifferent” and apolitical. On February 20, 2016, tens of thousands of people protested in support of Liang in New York, and the protest rallies were also held in Washington, Boston, Los Angeles and other cities across the U.S. on the same day.<sup>1</sup> Does this mean there is a growing political consciousness among Chinese Americans?

However, the younger generation of Chinese Americans (especially those who were born in the United States) had different opinions from their parents concerning Liang’s case. For those American born Chinese Americans, they felt disappointed by their parents rallying in support of Peter Liang and protesting the judge’s decision. They thought the old generation of Chinese Americans just cared about whether people of their group were treated with justice but kept silent and far away from social justice issues concerning other minority groups (such as the Black Lives Matter protests). The Chinese American journalist, Steph Yin, who is of the second generation, supported the judge’s decision and opposed the protest for Liang. As she stated:

Many Asian Americans are focusing on Peter Liang as an individual instead of as part of a system that’s broken... It’s also a system in which Black folks can face a life sentence for nonviolent drug crimes, while cops walk free (or serve much shorter sentences) for taking innocent lives. Many Asian Americans fail to see this systematic violence as related to them, when in

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<sup>1</sup> “Meiguo huashe faqi shenyuan huayi jingcha Liang Bide de da youxing,” [Chinese American Community Organized Demonstration for Chinese American NYPD police officer, Peter Liang] *BBC News: Chinese News Website*, February 20, 2016.  
[http://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/world/2016/02/160220\\_us\\_peterliang\\_chinese](http://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/world/2016/02/160220_us_peterliang_chinese)

fact history has taught us that white supremacy is a revolving door that deems different groups of marginalized folks as “unsafe” based on what benefits white people at the time. White people will always find new reasons to profile people of color as criminals, spies, terrorists, and so forth, and Asian Americans are not immune.<sup>2</sup>

Besides these native-born Chinese Americans who preferred to establish solidarity with other minorities, some leaders of civil rights organizations in Chinatowns and Chinese American scholars also opposed speaking up in support of Liang. As Cathy Dang, who is the chief general of the Asian Anti-violence League, said “All cops should take responsibility for their conduct, it is not concerned with color.” Moreover, Janelle Wong, who is professor and director of Asian American Studies at the University of Maryland, confessed, “as a scholar who has been studying the topic of Asian American participation in American politics for several years, normally, I should be cheerful for the awakening of Chinese Americans’ political consciousness and their great protesting campaigns. However, I felt a few anxieties.” She worried that “Liang’s case will drive a wedge between Chinese Americans and African Americans as Chinese American were used as puppets to strip away black civil rights like in the past.”<sup>3</sup>

Why were there gaps between old and young generations considering Peter Liang’s

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<sup>2</sup> Steph Yin, “I’m Chinese American and I Think This Weekend’s Peter Liang Protests Were a Problem, and an Opportunity,” *Huff Post New York*, February 22, 2016, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/steph-yin/peter-liang-protests\\_b\\_9289990.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/steph-yin/peter-liang-protests_b_9289990.html)

<sup>3</sup> Feng Zhaoyin, “Chenmo de huaren weishenme wei Liang Bide zhanlechulai,” [Why did the silent Chinese Americans protest for Peter Liang] *Duan Chuanmei* [Initium Media], February 24, 2016. <https://theinitium.com/article/20160224-international-PeterLiang1/>

case? Were there any similar protest movements in the past? If there were, how did Chinese Americans struggle for justice and their civil rights? Why was it the case that, like Professor Wong states “Chinese American were used as puppets to strip away black civil rights like in the past?”<sup>4</sup> How did Chinese Americans view the African American Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement in the past? These questions are of profound concern in my dissertation.

Undoubtedly, the African American Civil Rights Movement of the 20th century did not only profoundly impact the black communities, but also greatly inspired other minority groups. However, according to some scholars, among the Asian ethnic groups, only limited activism can be found before the late 1960s.<sup>5</sup> It seemed that Chinese Americans, who have had a long history of discrimination and were victims of institutionalized racism just like African Americans, stood aside when black people fought for equality and justice in the 1950s and 1960s, and that suddenly the “Asian American Movement”<sup>6</sup> emerged after the late 1960s. Interestingly enough, most scholars

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> It is actually worthwhile to examine why Asian ethnic groups lost their voice while black people struggled for their legal rights in the period of the 1950s and the early half of 1960s. William Wei attributes the lack of a visible activist movement to the fact that “unlike a large proportion in the American population and the widespread public awareness of African American history and the exploitation as slaves, Asian Americans have smaller numbers and little known history of labor exploitation and resistance to oppression.” See William Wei, *The Asian American Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1993), 1-4.

<sup>6</sup> There are many scholars who have published works on the Asian American movement. For example, William Wei’s *The Asian American Movement* mainly takes a rather conservative look at the Asian American movement after 1968 and its origins. In Wei’s other essay, “A commentary

depicted the “Asian American Movement” as pan-Asian group activism, moreover, they always mention that the Asian American Movement emerged under great inspiration by the African American Civil Rights Movement. How did the African American Civil Rights Movement influence these young activists? Surely, there were many young Chinese American activists who joined the movement. How did they break the silence in their communities and finally unite other Asian ethnic groups to form an activist coalition? These questions remain unsolved.

William Wei is famous for his scholarship on the Asian American Movement, which he characterized as being initiated by young Asian American college students who “grew up in white suburbs or managed to escape ethnic communities”. In his works, he simply asserts the civil rights movement did not occur among Asian groups until the late 1960s because these groups were fragmented due to ethnic factors. Furthermore, he argues, the Exclusion Acts towards Asians meant that it was difficult to form families so that there

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on Young Asian American Activists from the 1960s to the Present” (In Lee, Jennifer, Zhou, Min eds. *Asian American Youth: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity* (New York: Routledge, 2004)299-312), he points out that most Asian American activists were college students who were from middle class families and grew up in white suburbs or managed to escape their ethnic communities. In Harvey Dong’s 2002 Ph.D. dissertation, “The Origins and Trajectory of Asian American Political Activism in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1968-1978,” sets out to develop a framework that can explain the rise, direction and decline of Asian American political activism from 1968 to 1978 through some case studies. In Daryl Joji Maeda’s *Rethinking the Asian American Movement* (NY: Routledge, 2012), he provides a short, accessible overview of this important social and political movement from 1968 to 1980, highlighting key events and key figures, the movement’s strengths and weakness and how it intersected with other social and political movements of the time, and its lasting effects on the country.



were not enough Asian youths, and Asians in the United States were too busy making a living and raising a family to participate in political activities.<sup>7</sup> However, as an old-time activist as well as a famous scholar of studying Chinese American history, Him Mark Lai views leftist activism in Chinese American communities differently. According to several of his works, since the beginning of the twentieth century the leftist activist movements in Chinese American communities did occur, and continually existed until the end of 1950s. These activist movements were mainly related to the politics and revolutions in China, but sometimes the activists also called for their civil rights in American society.<sup>8</sup>

Why is there a gap of recognition concerning the Chinese American activist movements between scholars and activists? Why did the Chinese American activism that was examined by Him Mark Lai become invisible? Moreover, it is well known that the African American Civil Rights Movement coincided with the Cold War. How did Chinese Americans consider the African American movement while they were situated in difficult positions— due to the transnational politics in the context of the Cold War? How did the theme of Chinese American activism transform from being a participant in China’s politics to being an integral part of the Asian American Movement? My dissertation

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<sup>7</sup> William Wei, *The Asian American Movement*, 11-43; Wei, “A Commentary on Young Asian American Activists from 1960s to the Present”, 306.

<sup>8</sup> Him Mark Lai, “China Politics and the U.S. Chinese Communities,” in Emma Gee, ed., *Counterpoint: Perspectives on Asian America* (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 1976), 152-159; Lai, “A Historical Survey of the Left in America,” 63-80.

aspires to develop an awareness concerning these questions. The aim of this dissertation is to give an overview of the Chinese American activist movement in the period of the Cold War and the African American Civil Rights Movement. In order to accomplish it, the first task is to examine the historical account of Chinese Americans and their communities.

### **Previous Research**

In the United States, the founding of the Chinese Historical Society of America(CHSA 美國華人歷史學會, which will be discussed in chapter 5) in January 1963 had great significance for the research of Chinese American history. Before it was founded, history research on Chinese immigrants in the United States was scattered in mainstream intellectual works and many were distorted because most of the primary resources were written in Chinese and were not available to English speaking scholars. For example, historian Gunther P. Barth, in his work *Bitter Strength: A History of the Chinese in the United States*, published in 1964, blamed the lack of conventional sources of their history on the “illiterate or poorly educated sojourners.”<sup>9</sup>

After the CHSA was founded, and especially since Him Mark Lai joined the association, he and other CHSA members have used a large number of Chinese language

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<sup>9</sup> Gunther P. Barth, *Bitter Strength: A History of the Chinese in the United States, 1850-1870* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 7.

materials to compile *A History of the Chinese in California: A Syllabus*,<sup>10</sup> published in 1969. This work provides the first framework for understanding the Chinese American experience and became an important and indispensable reference for the research of Chinese labor history in the nineteenth century.

Through the academic base of the CHSA, Lai continued to research Chinese American history and published *Cong Huaqiao dao Huaren*<sup>11</sup> [From Overseas Chinese to Chinese American] in 1992, which became the first insightful general history book of Chinese American written in Chinese by a native born Chinese American. Lai chronologically gives an exhaustive overview of Chinese American history from the Gold Rush in the mid-nineteenth century to participation in American mainstream politics in the 1980s. He vividly describes Chinese American experiences from enduring discrimination to integrating into the larger American society. After twelve years Lai published another masterpiece, *Becoming Chinese American: A History of Communities and Institutions*.<sup>12</sup> Compared to the former work which is narrated as a general book, the latter is a seminal study on key organizations and institutions in Chinese American society

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas W. Chin, Him Mark Lai and Philip P. Choy eds. *A History of Chinese in California: A Syllabus* (San Francisco, CA: Chinese Historical Society of America, 1969).

<sup>11</sup> Lai, *Cong Huaqiao dao Huaren: Er'shi shiji Meiguo Huaren shehui fazhanshi* [From Overseas Chinese to Chinese American: A History of the Development of Chinese American Society during the Twentieth Century] (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing (H.K) CO., LTD, 1992).

<sup>12</sup> Lai, *Becoming Chinese American: A History of Communities and Institutions* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2004).

that analytically examines both enormous Chinese and English language resources. Both of them provide useful insights into the Chinese American communities, especially the latter work, and the descriptions on the CCBA/Huiguan system have inspired me to explore how Chinese American activism emerged.

Lai's two books establish the base for scholarship of Chinese American historiography, while the following two books analyze Chinese American general history from their unique perspectives. Liu Peichi's *Meiguo Huaqiao shi xubian* [A Sequel to *A History of Chinese in the United States of America*], published in 1981, is written on the basis of a large quantity of primary materials collected by the pro-KMT Chinese American establishment.<sup>13</sup> Because Liu was a KMT Central Committee member and was dispatched to San Francisco for supervising the KMT's branch in the United States in early 1950s, his narratives support the Kuomintang control of Chinese American communities and display a bias against Chinese American leftist activism. However, his description of the progress of founding the Anti-Communist League are worthy of reference for examining how the Kuomintang power was controlling the Chinese American communities.

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<sup>13</sup> Peichi Liu, *Meiguo Huaqiao shi xubian* [A Sequel to *A History of Chinese in the United States of America*] (Taipei: Liming wenhua shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1981).

In *The Chinese in America: A Narrative History*<sup>14</sup>, published in 2003, Iris Chang tries to write a story-based form history of Chinese Americans, which approaches comprehensive narratives on the history relevant to Chinese Americans from imperial China in the nineteenth century to the high-tech period of the 1990s. Chang mainly focuses on each injustice that the Chinese Americans suffered, including the Chinese Exclusion period, the Great Depression and the Cold War-McCarthyism. Unlike Lai's narrative that looks at Chinese Americans integrating into the larger society of America, Chang's narrative history narrates the discrimination and experiences of exclusion suffered by Chinese Americans.

As general history books, the above-mentioned works give an overview of Chinese American experiences in the United States and provide the socio-political context for this dissertation to explore Chinese American activism. Although some of them narrate fragments of Chinese American activism, they fail to describe the dynamics of the Chinese American activist movement and to explore the interconnectedness of these movements with American society in particular regarding historical periods such as the Cold War-Civil Rights period.

Focusing on the historical narratives in the Cold War-Civil Rights era, the first

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<sup>14</sup> Iris Chang, *The Chinese in America: A Narrative History* (New York, NY: Viking Penguin, 2003).

historian to approach both the Civil Rights Movement and the Cold War in the same context is Mary L. Dudziak. In her work *Cold War Civil Rights*, published in 2000, Dudziak argues that in the context of the Cold War, American domestic racial problems became a target of the Soviet Union and the newly decolonized African countries. In the face of such pressures, the U.S. government had to consider African Americans' appeal and to promote social change at home in order to uphold the image of "leader of the Free World."<sup>15</sup>

However, Chinese Americans faced a considerably different situation from African Americans. In the antagonistic paradigm between "Communist" mainland China and "Free World" Taiwan which was backed by the U.S., the Chinese Americans who appealed for civil rights to the American majority society would be considered "communists" or "subversives" and purged from the Chinese American community. Therefore, the Cold War prevented them from calling for their civil rights in relation to the white majority society. The voices of Chinese American activism also became invisible for the outside world.

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<sup>15</sup> As Mary L. Dudziak suggests, "In spite of the repression of the Cold War era, civil rights reform was in part a product of the Cold War. In the years following World War II, racial discrimination in the United States received increasing attention from other countries...In this context, efforts to promote civil rights within the United States were consistent with and important to the more central U.S. mission of fighting world communism." See Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War and Civil Rights: Race and Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2000), 12.

Besides the Cold War, another important factor that influenced Chinese American society is that accompanying the repeal of Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943, some literate Chinese Americans found jobs in professional, technical, and clerical areas from which Chinese Americans had been barred during the Chinese Exclusion period, and they became well-assimilated into the white society and became middle class so that they could escape from Chinatown to live in white suburbs. In consideration of these important contexts, the previous studies on Chinese American history in the Cold War-Civil Rights period were written from the following two approaches:

1. The “Assimilation and model minority” approach

Some historians describe how Chinese Americans adjusted their positions and status in order to adapt to American policies in the domestic and international sphere (such as assimilation, suburbanization and advocating American democracy’s superiority to communism) in the early Cold War era. For example, in Cindy I-Fen Cheng’s insightful article, “Out of Chinatown and into the Suburbs,”<sup>16</sup> Cheng argues in the context of the Cold War, in order to establish the credibility of American democracy over communism, suburbanization became symbol of the minority groups’ Americanization. She explores

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<sup>16</sup> Cindy I-Fen Cheng, “Out of Chinatown and into the Suburbs: Chinese Americans and the Politics of Cultural Citizenship in Early Cold War America,” *American Quarterly*, Vol.58, No.4 (December 2006), 1067-1090.

in that discourse, why it became important for Chinese Americans to stress “transform[ing] the ‘segregated immobility’ of bachelors into heterosexual nuclear families” and living in the white neighborhood.<sup>17</sup> In her recently published book, *Citizens of Asian America*, published in 2013, Cheng expanded the objectives of research to Asian Americans and continually explores “how the rising status of Asian Americans affirmed the belief in the inevitability of national progress and effectively distinguished the superiority of the American way of life over communism.”<sup>18</sup>

Ellen D. Wu’s article, “‘America’s Chinese’: Anti-Communism Citizenship and Cultural Diplomacy during the Cold War,”<sup>19</sup> follows the same narrative mode. Wu depicted that in order to counter the Communists’ propaganda in the Asian Pacific, the U.S. State Department used the well-assimilated Chinese Americans as a vehicle of U.S. cultural diplomacy to propagate that “Chinese Americans have gotten full citizenship as a racial minority,” so that the blame of the U.S. racial problem could ease and U.S. could continually maintain its presence in the Asian Pacific area as “a leader of the Free World.”<sup>20</sup> In her recently published work, *Color of Success: Asian Americans and the*

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Cheng, *Citizens of Asian America: Democracy and Race during the Cold War* (NY: New York University Press, 2013), 12.

<sup>19</sup> Ellen D. Wu, “‘America’s Chinese’: Anti-Communism, Citizenship and Cultural Diplomacy during the Cold War,” *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol.77, No.3 (2008), 391-422.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.



*Origins of Model Minority*, published in 2014, she examines the origins of the “Model Minority” concept following the same narrative because she argues that the geopolitical atmosphere of the Cold War and racial conflicts between white and black in the domestic sphere required Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans to play the well-assimilated “model” in American society. She also finds that many of the Asian American middle class felt it was appropriate to be called “Model Minority” and thought of themselves as “definitely not black.”<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, Chiou-Ling Yeh, in her work *Making an American Festival*, explores how Chinese Americans made traditional Chinese New Year change into an American festival in order to show their support for American democracy and its domestic policies. Meanwhile she also explores how the Chinese American leaders “strategically appropriate the idea of model minority and articulated it through the Miss Chinatown U.S.A. beauty pageant” by upholding the Confucian idea (such as obedience, self-control, and loyalty) while emphasizing that Chinese Americans “[had] achieved upward mobility and exercised middle-class consumer values.”<sup>22</sup>

In 2015 Madeline Y. Hsu published her book, *The Good Immigrants: How the Yellow*

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<sup>21</sup> Ellen D. Wu, *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

<sup>22</sup> Chiou-Ling Yeh, *Making an American Festival: Chinese New Year in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 5.

*Peril Became the Model Minority*,<sup>23</sup> in which Hsu concentrates on a few successful Chinese Americans or Chinese in America such as Madame Chiang Kai-shek and the famous Chinese American architect I. M. Pei. She vividly describes how their families immigrated to the U.S. and faced discriminations and finally became the so-called “model minority.”<sup>24</sup>

Besides the above-mentioned works which directly narrate Chinese American history in the Cold War-Civil Rights Movement period with the “model minority” approach, Charlotte Brooks’ recent work, *Between Mao and McCarthy: Chinese American Politics in the Cold War Years*<sup>25</sup>, published in 2015, indirectly uses the “assimilation/integration” approach to describe Chinese American internal politics and its political relation with the white society. Brooks tries to give an overview of internal political conflicts in the Chinese American community by focusing on conditions in New York’s Chinatown and San Francisco’s Chinatown, respectively. She also examines the rise of Chinese American liberals and the situation of their commitment and participation in the mainstream politics of the United States. The descriptions of Chinese American liberal Gilbert Woo and the Chinese American Democratic Club (CADC) in *Between Mao*

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<sup>23</sup> Madeline Y. Hsu, *The Good Immigrants: How the Yellow Peril Became the Model Minority* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2015).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Charlotte Brooks, *Between Mao and McCarthy: Chinese American Politics in the Cold War Years* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2015).

*and McCarthy* are worthy to be examined in Chapter 5 of this dissertation. However, the angle in this dissertation will be different from Brooks'. Although Brooks argues that Woo's activism tended towards the complete integration into the white society, by reading *Hu Jinnan Wenji* [Gilbert Woo's Selected Works] and Woo's biographies, I try to show that Gilbert Woo identified himself as a *Chinese American*, that is to say, he participated in the politics of the larger society while he still kept his Chinese heritage.

Unlike those works that use an approach with the angle of "assimilation and model minority" this dissertation tries to trace the history of the common people in relation to Chinese American activism.

## 2. Transnationalism approach<sup>26</sup>

Other historians explore the history of Chinese Americans in the 1940s and early 1950s with the approach of transnationalism to describe connections between Chinese Americans and China's politics and the transformation of the Chinese community due to unification of Chinese American families.

For example, Him Mark Lai's *Chinese American Transnational Politics*<sup>27</sup>, published in 2010. Because Lai was an old-time activist and he knew both English and Chinese very

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<sup>26</sup> The definition of transnationalism will be argued in the section of methodology in detail.

<sup>27</sup> Him Mark Lai, *Chinese American Transnational Politics* (Champaign, IL: The University of Illinois Press, 2010).

well, he wrote this work of research on Chinese American activism through connecting it with politics of their ancestral land, spanning from the early twentieth century revolution by Sun Yat-sen to the establishment of the PRC by the CCP in 1949. Lai gives an exhaustive overview of Chinese American transnational politics by using a tremendous amount of materials in both English and Chinese. Lai's *Chinese American Transnational Politics* became a very important reference and greatly inspired this dissertation. While Lai invests more energy in examining transnational politics between Chinese American and China's politics, he hardly focuses on the relation between Chinese American political activism and the African American movements. Again, while he briefly refers to how the rise of a younger generation's political activism was "influenced by the U.S. civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements and, from the PRC, the teachings of Mao Zedong and the idealized image of egalitarian Marxist rhetoric and the Cultural Revolution,"<sup>28</sup> he rarely discusses how the interaction among those who engaged with these movements formed the younger generation's political movement. This dissertation tries to shed lights on these problems.

Another significant book approaching Chinese American transnational history in the Cold War-Civil Rights era is Xiaojian Zhao's *Remaking Chinese America*<sup>29</sup>, published in

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<sup>28</sup> Lai, *Chinese American Transnational Politics*, 36.

<sup>29</sup> Xiaojian Zhao, *Remaking Chinese America: Immigration, Family, and Community, 1940-1965*

2002. By focusing on Chinese women in the U.S. after the U.S. immigration laws changed, Zhao examines how a segregated bachelor community transformed into a family-centered American ethnic community. Meanwhile Zhao also explores the Chinese community institutions and the press situation which greatly benefited this dissertation. Renqiu Yu's *To Save China, To Save Ourselves: The Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance of New York*,<sup>30</sup> published in 1992, is also considered as a transnational history book. Yu makes a pioneering study on the Chinese laundrymen organization, the Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance of New York(CHLA). By using a lot of the CHLA's newsletters and its organ, *China Daily News*, as well as oral history interviews with the members of the CHLA, Yu does not only clarify the history of the CHLA struggling for legal rights domestically but he also describes how the CHLA strived for aiding the Chinese war effort against Japan in WWII by raising the banner "To Save China, To Save Ourselves." This book serves as an important reference for chapter 2 of this dissertation. However, unlike Yu's definition of the CHLA as a liberal organization, the CHLA will be defined as the leftist one in this dissertation.

To conclude, the first approach was used to write the history for a few successful

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(Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002).

<sup>30</sup> Renqiu Yu, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves: The Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance of New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992).

Chinese Americans. As for the majority who had continually lived in Chinatown and endured exploitation from the owners of their own ethnic small businesses and discrimination from the white society, their history is not yet discussed.

The second approach describes a history of Chinese American activism shaped by transnational alliances and enmities and the intolerance of the Cold War period, however it only stresses one facet of Chinese American activist movements, namely the fact that it was focused on China's politics. Whereas both of these two approaches mainly stressed the influence of the Cold War on Chinese American history, the influence of the African American Civil Rights Movement is clearly missing in the narrative of these previous studies. Furthermore, the scope of these two approaches is limited to the specific groups, that is, the assimilated middle class and political activists influenced by China's politics. In fact, not only American domestic and international policies and the context of the African American Civil Rights Movement, but also the internal structure and power relations within the Chinese American community and the triangular relations among U.S.-PRC, U.S.-KMT (Taiwan), and KMT-PRC should be included as factors that influenced Chinese American history and activism in that particular period.

### **Research Questions**

In this dissertation, by carefully analyzing various factors which influenced Chinese American history and the Chinese American activist movement in the Cold War Civil

Rights era, I try to clarify the *dynamic process* by which the Chinese American activist movements changed from fighting for China's politics to fighting for justice and the interests of their own community as a part of American society, and finally to become an integral part of the Asian American movement. Meanwhile, I explore how such activist movements helped to reform or transform the *identity* of Chinese in America from *Overseas Chinese* to *Chinese American*. Furthermore, by examining the transnational communication between the CCP and radical African American activists via the help of leftist Chinese American activists, this dissertation also tries to contribute to a new perception of the African American Civil Rights Movement from the perspective of Chinese American activism. This dissertation will specifically set up three research topical categories:

1. Influence of transnational politics on Chinese American activism and their community.

During the Chinese Exclusion period, Chinese immigrants were excluded from American mainstream society and trapped into the enclave called "Chinatown" as perpetual aliens. In their communities many China-like associations were built to support their livelihoods. These associations kept close contact with China and their leaders usually actively participated in China's politics and revolutions. And this also became the origin of activism of Chinese immigrants in the U.S. Meanwhile, the governments in

China also manipulated Chinese immigrant society in the U.S. by means of these associations. This manipulation model is defined by L. Ling-chi Wang as “extraterritorial domination”.<sup>31</sup>

Besides such characteristics of the internal structure of Chinese community, the power relations in the Chinese community were also special. In fact, Chinese Americans were always burdened by the brunt of double-oppression, or the structure of what L. Ling-chi Wang defined as “dual-domination.” They did not only face racial discrimination, prejudice and political pressure from the white-dominated majority society and the U.S. government, but also endured the exploitation and persecution from leaders of Chinese American associations who were representatives of the KMT’s interests.<sup>32</sup> The factors of such internal structure and power relations of the Chinese American community were intertwined with another factor (triangular relations among U.S.-PRC, U.S.-KMT (Taiwan), and PRC-KMT) to form a *mechanism* which caused Chinese American activism to be largely invisible in the Cold War Civil Rights period. It can be described as follows: within the Chinese American community, there was a sentiment to call for

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<sup>31</sup> According to Ling-chi Wang’s works, “extraterritorial domination” refers to the fact that the Chinese government could manipulate Chinese overseas regardless of the sovereignty of their residence. This trend was reinforced after the KMT government failed in the mainland and retreated to Taiwan. See L. Ling-chi Wang, “The Structure of Dual Domination: Toward a Paradigm for the Study of the Chinese Diaspora in the United States,” *Amerasia*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (2007), 143-168.

<sup>32</sup> See Wang, “The Structure of Dual Domination,” 149-169.



support of Chiang Kai-shek's Taiwan regime and to advocate assimilation into the mainstream white society while trying to suppress those who were pro-communist China. As a result, some activists, who were not inclined to support the PRC but strove for their equal rights, also suffered repression. And outside the Chinese American community, the myth of well-assimilated Chinese Americans was used to criticize African Americans for lack of endeavors of their own, and also to criticize the African American Civil Rights Movement so that it caused an ironic situation: *Chinese Americans were used as puppets to strip away black civil rights while Chinese Americans also greatly benefited from legacies of black civil rights movements.*

L. Ling-chi Wang's empirical definition of "extraterritorial domination" and "dual domination" are very helpful for this dissertation, however, they were just put forward on the basis of Wang's activist experiences. In chapter 1 and chapter 2 of this dissertation, by using the Foreign Ministry files of the Kuomintang government, FBI files, community newspapers, activist organizations' newsletters and other files, I will carefully examine how the "domination" was developed and how it impacted Chinese American activism and the Chinese American community over three decades.

2. Chinese American activists' engagement in black civil rights activism, the response to the African American Civil Rights Movement in the Chinese American community.

In the conventional historiographies written on Chinese Americans in the Cold War-Civil Rights Movement era, few scholars examine the relation between African Americans and Chinese Americans. Especially, in the literature reviews they overlook the questions related to the African American Civil Rights Movement such as whether there were Chinese American activists who directly or indirectly participated in black civil rights activism, and how Chinese Americans reacted to the African American Civil Rights Movement and its succeeding Black Power Movement and how African American movements empowered young Chinese American activism. In this dissertation, I try to shed light on these questions carefully.

In fact, it is not just that African American civil rights activism influenced Chinese Americans, but there is also the possibility that the Chinese Communist Party impacted black activism via Chinese American activists (which will be discussed in chapter 3), and young Chinese American student activists were influenced by Chinese communist theories via black radical activists (in chapter 6 there will be more detailed descriptions of this). Moreover, some Chinese American activists also lived in black ghettos and directly joined African American movements, such as Grace Lee Boggs. As for Boggs' activism, this dissertation will give a detailed discussion in chapter 5.

At the same time, because some previous studies claimed that Chinese American had

become a “model minority” while African Americans were striving for their civil rights, it is necessary to examine how Chinese Americans looked at the African American Civil Rights Movement. Did they really detach themselves from African American civil rights activism, while boasting of themselves as a “model minority” group, as they were labelled by the outside world? In order to examine the response to the African American Civil Rights Movement in the Chinese American community, in chapter 4 of this dissertation I chose the Chinese American community press as a source because it reflects different views of community members reviewing historical events occurring in American society.

3. The formation of Chinese American identity in the discourse of Chinese American activism and the formation of the Asian American Movement in the process of maintaining solidarity with other Asian ethnic groups’ activism.

Most of the scholars argue that Chinese American consciousness emerged after they Americanized and became middle class. For example, in Him Mark Lai’s work, *Cong Huaqiao dao Huaren*, Lai attributes the formation of Chinese American consciousness to the improvement of social and economic status of Chinese in the United States post-World War II.<sup>33</sup> In Ellen Wu’s *The Color of Success* and Cindy I-Fen Cheng’s *Citizens of Asian America*, both Wu and Cheng identify Chinese American as people of a “well-assimilated

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<sup>33</sup> Him Mark Lai, *Cong Huaqiao dao Huaren*, 364-377.

middle class” group.<sup>34</sup> The angle of this dissertation is different from the narrative approach of one-way assimilation and Americanization, and I try to explore how Chinese American identity was made and remade in the course of Chinese American activism and how the objectives of Chinese American activism changed from fighting for China’s politics to fighting for the interests of the Chinese American community, and were finally integrated into the Asian American movement.

### **Methodology**

As for the methodologies of this research, these are mainly based on theories of transnational history. What is transnational history? There seems no single account of the term to define the wide scholarship of historians. However, some working definition can be cited to explain it well. For example, Akira Iriye, who is well-known for contributing to the development of transnational history, proposes to define it as “the study of movements and forces that cut across national boundaries.”<sup>35</sup> The commentators on theories of transnational history agree with Iriye’s definition that one basic constitutive factor of transnational history is “its concern with cross-border flows,” but they also think that Iriye does not give “an exhaustive definition of ongoing work in the field.”<sup>36</sup> Sven

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<sup>34</sup> Wu, *The Color of Success*, 1-9; Cheng, *Citizens of Asian America*, 1-20.

<sup>35</sup> Akira Iriye, “Transnational History,” *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 13, Issue 2 (May 2004), 213.

<sup>36</sup> Simon Macdonald, “Transnational History: A Review of Past and Present Scholarship,” UCL Center for Transnational, 2013.

Beckert, who is a professor of history at Harvard University and a historian whose works focusing on the history of nineteenth century capitalism, provided a survey of the evolving approach on transnational history at *AHR Conversation* of 2006. He describes how transnational history “takes at its starting point the interconnectedness of human history as a whole, and while it acknowledges the extraordinary importance of states, empires, and the like, it pays attention to networks, processes, beliefs, and institutions that transcend these politically defined spaces.”<sup>37</sup>

However, transnational history does not mean a narrative approach that seeks to obliterate “the nation.” It just provides a new vehicle to explore the historical facts which cannot be easily uncovered in the context of the nation-state. As historian Ian Tyrrell lists four ways of transnational history’s functions for the study of historiography: “as framing contexts; as patterns of exchange; as centripetal clusters of power; and as transnational circulations and networks.”<sup>38</sup>

Chinese Americans were descendants of Chinese immigrants from China, or themselves had just newly immigrated from China. They kept their more or less Chinese cultural heritage and habits, and moreover many of them participated in China’s political

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<sup>37</sup> C.A. Bayly, Sven Beckert, Matthew Connelly, Isabel Hofmeyr, Wendy Kozol and Patricia Seed, “AHR Conversation: On Transnational History,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 111, No.5 (2006), 1459.

<sup>38</sup> Ian Tyrrell, “Reflections on the Transnational Turn in United States History: Theory and Practice,” *Journal of Global History*, Vol.4 (2009), 462.

struggles. Therefore, the history of Chinese Americans can be categorized within the boundary of transnationalism. In fact, several Chinese American scholars have begun to study Chinese American history by using transnational theories. For example, in Madeline Yuan-yin Hsu's work, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration between the United States and South China, 1882-1943*, Hsu gives a case study of Chinese immigrants migrating from Taishan to explain the concept "transnational migrant circuit," which included "people and the flow of money, ideas, and relationships between 'sites' in Taishan, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Burma, Penang, Sydney, Melbourne, New Zealand, Mexico, Los Angeles, Vancouver, San Francisco, New York, Chicago, Baltimore, and St. Louis" in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>39</sup> In *Chinese American Transnationalism: The Flow of People, Resources, and Ideas between China and America during the Exclusion Era* edited by Sucheng Chan, Chan considers Chinese American transnationalism as "the many ways in which Chinese living in the United States maintained ties to China through a constant transpacific flow of people, economic resources, and political and cultural ideas, the exclusion laws notwithstanding."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Madeline Yuan-yin Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration between the United States and South China, 1882-1943* (San Francisco, CA: Stanford University, 2000), 7-8.

<sup>40</sup> Sucheng Chan, *Chinese American Transnationalism: The Flow of People, Resources, and Ideas between China and America during the Exclusion Era* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University

In the recent years, many scholars also use transnational theory to study Asian American political behavior. Scholar Pei-te Lien, who studies Asian American political participation and political behavior, defines the transnational political behavior of Asian Americans as “political acts practiced by Asian Americans that transpire in America but transcend American borders,” and he further emphasizes the following: “the study of power relationships, among institutions and individuals, and the formation and role of attitudes, ideologies, and identities in the course of such interactions as they involve multiple nation-states.”<sup>41</sup>

This dissertation is indebted to the above-mentioned scholars’ recent theoretical intellectual contributions and tries to shape three types of frameworks to examine transnational history of Chinese American activism:

1. How the Kuomintang’s “extraterritorial domination” influenced Chinese American transnational political behavior

In the Cold War years, the Chinese American communities were largely controlled by the pro-Kuomintang establishment whose representative associations were the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Associations (CCBAs). At the same time, the

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Press, 2006), IV.

<sup>41</sup> Pei-te Lien, “Transnational Political Behavior,” in *Asian Americans: An Encyclopedia of Social, Cultural, Economic, and Political History* (Third Volume), Xiaojian Zhao and J. W. Park, eds. (Santa Barbara, Ca: Greenwood Press, 2013), 1126-1130; Christian Collet and Pei-te Lien eds., *The Transnational Politics of Asian Americans* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University, 2009), 12.

Kuomintang government in Taiwan dispatched the Kuomintang Central Committee members to the U.S. for helping to establish the so-called “Anti-Communist National Salvation Leagues.” Such *trans-borders* political acts formed the Kuomintang’s “extraterritorial domination” in the Chinese American communities, which deeply influenced Chinese American transnational political behavior.

2. The PRC’s “people’s diplomacy”<sup>42</sup> in the transnational ties between African American activists and the Chinese Communists via Chinese American leftists

Since the mid-1950s, the ideological disputes between the PRC and the Soviet Union became escalated. The Soviet Union gradually became somewhat closer with the United States and turned to confront China. The PRC finally changed its foreign policy to focus on anti-American imperialism and anti-Soviet revisionism and attempting to unify the Third World to mobilize for “world revolution” in the late 1950s. Around the same time, the African American Civil Rights Movement began to reach its peak. Recognizing a strategic alliance, the PRC started to support black American struggles and launched its so-called “people’s diplomacy” to invite black American leaders to visit China and learn about the Chinese revolutionary spirit. The process of establishing transnational relations between African American civil rights and the Chinese Communists, which was

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<sup>42</sup> The definition of the PRC’s “people’s diplomacy” will be argued in the Chapter 3 of this dissertation in detail.



facilitated and orchestrated by Tang Mingzhao (who was an old generation Chinese American leftist), could be considered as the flow of people and idea across borders.

### 3. Maoism as a transnational revolutionary spirit

Through African American activists' travel to China and circulation of the PRC's periodicals and Mao's works in the black nationalist communities, Maoism crossed the borders and spread among African American nationalists. It did not only become an important factor impacting the Black Power Movement but it also fueled the revolutionary imagination of young Chinese Americans in the early 1970s.

### **Sources**

The primary resources in this dissertation can be categorized as follows:

#### 1. Chinese American community newspapers

In this research, the Chinese American community newspapers (which were mainly written in Chinese and have so far been largely overlooked by English-speaking scholars) are important sources because they do not only record Chinese American community life but also reflect different views of community members regarding historical events occurring in American society. A typical example is that by analyzing the Chinese American community newspapers, this dissertation clarifies what kinds of views the different groups of Chinese Americans had towards the African American Civil Rights Movement and black people and their community.

## 2. Oral history interviews with Chinese American activists

Besides the community newspapers, oral history interviews with Chinese American activists were also helpful sources for writing this dissertation. Though these interviews help me to understand their activism better, my writings do not rely on them completely. Instead I use them to verify the information which I gathered from Chinese American community newspapers and other historical materials. I interviewed four Chinese American activists:

**Laura Lai** (張玉英, 1933-2014), Him Mark Lai's wife who was born in Zhongshan, Guangdong province of China on January 7, 1933. She migrated to San Francisco in 1949 and then she joined the leftist organization Min Qing and became one of the most active members of that organization. **Laura Lai was interviewed by the author on June 28, 2012 in San Francisco, California.**

**Philip P. Choy** (胡垣坤, 1926-2017), who was born in San Francisco on December 17, 1926. He was a co-founder of the Chinese Historical Society of America, an architect and renowned historian of Chinese American. He was also a community activist. In the late 1960s Choy and Him Mark Lai taught the first Chinese American history course at San Francisco State University. **Philip P. Choy was interviewed by the author on December**

**18, 2014 in San Francisco, California.**

**L. Ling-chi Wang** (王靈智, 1938- ), who was born in Gulangyu of Xiamen, Fujian province in China in 1938. He migrated to the U.S. in 1957. He was one of the Chinese American leaders in the younger generation of Chinese American activists since the late 1960s and co-founded the Chinese American civil rights organization, Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA) in the Chinatown of San Francisco in 1969. He is now a Professor Emeritus of Ethnic Studies in U.C. Berkeley. **L. Ling-chi Wang was interviewed by the author on June 27, 2012 in San Francisco, California.**

**Harvey Dong** (鄧仕明, 1948- ), who was born in Sacramento, California in 1948. He was active in the Asian American Movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the Movement, he co-founded many activist organizations such as the Asian Community Center and Wei Min She. He is now teaching in Asian American Studies Program in the Ethnic Studies Department of U.C. Berkeley. **Harvey Dong was interviewed by the author on June 29, 2012 and December 19, 2014 in Berkeley, CA.**

3. U.S. official documents (including FBI files, INS files, etc.), ROC official documents,

PRC official documents, Him Mark Lai collections, James and Grace Lee Boggs papers, W. E. B. Du Bois papers, Robert F. Williams papers, Gilbert Woo editorials, newsletters of Chinese American activist organizations, and autobiographies of Chinese American activists.

### **Notes on Romanization and Translation of Chinese American Community Newspapers**

This dissertation uses pinyin to Romanize Chinese names and terms from Chinese language sources. The Wade-Giles spelling of Peking, for example, is transliterated as Beijing. However, there are the following exceptions where the Wade-Giles spelling is used, or the Westernized names: 1) the names of well-known figures, such as Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek, Soong Ching-ling, Mao Tse-tung and Chiang Ching-kuo, for which widely accepted transliterations are commonly used; 2) the Westernized names of a few Chinese Americans appear in English-language official documents such as Eugene Moy, and the titles of Chinese language community newspapers such as *China Daily News* and *Chinese Pacific Weekly*.

Chinese American community newspapers are important primary resources in this dissertation. Most of the quotations from the newspapers in Chinese are translated into English by the author. If the quotations of translations are cited from other secondary resources, there will be citation notes to explain from which they are quoted.

## **Part 1. Influence of Transnational Politics on Chinese American Activism and Their Community**

This part endeavors to examine why oppression of pro-PRC Chinese American dissidents became an important factor in making Chinese American civil rights activism invisible in the early Cold War years. In Chapter 1, I explore what kind of factors impacted Chinese American activism in the early 1950s. Chapter 2 clarifies what kind of Chinese American activism occurred in this period. It will mainly describe the following points:

1. how did Tang Mingzhao, who was a Chinese American old leftist and returned to the PRC in 1950, deal with China's "people's diplomacy" and bring Mao's Thought to the outside world;
2. In the two pro-PRC organizations, the Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance of New York (CHLA) (紐約華僑衣館聯合會) and the Chinese American Democratic Youth League (CADYL in San Francisco) (華僑民主青年團), how was activism conducted and how did it resonate with the propaganda of communist China.
3. In the process of the investigation of Chinese immigrant fraud from 1955 and the Chinese Confession Program in 1956, how did the U.S. government and its collaborators in the pro-KMT Chinese American establishment oppress Chinese American activists and debilitate their organizations.

## **Chapter 1. Transnational Politics, Community Sociopolitical Structure and Sociological Theories Stereotyping Chinese Americans.**

The African American Civil Rights Movement coincided with the Cold War. It greatly influenced racial relations in American history. In this particular period, the United States had to propagate the superiority of U.S democracy over communism in order to counter the Soviet Union and to increase its allies in the world. However, due to the racial problems in the domestic sphere, the US was condemned by communist propaganda which stressed that American racism was undermining the benefits of the American way of life.<sup>1</sup> In order to counter this, the President's Committee on Civil Rights made an investigation into racial problems resulting in the report *To Secure These Rights* in 1947, which suggested to change unjust laws and to end residential segregation in order to silence critics from the outside world.<sup>2</sup> Afterwards, the Committee on Race and Housing<sup>3</sup> produced a report to advocate that minorities should learn about American values and behavior so that they could move out of the slums and into the white suburban neighborhood.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, suburbanization became the facilitating process for

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University, 2000), 12.

<sup>2</sup> The Report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights, *To Secure These Rights* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1947), 147-148.

<sup>3</sup> The Committee on Race and Housing is a citizens' group founded in 1955 for the purpose of inquiring into problems of residence and housing involving racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States.

<sup>4</sup> *Where Shall We Live? Report of the Commission on Race and Housing* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1958), 6.

assimilation and a strategy for advocating the superiority of American democracy.<sup>5</sup>

By examining the previous studies of Chinese American history in the Cold War period, we see that most of them follow this ideology and their narratives reflect the point of view of assimilation (details about this point have been discussed in the introduction of this dissertation). They usually focused on the outward migration of Chinese Americans from the ghettos, so-called Chinatowns, to the suburbs where they lived among whites. Therefore, the idea was formed that Chinese Americans gradually entered into mainstream American society and became middle class, and such an idea was reinforced by the repealing of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943.

In fact, the number of Chinese Americans who assimilated into mainstream society and joined the middle class was limited, and most of them had to continue to live in Chinatowns during that period.<sup>6</sup>

Unlike historians focusing on “suburbanization” and “assimilation”, this dissertation tries to deal with the history of common people who lived in Chinatown from the

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<sup>5</sup> At the 1959 American National Exhibition in Moscow, Vice president Richard Nixon specially explained the superiority of American democracy and capitalism by displaying the advantage of the suburban home. See Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (United States: BasicBooks, 1988), 20.

<sup>6</sup> According to Mely Giok-lan Tan’s work, Chinese Americans who could assimilate into the majority society and become middle class were mainly limited to the well-educated professional category, and the proportion of those in manual occupations usually remained high. They mostly continued to live in Chinatown of San Francisco. See Mely Giok-lan Tan, *The Chinese in the United States: Social Mobility & Assimilation* (Taipei: The Oriental Service, 1971) 231-285.

perspective of Chinese American activism. This chapter explores how Chinese American activism became invisible by examining three specific factors which impacted them profoundly: the international and domestic sociopolitical context; the informal sociopolitical structure of the Chinese American community; and the transition of sociological theories stereotyping Chinese Americans.

### **I. To be Contained or to be Integrated: Chinese Americans at the Center of the Triangular Relations among the U.S, PRC and KMT.**

As cultural historian Christina Klein stated in her work *Cold War Orientalism*, “containment and integration constituted the two ideological foundations of U.S. postwar foreign policy.”<sup>7</sup> The policy of containment was aimed to prevent communism from threatening the “free world,” while the ideology of integration reflected the expansion of U.S. economic and political hegemony in the world. In fact, after World War II the strategy of the US towards China typically reflected such ideologies. In the meantime, it also greatly influenced the fates of Chinese Americans in the Cold War years.

#### **i. Containing the Communist Mainland while Integrating “Free” Taiwan**

In reaction to the U.S. policy of non-recognition of the PRC, Mao Zedong published a sarcastic article “Farewell, Leighton Stuart”, calling Stuart “a symbol of the complete defeat of U.S. policy of aggression.”<sup>8</sup> In 1950, the Korean War had thoroughly changed

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<sup>7</sup> Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 24.

<sup>8</sup> John Leighton Stuart (Chinese: 司徒雷登) was born in Hangzhou, China on June 24, 1876. He



the attitude of the U.S. government towards the PRC.<sup>9</sup>

On December, 1950, President Harry S. Truman declared an order to establish The Division of Foreign Assets Control in the United States Treasury Department. The new organization was used to ban any flow of capital from the Chinese American community to relatives in the PRC. The US government also used the Trading with the Enemy Act to silence newspapers' pro-China views. For example, in New York's Chinatown, *China Daily News*, which was founded by laundrymen, was exceptional in its independence from the control of allies of Chiang Kai-shek's KMT government in Chinatown and in covering the positive changes occurring in China under Mao. But in 1952, the U.S. government charged several staff members of *China Daily News* with violation of the Trading with the Enemy Act and the Treasury Department's Foreign Assets Control Regulation because *China Daily News* published advertisements for the PRC-owned Nanyang Bank of Hong Kong, informing Chinese Americans that they could use the bank

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was born in a Presbyterian missionary family from the US. Stuart started missionary work in China from 1905. On July 11, 1946, Stuart was appointed U.S. ambassador to China. After Chinese Communist forces controlled Nanjing, Stuart was recalled to the U.S. on August 2, 1949. After he departed to Washington, Mao published the sarcastic article *Farewell, Leighton Stuart*. In the article, called Stuart "a loyal agent of U.S. cultural aggression in China," and his departure from China as "a symbol of the complete defeat of the U.S. policy of aggression." See Mao Tse-Tung, "Farewell, Leighton Stuart," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, Vol. (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1961), 433-440.

<sup>9</sup> Iris Chang, *The Chinese in America: A Narrative History* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2003), 239, 242, 248; Meredith Oyen, *The Diplomacy of Migration: Transnational Lives and the Making of U.S.-Chinese Relations in the Cold War* (Ithaca, Cornell University, 2015), 69-70, 99-100.

to send money to their relatives in the PRC.<sup>10</sup>

The collapse of the Nationalist regime in mainland China had shocked Washington. The pro-KMT China lobby pushed the State Department to consider who “lost” China and demanded that the Truman government should continue to support Chiang Kai-shek’s Taiwan government. The U.S. government supplied enormous economic aid to Taiwan, moreover after the outbreak of the Korean War, President Truman ordered the U.S. Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait to prevent the PLA from attacking Taiwan. Thus, Taiwan was integrated into the U.S.’s economic and military allies as the “unsinkable aircraft carrier” in East Asia.<sup>11</sup> Besides providing economic and military aid for the Taiwan government, the U.S. also spent a lot of money to support Taiwan’s cultural and educational programs through the United States Information Agency (USIA). The aim was not only to enhance American cultural influence on Taiwan but also to build Taiwan

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<sup>10</sup> Wang Shigu, “Meizhou huaqiao ribao.” [China Daily News] in *Huaqiao Huaren Bauke Quanshu: Meiti & Chuban juan* [The Encyclopedia of Chinese Overseas: Volume of Media & Publication], Zhou Nanjing, ed. (Beijing: Zhongguo Huaqiao Chubanshe, 1999), 250; Lai, *Chinese American Transnational Politics*, 144-146; Yu, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University, 1992), 187-189; Amy Chen, *The Chinatown Files* (documentary), (NY: Third World Newsreel, 2001).

<sup>11</sup> Meredith Oyen, *The Diplomacy of Migration: Transnational Lives and the Making of U.S.-Chinese Relations in the Cold War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 99-100; Wanli Hu, “Mao’s America Strategy and the Korean War,” in *China and the United States: A New Cold War History*, Xiaobing Li and Hongshan Li, eds. (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1998), 310-313; William C. Kirby, “The Changing International Scene and Chinese Policy toward the United States, 1954-1970,” in *Re-examining the Cold War U.S.-China Diplomacy, 1954-1973*, Robert S. Ross and Changbin Jiang, eds. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 39-45; Chang, *The Chinese in America*, 247; Shin-shan Henry Tsai, *The Chinese Experience in America* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), 123.

as a model of the “free world” against the “dictatorial” communist mainland.<sup>12</sup>

**ii. Repressing Chinese Dissidents while Utilizing Assimilated Chinese for Cultural Diplomacy.**

Due to the establishment of the PRC and the subsequent Sino-Soviet alliance, the Chinese Americans faced suspicions of disloyalty. On December 9, 1955, an official report entitled the “Report on the Problem of Fraud in Hong Kong” was submitted to the State Department by the U.S. consul in Hong Kong, Everett F. Drumright, pointed out that the PRC was planning “a criminal conspiracy to evade the laws of the United States” through a well-organized system in Hong Kong, dispatching immigrants to New York and San Francisco. It had become the major channel for immigrants who had ties with communists in the PRC.<sup>13</sup> This report reawakened the American fear of a “Red China.” The FBI and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) began to investigate Communist subversive activities in Chinatowns throughout the country. The progressive organizations and newspapers that were suspected of being pro-PRC became the first scapegoats of this investigation.

In 1956, the U.S. government initiated a “confession program” to encourage the

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<sup>12</sup> Hongshan Li, “The Visible Hand: Washington’s Role in the U.S.-Taiwan Cultural Relations in the Cold War,” in *China and The United States: A New Cold War*, Xiaobing Li and Hongshan Li, eds. (Lanham, Maryland: University of Press of America, 1998), 154-155.

<sup>13</sup> Everett F. Drumright, “Report on the Problem of Passport Fraud at Hong Kong,” Foreign Services Dispatch 931, December 9, 1955, 4-26, file 122.4732/12-955, Central Files, Dept. of State.

Chinese Americans who had illegally immigrated by means of “paper sons”<sup>14</sup> to voluntarily confess their true status. At that time, Chinese community leaders (僑領, also called Kiu Ling in Cantonese) began to reassert their declining leadership in the community by attacking leftist organizations and cooperating actively with the FBI and the INS. The INS heralded “the Confession Program as one of its greatest accomplishments” because it rooted out “paper families” one after another and silenced pro-PRC activists.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, at the same time U.S. policymakers were perplexed by domestic racial conflict of the “black/white paradigm” and external pressures from communist ideological antagonism. Thus, assimilated Chinese Americans were presented as a “model” of integration into the American way of life. On the one hand, the successful stories of Chinese Americans were used to inspire other minorities and helped to paint desegregation as a necessary and possible goal, and on the other hand, to further the

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<sup>14</sup> Thomas Chin, ed., “*The History of the Chinese in California*.” Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco, accessed September 17, 2016, <http://www.sfmuseum.net/hist11/papersons.html>. In 1906, the San Francisco earthquake and fire destroyed local public records. Dating from the fire, many Chinese claimed that they were born in San Francisco. With this citizenship the father then claimed citizenship for his offspring born in China. Sometimes, the father would report the birth of a son when in reality there was no such event. This was what was termed a “slot” and would then be available for sale to boys who had no family relationships in the United States in order to enable them to enter the country. Merchant brokers often acted as middlemen to handle the sale of slots. Sons who entered the country in this fashion were known as “paper sons.”

<sup>15</sup> Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 218-224; Lai, *Becoming Chinese America*, 30-32; Zhao, *Remaking Chinese America*, 173-183.

containment of Communist China the federal government utilized assimilated Chinese Americans to attest to the credibility of U.S. democracy, and to bolster U.S. efforts to rally the newly decolonized countries in Asia.<sup>16</sup> One example is the experience of Jade Snow Wong who was commissioned by the US State Department to travel abroad in order to promote the “benefits of American way of life” after the outbreak of the Korean War. Jade Snow Wong travelled throughout East, Southeast, and South Asia to espouse the “superiority of US democracy over communism”, able to do so because of her racial identity as a Chinese American and her autobiography, *Fifth Chinese Daughter* became “the first nationally acclaimed commercially successful book written by a Chinese American.” But she did not achieve the desired results, as she remarked that there was no “shared Asian sensibility”.<sup>17</sup> In *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, she expressed her discomfort being a Chinese and how she longed for the American way of life.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Cheng, *Citizens of Asian America*, 85-89; Wu, “‘America’s Chinese’: Anti-Communism, Citizenship, and Cultural Diplomacy during the Cold War,” 391-395.

<sup>17</sup> Cheng, *Citizens of Asian America*, 18, 95-105; Wu, “‘America’s Chinese’: Anti-Communism, Citizenship, and Cultural Diplomacy during the Cold War,” 402-420.

<sup>18</sup> As an acquaintance of Jade Snow Wong, the Chinese American activist L. Ling-chi Wang mentioned his opinion of Wong’s life experience in an interview. He said, “... It is very sad when you read the chapter about how she eventually had to return to Chinatown to start her tourist-oriented pottery-making business and had to get ‘reacquainted with Chinatown’ because she had completely forgotten about how to be a Chinese living in Chinatown... Living in her time, quite different with mine, was difficult if not impossible for her and her generation to speak out about racism. Even in the 1970s, when the younger generation was openly denouncing racism, her generation remained quiet if not uneasy and resentful of the boat-rocking going on...” See more in Kui-lan Liu, *Bian huan de bian jie: ya yi zuo jia he pi ping jia fang tan lu*. [The Shifting Boundaries: Interviews with Asian American Writers and Critics] (Tianjin: Nankai University Press, 2012), 253.

However, sometimes the international and domestic sociopolitical climate changed in the blink of an eye. After the New Immigration Act of 1965 went into effect, many new overseas Chinese surged into America from Southeast Asia, Taiwan and Hong Kong. The demographics in the Chinese community changed rapidly. In addition to the influence of the civil rights movement that spread around the whole nation, Chinese Americans were inspired and many younger activists emerged, signaling that the forces of change were stirring in Chinese American communities.

## **II. Transition of the Sociopolitical Structure in the Chinese American Community**

### **i. Internal Power Structure of Chinese American Community**

During the Chinese Exclusion period, Chinese immigrants were denied naturalization. In order to protect themselves from discrimination and to have support within their own ethnic enclaves, they created many China-like associations for mutual aid based on kinship, native places, and common interests.

According to Him Mark Lai, Huiguan (會館) and Fong (Cantonese 坊) were two kinds of the most important Chinese immigrant organizations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The members of Huiguan always consisted of “sojourning merchants” or “artisans” who were from the same locality in China. Huiguan supplied services to protect group economic interests and performed certain charitable and social functions

for fellow members while they were away from home. In contrast to Huiguan, Fong operated at a low level within the “well-defined hierarchical organization structure” and “evolved under the umbrella of the Huiguan.” Its members mainly shared knowledge of trade, manufacturing and types of labor. The aims of Fong associations were especially important in establishing immigration networks and assisting members in finding jobs, and also crucial to the development of both ethnic businesses and Chinatowns.<sup>19</sup>The most powerful association hierarchically above Huiguan and Fong was the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA). It was commonly known as the Chinese Six Companies which was recognized by the larger society as the voice of the Chinese community in the United States. As Lai claimed in his works: “The CCBA/Huiguan system evolved in response to the need of the Chinese to organize for social, economic, and political reasons.”<sup>20</sup> (see Appendix 2)

The association leaders always came from among the merchant elites. They were called Kiu Lings in Chinese American communities, who were the owners of restaurants, laundry shops, and garment factories, and always controlled the community power structure. They were wealthy and became famous through activities in the family, clan,

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<sup>19</sup> Him Mark Lai, *Becoming Chinese American: A History of Communities and Institutions* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2004), 39-69; Stanford M. Lyman, “Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliation in San Francisco’s Chinatown, 1859-1910,” *Pacific Historical Review* 43, No.4 (1974), 473-499.

<sup>20</sup> Lai, *Becoming Chinese American*, 39, 49-54

and regional associations. During the Chinese Exclusion period, Chinese immigrants were isolated from the wider society. In their mind they would forever be considered as foreigners by the white-dominated society, and their roots were in China, not in America. They stayed in the U.S. in order to make money and save for their poor family and relatives in China. They would return to China to reunite with their families one day in the future. And many Chinese Americans believed that making China strong would be the key to improve their status in the United States. Therefore, Chinese Americans had great interest in Chinese political developments.<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, the community power structure was strengthened with the support of the Chinese government. As historian Xiaojian Zhao pointed out, after the KMT gained control of a large part of China in 1927, it began to regulate overseas Chinese communities and to expand Kuomintang membership to overseas Chinese. It also established headquarters in Chinatowns in the United States and appointed several heads of Huiguans and the CCBA as the officials of its branches abroad. In order to receive and maintain their loyalties to the Nationalist government, the KMT gave them honorary posts in the central committee of the KMT or central government, meanwhile the Party also

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<sup>21</sup> Zhao, *Remaking Chinese America: Immigration, Family and Community* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 94-107; Him Mark Lai, "China Politics and the U.S. Chinese Communities," in Emma Gee, ed., *Counterpoint: Perspectives on Asian America* (LA: UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 1976), 152-159.



helped these Kiu lings maintain their control in Chinatowns. This condition continued after the KMT government retreated to Taiwan.<sup>22</sup> However, the elites did not always control Chinese communities smoothly. Apart from the internal disputes between Huiguans and Fongs, many intellectuals, workers and young people also began to challenge the power of the elites in the communities. They began to see that the merchant-dominated power structure had little interest in providing protections for common Chinese Americans. Some of them were inspired by Marxist theories and became sympathetic to Chinese Communists and founded new organizations, such as the Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance (CHLA., founded in New York Chinatown in 1933) on the East Coast of the United States and the Chinese Workers Mutual Aid Association (CWMAA, established in San Francisco in 1937) and the Chinese American Democratic Youth League (CADYL, the predecessor of Min Qing, established in San Francisco Chinatown in 1940) on the West Coast of the United States. In Him Mark Lai's work, he called this "new power" as the old activists and their organizations were old activist organizations in contrast to some activist organizations founded by "new left" Chinese American

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<sup>22</sup> Zhao, *Remaking Chinese America*, 98; Him Mark Lai, "Historical Development of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association/Huiguan System," in *Chinese America: History and Perspectives* (San Francisco, CA: Chinese Historical Society of America, 1987), 39-42. As for the relations between KMT and Kiu lings in the Chinese American community, Woo Chin-fu gave detailed description in an editorial article of *Chinese American Weekly* (which was a famous Chinese newspaper circulated in Chinese American community). See Woo Chin-fu, "Qiaotuan, qiaoling yu qiaozhong," [Kiu Lings, overseas Chinese and their organizations], *Chinese American Weekly*, Vol. 1056 (May 2, 1952).

activists<sup>23</sup>

## ii. Internal Political Struggles Post World War II

Naturally, the Civil War in China garnered great attention in the Chinese communities of America. The “war” in Chinatowns between the main community institution leaders (Kiu Lings) who shared the same interests as the KMT and the old political leftists who were inspired by the ideology of Mao’s communist party became heated. For example, a mass rally for celebrating the founding of PRC (held by members of CWMAA and CADYL in San Francisco on the evening of October 9) was full of hostility. According to *China Weekly*’s report, half an hour after the ceremony began, a “KMT-hired goon squad” busted into the auditorium and tore down the red PRC flags, destroyed the flowers, and sprayed blue dye all over the crowd. Posters titled “Mop up Chinatown’s Bandits”, which were pasted on buildings and walls, announced that fifteen Chinese American leftists were wanted and five thousand dollars rewarded for each one’s death. People in San Francisco’s Chinatown were terrified the following days.<sup>24</sup>

Because the U.S. government declined to recognize the PRC and continued to support the KMT, the Chinese American communities were largely dominated by the

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<sup>23</sup> Zhao, *Remaking Chinese America*, 101-3; Victor G. and Brett de Bary Nee, *Longtime Californ’: A Documentary Study of An American Chinatown* (Stanford University, CA: Stanford University Press, 1972), 200-213; Lai, “A Historical Survey of the Left in America,” 73.

<sup>24</sup> *China Weekly*, October 22, 1949; Zhao, *Remaking Chinese America*, 117-119.

KMT and its supporters. Moreover, after the Korean War they formed the Anti-Communist League and helped the informants of the FBI and the INS to investigate and repress leftist activists.<sup>25</sup> At that time, some activists and journalists, who supported neither the CCP nor the KMT but strove for their equal rights, also suffered repression. For example, Gilbert Woo, a liberal Chinese American journalist, had established the *Chinese Pacific Weekly* which was nonpartisan. However, because some reports criticized the KMT rough domination and interference in Chinatown affairs, the KMT supporters accused the paper of being pro-Communist and threatened to close the paper<sup>26</sup>

After the crisis atmosphere of investigating Chinese immigration fraud permeated entire Chinese American communities in the mid-1950s, it compelled Chinese Americans to become acutely aware that neither the PRC nor the KMT government in Taiwan could protect them. They called on Chinese community organizations to get together and fight for their community interests. In 1957 a National Conference of Chinese Communities, which was convened by New York's CCBA, was held in Washington D.C. from March 3 to 7. The 124 delegates from 34 cities throughout the U.S. gathered to discuss how to face

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<sup>25</sup> Zhao, *Remaking Chinese America*, 186; Lai, *Chinese American Transnational Politics*, 146-148; Sun Xun, "Meiguo huaqiao huaren yu Taiwan dangju dui qi zhengce yanjiu, 1949-2002." [Study on Chinese Americans and Overseas Chinese Affairs Policy of Taiwan Government, from 1949 to 2002] (Ph.D. diss., PLA University of Foreign Language, 2007), 50-55.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Gilbert Woo, in Victor G. and Brett de Bary Nee, *Longtime Californ': A Documentary Study of An American Chinatown* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University), 222-227.

the investigations. However, a few participants proposed that the stance of the conference should be anti-communist and pro-KMT. Their agenda was resisted by most representatives. Furthermore, Chinese American journalists also pressured the conference organizers to place the focus on the problems which the Chinese American community faced. As Gilbert Woo wrote in his paper *China Pacific Weekly*:

If some people enjoy a conference on [China] politics, let them go. I strongly advise all citizens of the United States not to be involved... For decades, involvement in China's political struggle has caused endless conflict in the Chinese American community and brought about zero benefit... If the primary purpose of this conference is a political power struggle rather than an attempt to benefit the entire community, our delegation should withdraw and hold a conference of its own. If they were too myopic to see the harm, why should we follow them down the path? <sup>27</sup>

It meant that a new consciousness emerged in the minds of Chinese Americans. They were weary of China's political conflicts within Chinese American communities and advocated the struggle for their communities as Chinese Americans instead of being Chinese sojourning in the United States. This was a growing trend leading to the establishment of Chinese American identity in the activist movement of the late 1960s.

### **III. From Oriental Alien to “Model Minority”: Transition of the Chinese**

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<sup>27</sup> Gilbert Woo, “Quanjiao dahui,” [On the Chinese American National Conference], *Chinese Pacific Weekly*, March 1, 1957. Quoted the translation of the article from Zhao, *Remaking Chinese America*, 182.

## **Image in American Society**

### **i. The Oriental as A Racial Problem**

The Chinese of America were socially isolated and lacked communications with the larger American society, and sociological scholars of the dominant society had great interest in their life styles and their communities. They called those Chinese “the Orientals” and Chinatown as embodiment of the exotic Orient.<sup>28</sup> In academia, Chicago sociologists (Robert Park and his colleagues) put forth a number of approaches and theories in order to understand the Oriental in America, Park thought the main point of the “Oriental problem” was that Orientals could not achieve the last step of the “assimilation cycle” due to “race consciousness” among whites.<sup>29</sup> In order to examine the detailed situation of Chinese society in the U.S., Park and his peers recruited several Chinese Americans as graduate students and utilized them as informants to conduct extensive fieldworks. Paul C.P. Siu was a brilliant student among them. As an insider sociologist, by conducting much fieldwork in New York Chinatown, Siu argued that “sojourner” was more appropriate than “marginal” to describe the mentality of Chinese in America because “a sojourner clings to the culture of his own ethnic group as in contrast to the bicultural

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<sup>28</sup> Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America* (New York and London: Oxford University, 2001), 6-12.

<sup>29</sup> Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1921), 760-761; Park, “Racial Assimilation in Secondary Groups,” *Publication of American Sociological Society* 8 (1914), 66-72.

complex of the marginal man.”<sup>30</sup> Therefore, in the Chinese Exclusion era most of Chinese immigrants were “sojourners” because their lives were characterized by living outside of their homeland and enduring racial discrimination from the white dominated society. Similarly, the “old left” Chinese American activists, who shared the “same mentality oriented towards Chinese culture and revolutionary politics in China,” could also be categorized as “sojourners.”<sup>31</sup>

**ii. Assimilation as a Slogan for Becoming “Model Minority”**

Compared to the situation of Chinatown in the 1920s when the history of Chinese Americans was being shaped by the Chinese exclusion period, the situation of Chinese Americans had changed greatly in the 1950s, especially after the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed in 1943, and Chinese Americans had the chance to get white-collar professions. Thus, a few well-educated Chinese Americans gradually became middle class and began to escape from ghetto-Chinatown to live in suburban neighborhoods with whites. At that time, Rose Him Lee, as a Chinese American sociologist who grew up and

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<sup>30</sup> In his work, Siu mentioned that the essential characteristic of sojourner is that the sojourner connects with the culture and customs of his own ethnic group or ancestral land. From the psychological view, a sojourner is unwilling to recognize himself as a permanent resident in his host country. See Paul C. P. Siu, “The Sojourner,” *The American Journal of Sociology*, 58(July 1952), 34; Siu, *The Chinese Laundryman: A Study of Social Isolation*, John Kuo Wei Tchen, ed. (NY: New York University, 1987), Xxiii-Xxxv.

<sup>31</sup> Zhenxing Zhu, “From Sojourner to Chinese American: Changing Identities of Chinese American Activists during the Civil Rights Era,” An Occasional Supplement to *Doshisha American Studies*, 21 (Kyoto: International Institute of American Studies at Doshisha University), 109.

lived in a white suburb, reexamined Park's theories in her works in the 1950s. Lee suggested that only assimilation could erase the "Oriental problems." In order to reach the absolute "cultural assimilation", it is inevitable to "eradicate all physical evidence of foreignness."<sup>32</sup> Since World War II the idea of assimilation became "a set of political dogmas" to extend cultural hegemony or to reformulate social policies towards minorities in order to exploit Chinese Americans and to prevent more people from becoming communist activists.<sup>33</sup> For instance, before the outbreak of the Civil War in China many American-born Chinese believed that if they failed to establish themselves professionally in the U.S., they could always find careers in China. That was no longer an option because of the war. Therefore, assimilation became a much more attractive possibility, especially for those who were born in U.S. and were scared of the repressive anti-Communist climate of the 1950s. For example, in 1949, the participants of the Chinese Young People's Summer Conference in Lake Tahoe urged youth not only to leave Chinatowns, but to also discard Chinese tradition altogether. They thought it was the best way to advance "understanding" between the races.<sup>34</sup> When assimilationist theory spread around whole communities, the "sojourner" old activists were marginalized and their voices also

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<sup>32</sup> Rose Hum Lee, "The Marginal Man: Re-evaluation and Indices of Measurement," *Journal of Human Relations* 5 (Spring 1956), 27-28; Yu, *Thinking Orientals*, 128.

<sup>33</sup> Wang, *Post-War Development in the Chinese American community*, 273.

<sup>34</sup> Chang, *The Chinese in America*, 246

disappeared. On the contrary, tales of the well-assimilated Chinese Americans were common in mainstream media and eulogized by politicians in the process of policy-making. Gradually, Chinese Americans were labeled a “Model Minority.”<sup>35</sup> However, the showy “Model Minority” image in suburbs could not cover the bleak reality of the extreme unemployment, delinquency, and severe gang violence in Chinatowns.<sup>36</sup>

Nonetheless, the civil rights movement inspired many young professionals and young college students who began to re-identify themselves with and willingly participate in struggles for the interests of the ghetto-Chinatown deserted by their parents. This did not only directly challenge the repressive political and economic order maintained by the association leaders and merchant elites (Kiu Lings) but also contradicted the dominant ideology of assimilation.<sup>37</sup> This will be dealt with in more detail in chapter 6.

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<sup>35</sup> The concept “model minority” was first put forward by social scientist William Peterson to extol Japanese Americans. Soon after the focus shifted from Japanese to Chinese and attributed their success to “a tight network of family and clan loyalties.” Chinese were exalted for their “strict discipline” leading Children to “attend school faithfully, work hard at their studies—and stay out of trouble.” See Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals*, 188-189; Stephen Steinberg, “The Myth of Ethnic Success: Old Wine in New Bottles,” *The Oxford Handbook of American Immigration and Ethnicity*, Ronald H. Bayor ed. (Oxford Handbooks Online, 2014).

<sup>36</sup> Chiou-Ling Yeh, “Contesting Identities: Youth Rebellion in San Francisco’s Chinese New Year Festivals, 1953-1969,” in *The Chinese in America: A History from Gold Mountain to the New Millennia* (Walnut, CA: Alta Mira Press, 2002), 329-350; Gloria Heyung Chun, “Shifting Ethnic Identity and Consciousness: U.S.-Born Chinese American Youth in the 1930s and 1950s,” in *Asian American Youth: Culture, Identity and Ethnicity*, Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou, eds. (NY: Routledge, 2004), 125; Stanford M. Lyman, “Red Guard on Grant Avenue,” in *Culture and Civility in San Francisco*, Howard S. Becker ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1971), 21-34.

<sup>37</sup> Liu, *Bian huan de bian jie*, 271



#### **IV. Conclusion of this Chapter**

Throughout the entire Cold War-Civil Rights Movement era, Chinese American activists struggled to claim rights denied to them by those outside of Chinatown, as well as to change the social and political power within Chinatown itself. The process of claiming their rights and searching for their identity was not a smooth one, but full of setbacks. First, transnational politics in the context of the Cold War led to the U.S. government utilizing integrated Chinese immigrants to propagate the superiority of US democracy while suppressing pro-PRC activism. Second, internal political struggles made pro-KMT elites cooperate with the FBI and the INS to root out old leftists and their organizations, while non-partisan activism also suffered repression. Third, spreading assimilationist theory around the community made “sojourner” old leftists lose their voices and led to their activism becoming invisible.

This chapter provides the context for clarifying why oppression of pro-PRC Chinese American dissidents became one important factor to cause Chinese American activism to become invisible in the early Cold War years. The next chapter will give case studies to describe what kind of activism occurred and how it was suppressed in more detail.

## **Chapter 2. Chinese Americans Working for the PRC's Propaganda**

This chapter tries to clarify what kind of Chinese American activism occurred in the early Cold War years. It will mainly be described from the following angles:

### **I. Tang Mingzhao's Radical Activist Life**

In the 1940s and 1950s, a group of Chinese American leftists, who were called “old generation Chinese American leftists,” were sympathetic to the Chinese Communist Party and fought against both discrimination from the white society and suppression from the internal Chinese establishment dominated by Kuomintang power. Tang Mingzhao was a leading figure among them. This section explores how Tang Mingzhao helped to spread Chinese Communist ideology and propaganda abroad by examining his activism both in the U.S. and the PRC.

#### **i. A Brief Biography of Tang Mingzhao**

Tang Mingzhao was born in 1910 in Enping County, Guangdong Province, China. In 1920, he was brought over to San Francisco by his immigrant father who had become a U.S. citizen. After staying in San Francisco for seven years, Tang returned to China and studied in Tianjin's Nankai School. Following his graduation, he enrolled in Tsinghua University and secretly joined the Chinese Communist Party in 1931.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ling Luo, “Tang Mingzhao,” in *Jiangmen Wuyi haiwai mingren zhuan* [Biographies of Famous s abroad of Jiangmen Origin], Vol. 5, Tan Sizhe, ed. (Gulao, Heshan: Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe, 1996), 8-15; Haiming Liu, *Transnational History of a Chinese Family: Immigrant Letters, Family Business, and Reverse Migration* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press,

At Tsinghua, Tang actively organized student movements to criticize the Kuomintang government's policies for their lack of resistance to Japanese aggression. Soon the Kuomintang government arrested Tang and deported him to the United States.<sup>2</sup> After his return to the San Francisco bay area, Tang was admitted into the University of California, Berkeley, where he became an active member of the Communist Party of the USA (CPUSA). After graduating from U.C., Berkeley, Tang was dispatched to lead labor movements throughout the Chinese American communities of the East Coast. In 1937, Tang assumed the post of English language secretary for the leftist labor association, the Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance of New York (CHLA).<sup>3</sup> He became a leader in the struggle against anti-Chinese discrimination by America's white society and KMT oppression. Meanwhile, Tang helped the CHLA and other progressive Chinese American organizations to initiate a campaign called "To Save China, To Save Ourselves," which

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2005), 194.

<sup>2</sup> Him Mark Lai, *Chinese American Transnational Politics* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 91.

<sup>3</sup> During the Chinese Exclusion era, Chinese in the United States faced extreme professional restrictions. In order to make money, most of Chinese had to do the jobs usually associated with women like Laundry. Subsequently, it became a stereotyped occupation for Chinese men in U.S. And the Chinese laundrymen always concentrated their businesses in Chinatown. In order to protect their interests from harassment by the white majority society and conservative organizations in Chinatown (like the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association), these Chinese laundrymen formed their own alliance associations. Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance (CHLA 紐約華僑衣館聯合會) is a good example which was established in New York Chinatown in 1933. It identified as a working class organization, therefore from the beginning of its formation, it was greatly influenced by leftist thought. See more details in Paul. C.P. Siu, *The Chinese Laundryman: A Study of Social Isolation*, John Kuo Wei Tchen, ed. (NY: New York University, 1987) and Renqiu Yu, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves: The Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance of New York* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1992).

aimed to persuade the American people and government to help China resist Japanese aggression. In addition to this activism in Chinese American communities, Tang also represented the CHLA at many rallies and meetings organized by American civic and political organizations in order to promote international sympathy and aid for China. Significantly, in 1937 Tang Mingzhao attended the national congress of the League for Peace and Democracy and was elected a member of the League's National Committee.<sup>4</sup>

Tang's socio-political circle included many historical figures and one such person was Paul Robeson. Throughout the 1940s, Paul Robeson raised funds for the campaign of Chinese resistance to Japan's occupation and he even became an honorary director of the Chinese Defense League. He also released an album entitled *Chee Lai (Arise): Songs of New China* (which was also known as *The March of the Volunteers*), aimed to encourage Chinese resistance efforts. This song was later adopted as the national anthem of the PRC.<sup>5</sup>

In 1940, the CHLA founded *Meizhou huaqiao ribao* (*China Daily News*, also abbreviated to *CDN*, which will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter 4). Tang Mingzhao, as one of the founding members served as manager of the new paper and later he became

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<sup>4</sup> Lai, *Chinese American Transnational Politics*, 87-88, 91; Liu, *The Transnational History of A Chinese Family*, 196; Yu, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves*, 97, 104.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson, "From Peace to the Panthers," 237-238; Frazier, *The East is Black*, 1-2.

its chief editor. Since its founding, *CDN* formulated strategies to unite with other ethnic groups in U.S. society. Its aims were two-fold: to struggle against white racism and to build a “united front” to aid China in resisting Japanese aggression. *CDN* articles were critical of the “incorrect” attitude of many Chinese Americans toward minority groups (such as Jews and blacks) and attributing this negative attitude to the bad influence of America’s dominant “white racist culture.” In one editorial titled “We and the Oppressed Nations,” *CDN* stated to its readers, “We Chinese and blacks are both colored people. We are comrades on the same front.” In another editorial article titled “On the Black Attitude to Chinese,” *CDN* stated this proposition once again, “We should understand that blacks and we Chinese are like each other—we are the same nations being discriminated against and oppressed. We have no reason to discriminate against our black brothers.”<sup>6</sup>

After the attack on Pearl Harbor and the U.S. entry into the Pacific War, Tang was recommended to work in the Office of War Information of the State Department, meanwhile he also concurrently worked in Institute of Pacific Relations. After the end of the War, Tang returned to CHLA and continued as the editor-in-chief of *CDN*.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Yu, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves*, 96-97, 140, 19-123; *China Daily News*, September 17, 1942, p. 2; *China Daily News*, July 1, 1943, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Eighty Second U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Institute of Pacific Relations: Hearings*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, Part 10, March 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 14 and 21 (Washington D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1952), 3510-14; Shigu Wang, “Meizhou Huaqiao ribao,” [“China Daily News] in *Huaqiao Huaren bai ke quan shu* [The Encyclopedia of Chinese Overseas: Volume of Media and Publication], Nanjing Zhou et al, eds. (Beijing: Zhongguo Huaqiao chubanshe, 1999), 228-229.

In the late 1940s, the U.S. political climate changed as federal authorities began surveillance and harassment of progressive individuals and organizations. The founding of the PRC on October 1, 1949, only aggravated the American “red-scare” towards the Chinese in the United States resulting in heightened surveillance of the activities of Chinese activists. On October 11, 1949, the director of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover informed American intelligence bureaus that the CHLA was a “Communist infiltrated” organization. Tang Mingzhao became one of the main targets of persecution because he has hidden his membership of both the CCP and CPUSA during his tenure in the Office of Information Service of State Department during the War period.<sup>8</sup> Tang’s experiences were legendary, however, and his activism sustained connections with American nationalists and internationalists who helped him to work for China’s “people to people diplomacy” after he returned to China.

In 1950, after the Korean War broke out, arranged by Zhou Enlai, Tang Mingzhao

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<sup>8</sup> Luo, “Tang Mingzhao,” 10-11; Lai, *Chinese American Transnational Politics*, 144; Yu, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves*, 182-183; Liu, *Transnational History of A Chinese Family*, 197; Eighty Second U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Institute Of Pacific Relations: Hearings Before the Subcommittee to Investigate the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Laws*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, Part 10, March 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 14 and 21 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing office, 1952), 3510-14, 3595-97; INS Office, *Chinese Exclusion Act Case File 0200/130318: Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance, Office Memorandum*, File No.:516312/561 INV: VFP, April 29,1953 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953); Libo He, “Zhonggong haiwai zuzhi: Meigong zhongyang zhongguoju,” [“Overseas Association of Chinese Communist Party: China Bureau of Communist Party of USA”], *Dangshi bolan* [General Review of the Communist Party], Vol.7(2016); Yaxian Liu, “Meiguo gongchangdang yu Zhongguo gongchangdang guanxi de yanbian shulue,” [Investigating Evolution of Relation Between Chinese Communist Party and Communist Party of USA], *Zhonggong Dangshi Yanjiu* [Chinese Communist Party History Study], Vol. 8 (2010), 93-100.

secretly returned to China. In October of the same year, Tang was appointed as a deputy director of the Liaison Department of the Committee for Resisting the U.S.A. and Aiding Korea (which was later transferred to Chinese People's Committee for World Peace, also abbreviated to Chinese Peace Committee). Later he was elected as a representative of the Overseas Chinese to attend the first National People's Congress in 1954.<sup>9</sup> Tang was also a member of China's Delegation at the Asian-African Conference (also known as "Bandung Conference) in April, 1955. Later Tang became a dignitary of many liaison organizations (such as the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, the Chinese-African People's Friendship Association and the Chinese People's Committee for Defending World Peace) which helped to facilitate cultural and political connections between the PRC and other Third World countries, especially African countries.<sup>10</sup> In the late 1950s Tang was promoted to be deputy Secretary-General of the International Department of the Central Committee of the CCP (Zhongguo Gongchandang zhongyang weiyuanhui duiwai lianluobu, which was the most important department of the CCP responsible for "people's diplomacy" and managing ties with foreign communist parties)

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<sup>9</sup> Luo, "Tang Mingzhao," 11; Yu, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves*, 192; Yamin Lin, "Qin du lishi shike: Fang Mao Zedong Zhou Enlai Yingyu fanyi Tang Wensheng" [One Who Personally Witnessed an Historic Movement: Interview of Tang Wensheng, English Interpreter of Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai], *Nanfang Ribao* [China Southern Daily], October 11, 2002.

<sup>10</sup> Luo, "Tang Mingzhao," 12; Prazier, *The East Is Black: Cold War China in the Black Radical Imagination* (Durham, NC: Duke University, 2015), 56-57; Dihui Fang, "Yi Tang Mingzhao tongzhi" [Mourn Comrade Tang Mingzhao], in *World Affair Journal*, Vol. 2 (World Affairs Press, 1999)

and supervised the Liaison Department with English Speaking Countries. In this role, Tang had a key hand in extending invitations to many peace activists and socialists to visit China and observe the country's changes on the road to socialist modernization. Those visitors also included a small number of African Americans, many of whom even considered seeking political refuge in China to escape the intellectual and physical repression of U.S. racism and anti-communism.<sup>11</sup> (The specific examples will be discussed in Chapter 3) Consequently, upon their return to their home country, the visitors often became a vehicle of CCP's "people's diplomacy" to spread the ideologies and foreign policies of the PRC to the outside world.

ii. *China Reconstructs as A Window of People's Diplomacy*

Following the founding of the PRC and outbreak of the Korean War, the US government strictly prohibited the flow of capital to mainland China and also blocked U.S. citizens from visiting the PRC. The US containment policy also banned any publications from Beijing. Moreover, the western media (such as the *Voice of America*) attacked any policies of the new Republic. Contained by such disadvantageous international relations, at the insistence of Premier and Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai, the

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<sup>11</sup> FBI Records: The Vault\_ SOLO, Part 14 of 125, Office Memorandum, File No.:100-425091-434; FBI Records: The Vault\_ SOLO, Part 14 of 125, Office Memorandum, File No.:100-428091-496, Annex File entitled "Communist Party of China" No: 100-428091-497; Frazier, *The East Is Black*, 30.



monthly magazine, *China Reconstructs* (English edition) was founded by Soong Ching-ling (who was Dr. Sun Yat-sen's widow and Vice Chairwoman of the PRC Central People's Government) in 1952, with the aim of promoting a positive image of China abroad.<sup>12</sup> It was published by the China Welfare Institute which predecessor was the China Defense League.<sup>13</sup> The editorial committee was comprised of many famous scholars, journalists and politicians including Tang Mingzhao. In the beginning, the magazine assumed a more moderate stance and attracted a wide readership, including leftists, liberals and other moderate figures. In September, 1958, Tang Mingzhao was appointed as vice director of the editorial committee, and also concurrently as editor-in-chief.<sup>14</sup>

*China Reconstructs* recorded in detail China's experiments in specific social and economic sectors. In addition to covering issues related to education and public health, it

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<sup>12</sup> Huafeng Xu, "'Zhongguo jianshe' de chuangan yu xin Zhongguo chengli chuqi de duiwai xuanchuan," [Founding of "China Reconstructs" and International Communication in the early years of Establishment of the People's Republic], in *Zhonggong dangshi yanjiu* [Chinese Communist Party History Study], Vol. 5, (Beijing: Chinese Communist Party History Study Office, 2016). In January, 1990, *China Reconstructs* changed its name to *China Today*; Liang Yuan, "Zhou Enlai guanxin duiwai xinwen chuban gongzuo jishi (2)," ["Zhou Enlai Cared for External News Publishing Work"] *Chuban Faxing Yanjiu* [Publishing Research], Vol. 2 (2001).

<sup>13</sup> China Defense League was founded by Soong Ching-ling in Hong Kong in 1938, which aimed to enlist foreign funds and supplies to help China's resistance Japanese aggression. Paul Robeson was once invited to become an honorary director of the China Defense League. See Lai, *Chinese American Transnational Politics*, 104-106; Johnson, "From Peace to Panthers: PRC Engagement with African-American Transnational Networks, 1949-1979," 237.

<sup>14</sup> Xu, "'Zhongguojianshe' de chuangan yu xin Zhongguo chengli chuqi de duiwai xuanchuan"; "'Jinri Zhongguo' chuangan wushiwu zhounian dashiji, 1952-2007" [Chronology of *China Today* from 1952 to 2007], in Jinian "Jinri Zhongguo" chuangan wushiwu zhounian [Commemoration of Founding *China Today* 55 Years], Accessed on May 10, 2017. <http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/china/55/z10.htm>

expounded on the development of Chinese solutions to technological and organizational problems. These articles attracted a substantial readership in the newly decolonized African countries for whom China was seen as a model of a rural society in the process of modernization.<sup>15</sup>

Because Soong was well-known in the western world and she was not a member of the Chinese Communist Party, for outsiders *China Reconstructs* might be considered as less of a propaganda tool but a window for people's diplomacy. Therefore, it became easy to circulate it in western countries. According to Lu Ping, who was a founding official of *China Reconstructs*, the magazine reached more than one hundred countries—including many that had no formal diplomatic relations with the PRC. Significantly, in the 1950s *China Reconstructs* was the only Chinese magazine permitted to circulate in U.S. book stores.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, *China Reconstructs* had large readership in African American communities in the mid-1960s, and as African American Journalist, William Worthy reported, "*China Reconstructs* and *Peking Review* are standard reading fare of the black nationalists across the country... [T]he likely successors to Wilkins, King and Farmer are

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<sup>15</sup> George T. Yu, "China's Role in Africa," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 432, Africa in Transition (July, 1977),99-100.

<sup>16</sup> Haiping Shen compiled, "Luping koushu: zai Song Qingling lingdao xia chuangan 'Zhongguo jianshe' zazhi," [Lu Ping's Dictation: Founding *China Reconstructs* under Soong Ching-ling's Leadership], in *Bainian Chao* [Hundred Year Tide], Vol.4 (Beijing: Chinese Society of History of Communist Party of China, 2012).

openly seeking intellectual, ideological and strategic guidance from the Chinese revolution...”<sup>17</sup>

### iii. Bring Mao Tse-Tung’s Thought to the outside World

In the second half of the 1950s, the ideological disputes between the PRC and the Soviet Union escalated. After General Secretary of the Communist Party of the USSR Nikita Khrushchev met US President Dwight Eisenhower in 1959, many Chinese Communist leaders thought Moscow’s conciliatory tone towards the Western bloc proved that the Soviets had been abandoning the international communist movement and had become revisionist. Finally, the Sino-Soviet Alliance openly split in the early 1960s. This geopolitical context pushed China to adjust its foreign policies. China considered itself a member of the Third World and led efforts to break out of the encirclement imposed by the United States and the Soviet Union, and to cultivate China’s mobilization and organization of a new international force. The PRC’s policies during that period were articulated through a rhetoric of “antis”—anti-capitalism, anti-colonialism, anti-American imperialism and anti-Soviet revisionism.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> William Worthy, “The Red Chinese American Negro,” *Esquire*, October 1964.

<sup>18</sup> Libing Wu, “Jianlun Mao Zedong de ‘Shijie gemin’ zhanlve,” [“A Brief Research on Mao Zedong’s ‘World Revolution’ Strategy” *Fujian Dangshi Yuekan* [Fujian Historical Monthly of Chinese Communist Party], Vol. 12(2010),4-6; Jian Chen, *Mao’s China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina University, 2001), 37-84; Zhongyun Zi, “Cong ‘lao bu ke po’ dao fan mu cheng chou” [From “An Indissoluble Bond of Friendship” Turning into Enemy to Each Other: Reviewing the Sino-Soviet Alliance from Perspective of

Moreover, in order to present Mao as a representative of revolutionary leaders in Third World countries, and to bring Mao Zedong Thought to the outside world, the Chinese government decided to translate the new fourth volume of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung* into English, and meanwhile to revise the old translations of the first three volumes published in the early 1950s.<sup>19</sup> The government designated an elite translation team. Tang Mingzhao was appointed as vice director of the team to help with coordinating the translation work. There were 14 members in the team, 9 Chinese and 5 foreigners who were famous scholars, economists and English native speakers in China. According to Sidney Rittenberg, who was a member of the translation team, the members were ordered to work as quickly as possible because “Mao was anxious to release these works,” and the Chinese people were beginning “[to] advance the idea of *Mao as the Lenin of our time, the true standard-bearer of world socialism.*” [emphasized by author]<sup>20</sup> The translation team worked hard for almost two years to finish the all translations and revisions. These

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World Peace Movement], in *Yanhuang chunqiu*[Yan-Huang Historical Review], Vol. 12 (2014); Yu, “China’s Role in Africa,”103-106; A. M. Halpern, “The Foreign Policy Use of the Chinese Revolutionary Model,” *The China Quarterly*, No.7 (July-September, 1961), 1-16; Frazier, *The East Is Black*, 110-112.

<sup>19</sup> Hexiong Wu, “‘Mao Zedong xuanji’ Yingwen gaishu,”[Brief Introduction on English Translation of *Mao Tse-tung’s Selected Works*], in *Zhongguo fanyi* [Chinese Translators Journal], Vol. 28, No.5 (2007), 33-36; Weimin Pan and Haili Bu, “‘Mao Zedong xuanji’ Yingyi guocheng yu jiazhi yanjiu,” [Study on Process and Value of English Translation of *Mao Tse-tung’s Selected Works*], in *Xiangtan daxue xuebao shehuikexue ban*[Bulletin of Xiang Tan University Social Science Edition], Vol.6 (2013), 17-19; Sidney Rittenberg and Amanda Bennett, *The Man Who Stand Behind*(New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1993)(First Printing), 249.

<sup>20</sup> Sidney Rittenberg and Amanda Bennett, *The Man who stayed Behind* (Durham, NC: Duke University, 2001), 252.

translations were soon published by Beijing's Foreign Language Press and spread around seventy countries.<sup>21</sup>

According to a report issued by the Office of Foreign Affairs of the State Council of the PRC in 1962, publishing and circulating translations of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung* abroad was a central policy and integrated with a strategy of world-wide liberation and revolution. The Chinese government demanded, "continuously, intentionally and endeavoring in every possible way to deliver Mao's works to the outsider world, especially Asia, Africa and Latin America."<sup>22</sup> Circulation of Mao's works in western countries, especially in the U.S., had to be strategic. Often these works were delivered secretly via pro-PRC individuals and organizations or at certain times select articles which might be allowed to be published under the laws of various western countries were targeted for print and distribution.<sup>23</sup> Essays in these translations had great influence on the theories and cultures of the Black Power Movement. This can be seen in the ways that Mao's essays or speeches, for example "Maodun Lun" [*On Contradiction*], and "Yan'an wenyi zuotanhui shang de jianghua" [*Talks at the Yanan Forum on Art and Literature*], were widely studied and debated in the study circles of the Black Power

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<sup>21</sup> Wu, "Mao Zedong xuanji' yingwen gaishu," 33-36; Pan and Bu, "Mao Zedong xuanji' Yingyi guocheng yu jiazhi yanjiu," 17-19.

<sup>22</sup> Huoxiong Liu, "Mao Zedong zhuzuo de haiwai chuanbo," ["Study on Circulation of Mao's Works Abroad"] *Wenshi Tiandi* [History of World], Vol. 3 (2014), 4-8.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

Movement.<sup>24</sup>

## **II. Spreading Radical propaganda: The Activism of two pro-PRC Chinese American Organizations.**

As has been mentioned in Chapter 1, due to the influence of the Chinese Exclusion Act, Chinese immigrants were considered as “perpetual aliens” and excluded from the politics of the white-dominant society. Therefore, they became oriented toward China and often participated in China’s domestic politics even though they had lived in the United States for many years. The leaders of Huiguans and the CCBA were loyal to the KMT and depended on the support of the KMT government to maintain their control in Chinatowns. In contrast, the people in the leftist organizations felt sympathetic toward the Chinese Communist Party and oriented themselves toward its revolutionary politics. Most of them even believed that making China strong would be the key to improving their status in the United States.

Thus, when the news of Mao Zedong’s declaration of founding the PRC on October 1, 1949 was circulated around Chinese American leftists, they rejoiced, and tried to spread radical propaganda through their continuing activism. However, the pro-KMT community establishment colluded with the FBI and the INS to carry out a systemic purge

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<sup>24</sup> Mullen, “Transnational Correspondence,” 204; Robin D. G. Kelley and Betsy Esch, “Black Like Mao,” 31.

of Chinatown leftists.

Focusing on two leading pro-PRC organizations: CHLA and Min Qing, this section examines how their activism was conducted and how it resonated with the propaganda of communist China. At the same time oppression of pro-PRC Chinese American dissidents gathered stream, especially in the process of the investigation into Chinese immigration fraud from 1955 and the Chinese Confession Program since 1956. By examining U.S. official documents, memoirs and biographies of Chinese American leftist activists, I also try to clarify how, the U.S. government and its collaborators—the pro-KMT Chinese American establishment oppressed Chinatown activists and debilitated their leftist organizations.

In order to explore these questions, I use *China Daily News* (an organ of CHLA), INS and FBI files on CHLA, *Min Qing* (民青, the English name was *Chinese American Democratic Youth League Miscellany*), FBI files on Min Qing, INS files on the Chinese Confession Program, official papers of Foreign Ministry of the ROC government (in Taiwan), memoirs, biographies and autobiographies of Chinese American leftist activists as my primary resources.

#### **i. The Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance (CHLA)**

The Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance was founded by a group of Chinese

Laundrymen in New York's Chinatown in April 1933. The purpose of establishing the alliance was to resist any discriminatory acts against the Chinese hand laundries, and to protect the interests of Chinese laundrymen from harassment of both the white majority society and conservative organizations in Chinatown (like CCBA). Since the beginning of founding the association it had been greatly influenced by Chinese leftist thoughts.<sup>25</sup>

### **“To Save China, To Save Ourselves”**

In 1937 Tang Mingzhao became the CHLA's English language secretary. Tang actively helped the CHLA members to fight against racial discrimination of the white society and the dominance of the traditionalist Chinatown power structure. Meanwhile he led the CHLA members to participate in the anti-Japanese movement in the Chinese community. The CHLA raised a banner, called “To Save China, To Save Ourselves,” which meant that the patriotic support for China contributed to the struggle against exploitation and discrimination suffered by Chinese Americans. The CHLA expanded such sentiments and united other Chinese American patriotic organizations (such as Anti-Japanese Associations, National Salvation Associations and National Salvation Fund Savings Societies) to sponsor anti-Japanese rallies and also to launch fund-raising

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<sup>25</sup> Renqiu Yu, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves: The Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance of New York* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1992), 31-76; Fu'er Fang and Manli Zhang narrated, “Niuyue Huaqiao xiyiguan de bianqian,” [“Oral History on Development of the Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance of New York”] compiled by Jirui Luo, in *Guangzhou Wenshi Ziliao* [Guangzhou Historical Review], Vol. 21 (1980).



campaigns for China. As historian Renqiu Yu stated, “By upholding such a banner, the CHLA was able to unite other Chinese American patriotic organizations around itself and emerged as a new leader in the New York Chinese community.”<sup>26</sup>

In 1940 Tang and other progressives founded *China Daily News* (*CDN*, 美洲華僑日報) at the headquarters of the CHLA. Tang was manager of the new paper and later he became chief editor. Eugene Moy edited the literary section. The paper was not only a newsletter of the CHLA but it also became the first daily organ of Chinese American leftists on the East Coast of the United States. Its editorial policy was to support the CCP’s program, and *CDN* frequently released reports and editorials to criticize Chiang Kai-shek’s KMT army attacks on the CCP army and its sabotaging of the anti-Japanese united front. On this account, *CDN* constantly conducted the written polemics with the KMT organs or pro-KMT newspapers (such as *The Chinese Nationalist Daily*(民氣日報), *The Chinese Journal* (美洲日報), *The Young China Daily*(少年中國晨報), and *The United Journal* (聯合日報)) in the Chinese American community.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ling Luo, “Tang Mingzhao,” *Jiangmen Wuyi haiwai mingren zhuan* [Biographies of Famous Individuals Abroad of Jiangmen Origin], Vol. 5, Sizhe Tang ed. (Gulao, Heshan: Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe, 1996), 8-15; Libo He, “Zhonggong haiwai zuzhi: Meigong zhongyang zhongguojie,” [“Overseas Association of the Chinese Communist Party: China Bureau of the Communist Party of USA”], *Dangshi Bolan* [General Historical Review of the Chinese Communist Party], Vol.7 (2016); Him Mark Lai, *Chinese American Transnational Politics* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 87-88; 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* (2004), 7; Yu, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves*, 77-78, 96-97.

<sup>27</sup> Yu, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves*, 94-99; Tingzheng Zhang reporter and Fu’er Fang, and

Accompanying the end of the WWII, the Civil War between the CCP and the KMT started again. The CHLA pointed out the grave threat of a Civil War in China and called for establishing a coalition government under a democratic nation-wide election. In July 1945 *CDN* published Mao Zedong's essays, "Lun lianhe zhengfu" ["On Coalition Government"] and "Lun xin minzhu zhuyi" ["On New Democracy"]. Meanwhile, following the pro-CCP's tone and directions, *CDN* also issued many editorials to decry the dictatorship and corruption of the Kuomintang government and further to criticize U.S. government support for Chiang Kai-shek's launching the Chinese civil war. Moreover, on November 1947 Tang Mingzhao and members of other leftist Chinese organizations founded the Overseas Chinese Federation for Peace and Democracy in China (OCFPD, 旅美中國和平民主聯盟) in New York City, which aimed to launch an anti-Chiang Kai-shek campaign among Chinese abroad and to oppose U.S. government interference in the Chinese Civil War.<sup>28</sup>

### **Hoisting the First Five Starred Red Flag in U.S.**

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Manli Zhang interviewees, "Jianku fendou de *Meizhou Huaqiao Ribao*," ["Oral History on the Arduously Struggling Experiences of founding and publishing *China Daily News*"] in *Guangzhou Wenshi Ziliao* [Guangzhou Historical Review], Vol. 17 (1979); Peiqi Peng, "Guomindang zhengfu zai Mei qiaoshe de qiaowu gongzuo, 1949-1960," [Study on Kuomintang Government's Engagement in Overseas Chinese Affairs in U.S., 1949-1960"] (Master thesis, Taiwan Normal University, 2010), 61-100.

<sup>28</sup> Lai, "The Chinese-Marxist Left, Chinese Students and Scholars in America, and the New China," 11; Lai, *Chinese American Transnational Politics*, 123-132; Luo. "Tang Mingzhao," 8-15; Dihuai Fang, "Yi Tang Mingzhao tongzhi," ["Mourn Comrade Tang Mingzhao"], in *World Affair Journal*, Vol. 2(Beijing: World Affairs Press, 1999), 32-33.

Ironically, while Mao commanded the People's Liberation Army to defeat the KMT's army and gradually controlled large territories in China, the *CDN* stopped its arguments for peace and a coalition government in China and started openly to support the CCP's assault on the KMT and published many articles eulogizing the situation in the areas where the Chinese Communists had liberated. On April 25, 1949, leaders of the CHLA even cabled Mao Zedong and other CCP leaders to congratulate them on their success in the Civil War battlefields and meanwhile praised them for driving out imperialist power from China.<sup>29</sup>

From October 1 to October 3, 1949, *CDN* used a banner headline to report the news entitled "the Central People's Government of the PRC founded, Mao Zedong was elected as chairman" and to broadcast reports of the founding ceremonies around the Chinese American community.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, the CHLA also planned to hold a celebration in New York's Chinatown. When the members got to know the design of the PRC's national flag from a Hong Kong's newspaper, they immediately resolved to make one. On October 9, Chen Jinjian (then a member of the CHLA Executive Committee) hoisted the first Five Starred Red Flag in the front of the CHLA headquarters on 191 Canal Street.

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<sup>29</sup> *China Daily News*, November 1, 1948, p7; July 11, 1949, p2; April 26, 1949, p7; April 29, 1949, p7; August 2, 1949, p2.

<sup>30</sup> *China Daily News*, October 1, 1949, p1; October 2, 1949, p1; October 3, 1949, p1

Hundreds of people attend the celebration. Because the CHLA members informed the police beforehand and were protected by the police from harassment by the pro-KMT establishment, the celebration ended safely.<sup>31</sup>

Subsequently, the *CDN* initiated an editorial campaign to call for Chinese abroad to return to mainland China and join the Communist efforts to build a “New China.” The editorial articles mainly reported the CCP’s programs and policies, and especially described how the CCP restored law and order and controlled inflation and corruption after liberation. Hundreds of copies of *CDN* were distributed to associations of Chinese students and scholars who were studying or working on American university campuses (such as Chinese Students Christian Association and Association of Chinese Scientific Workers in America). Some progressive Chinese students and scholars opened conferences to discuss current events and the CCP’s political programs, and even invited leftist activists of the CHLA to explain the CCP’s policies. For example, at the 1950 Midwest Conference of the Chinese Students Christian Association, Tang Mingzhao was invited to attend it as a guest and explained the policies of the PRC. With these activities the CCP’s propaganda reached Chinese students, scholars and intellectuals on American

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<sup>31</sup> Meichang Chen and Xianwen Meng, eds., *Niuyue Tangrenjie Chunqiu: Yishu fuqing Chen Jinjian shengping jingli* [The Historical Stories on New York’s Chinatown: Recalling My Father, Chen Jinjian’s Life] (Hong Kong: The Publishing House of China, 2011); Yu, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves*, 182-183.

university campuses. It attracted and finally persuaded many of them (especially scholars in the sciences and technology) to return to mainland China and serve the construction of the “New China.” According to a survey by historian Him Mark Lai, about 700 to 1000 Chinese American students and scholars chose to return to the PRC until 1956.<sup>32</sup>

### **In Times of Crisis**

However, when both the U.S. domestic political climate and the international geopolitics changed, the CHLA fell in crisis. Because it was considered a “pro-communist” organization, since the late 1940s the federal authorities began surveillance and harassment of CHLA members. Ten days after Mao declared the founding of the PRC, the director of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover authorized the FBI’s New York office to install “technical surveillance” on the CHLA’s “pro-Communist activity.”<sup>33</sup> Moreover, soon after the outbreak of the Korean War, the PRC’s army confronted the American troops on the battlefield in October 1950, and anti-Chinese sentiment spread in American society. Many Chinese Americans felt scared that they would be treated like Japanese Americans

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<sup>32</sup> Lai, *Chinese American Transnational Politics*, 132-139, 143-144; Lai, “The Chinese-Marxist Left, Chinese Students and Scholars in America, and the New China,” 11-14; Fang, “Yi Tang Mingzhao tongzhi,” 32-33.

<sup>33</sup> INS Office, *Chinese Exclusion Act Case File 0200/130318: Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance, Office Memorandum*, File No.: 516312/561 INV: VFP, April 29, 1953 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Print Office, 1953); FBI documents, File No.:100-365097-59, June 29, 1954; and File No.: 100-365097-66, enclosure, pp.1-4; FBI documents, File No.: 100-365097-88, December 29, 1954; Yu, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves*, 191.

who were incarcerated in concentration camps during World War II.<sup>34</sup>

At that time in the Chinese American community the pro-KMT establishment saw an opportunity to recover their dominant power by using anti-communist sentiment to oppress the opposition power of the left. Meanwhile, the Kuomintang government (in Taiwan) also dispatched party officials (such as the KMT central committeemen Huang Wenshan and Zheng Yanfen who was director of the Overseas Party Affairs Section of the KMT) to San Francisco and New York in order to help leaders of the CCBA to organize anti-Communist activities. On December 1950 the first Chinese Anti-Communist National Salvation League was founded by the CCBA leaders in San Francisco's Chinatown, and three months later the same Anti-Communist League was also established in New York's Chinatown. According to an interview with founding member Liu Peichi, the purpose of founding the Chinese Anti-Communist League was "[to] let the American people know that the Chinese are not communists and to rally all overseas Chinese people against communism and to support the Republic of China."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Him Mark Lai, "China and the Chinese American Community: The Political Dimension," in *Chinese America: History and Perspective* (San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America, 2009), 9; Victor G. and Brett de Bary Nee, *Longtime Californ': A Documentary Study of An American Chinatown* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), 211; Amy Chen, *The Chinatown Files* (Documentary) (NY: Third World Newsreel, 2001).

<sup>35</sup> Lai, "China and Chinese American Community," 9-10; Wenshan Huang, "Zuzhi Meizhou huaqiao fan-Gong jiuguohui jihua," ["Plan for organizing an overseas Chinese anti-Communist national salvation league in the Americas"] in *Huang Wenshan lü Mei luncong* [Essays published by Huang Wenshan while sojourning in the United States], Huang Wenshan ed. (Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), 641-642; President Chiang Kai-shek's Signature Files, "Tai(40)gai mi shi zi di 0247 hao Zhang Qiyun, Zheng Yanfen cheng: chengbao Niuyue huaqiao fangong jiuguo

Thus, the major task for the League was to eliminate Communist sympathizers from the Chinese American communities and use various means to break up their organizations.

In the face of such a repressive atmosphere, Tang Mingzhao secretly returned to China in September 1950. The manager and chief-editor of *CDN* was succeeded by Eugene Moy who maintained its pro-PRC editorial stance. However, the Chinese Anti-Communist National Salvation League severely attacked the CHLA and *CDN*. It spread rumors around New York's Chinatown that the U.S. government had investigated communists in the CHLA for national security, and that members of the CHLA who did not withdraw their membership would be sent to a concentration camp. In consequence, membership of the CHLA sharply decreased from over two thousand to less than four hundred within just several months. At the same time, the Anti-Communist League called for a general boycott of *CDN* and violently intimidated news-vendors and advertisers of *CDN* and forced them to withdraw their commitments. Furthermore, the KMT organs and pro-KMT newspapers (such as *The Chinese Journal*, *The Chinese Nationalist Daily* and *The China Tribune*) described *CDN* with red-baiting phrases such as “Russian Daily

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zonghui zuzhi jingguo qing jianyou,” [“Tai(40)gai mi shi zi No.:0247 from Zhang Qiyun and Zheng Fenyan: Report on Founding of the Anti-Communist National Salvation League in New York”], June 13, 1951, Kuomintang History Archives (Taipei), File No.: President signature 40/0186; Section 3 of the Kuomintang Central Committee, *Zhongguo Guomindang zai haiwai* [Kuomintang's Activities Abroad], Vol. 1, 242-243; Interview with Liu Peichi, in Victor G. and Brett de Bary Nee, *Longtime Californ'*, 217-222.

News” and “anti-American” in their reports and openly incited their followers to use violence against the CHLA and *CDN*.<sup>36</sup>

With the help of the pro-KMT Chinese American informants, the Justice Department indicted three CHLA members who had sent money to their relatives in the PRC, thereby violating the 1917 Trading with the Enemy Act. The chief-editor of *CDN* Eugene Moy was also charged because he was accused of publishing advertisements for the PRC-owned banks in Hong Kong, offering services for individuals wishing to remit money to China. Finally, Moy was sentenced to two years in jail and some others for one year. Although Moy’s jail term was later modified to one year, the *CDN* was charged a fine of \$25,000.<sup>37</sup>

Due to a more severe harassment and persecution from both the pro-KMT

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<sup>36</sup> Fang and Zhang, “Jianku fendou de *Meizhou huaqiao ribao*”; China Daily News, July 4, 1950; Yu, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves*, 183-186; Meredith Oyen, *The Diplomacy of Migration: Transnational Lives and the Making of U.S.-Chinese Relations in the Cold War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 2015), 147-148; The Committee to Support the China Daily News, *The China Daily News Case*(New York: n.d.[ca.1952]); “Russian Daily News(*The China Daily News*) was Discarded By Overseas Chinese,” in *The Chinese Nationalist Daily*, January 27, 1951; “Chinese And Westerners Against Russian Daily News (*The China Daily News*),” in *The Chinese Journal*, January 27, 1951.

<sup>37</sup> The Committee to Support the *China Daily News*, *The China Daily News Case*(New York: n.d.[ca.1952]) (unpublished manuscript in possession of the author); Yu, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves*, 187-188; Lai, “China and Chinese American Community,” 11; Lai, *Chinese American Transnational Politics*, 145-146; Oyen, *The Diplomacy of Migration*, 145-153; American Civil Liberties Union, *United States of America v. China Daily News, Inc. and Eugene Moy*, American Civil Liberties Union Archives, 1950-1990: Series3: Subject Files, Box/Folder No.: 926/12, 926/13 (Reel:157); U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, *United States of America, Plaintiff-appellee, v. China Daily News, Inc., and Eugene Moy, Defendants-Appellants, Andchin You Gon, Tom Sung, and Chin Hong Ming, Defendants-appellants*, 224F.2d 670 (2d Cir. 1955), Argued June 15, 1955, Decided July, 1955. <http://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/F2/224/667/145760>, accessed on June 27, 2017.



establishment and the U.S. federal authorities, *CDN* faced a serious financial and staff crisis and its circulations dropped precipitously. Finally, it had to become a semiweekly publication. However, the paper persisted in its pro-PRC editorial stance throughout. Relying only on financial contributions from loyal readers across the country, *CDN* continued to spread Chinese Communist propaganda in its reports. For example, in January 1956 *CDN* published an article titled “Zuguo de xin mianmao” [A New Face Every Day for Our Ancestral Land-the PRC] written by Ye Shengtao who was a writer as well as a propaganda worker in the PRC. By citing statistics and data, the author vividly praised Chinese development in all fields during its First Five-Year Plan (from 1953 to 1957) which was modeled on the Soviet Union’s mode of economic development.<sup>38</sup> It was presumed that the article was published to counter distorted reports on the PRC in the pro-KMT newspapers.

**ii. The Chinese American Democratic Youth League (CADYL)**

The Chinese American Democratic Youth League (CADYL, 三藩市華僑民主青年團) was first organized as *xin wenzi yanjiu hui* (新文字研究會, The New Chinese Alphabetized Language Study Society, or NCALSS) at 812 Stockton Street, San Francisco in 1939, which aimed to unite young people to combat illiteracy and acquire

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<sup>38</sup> Ye Shengtao, “Zuguo de xin mianmao,” [“The New Look of Our Ancestral Land-the PRC], in *China Daily News*, January 12-13, 1956, p2.

knowledge by studying the new Latinized Chinese language advocated by the Chinese Communists in the 1930s. Later, the association shifted its activities to support China's war against Japan and reorganized as the Chinese Youth League for National Salvation in California (加省華僑青年救國團) or simply the Chinese Youth League(CYL) in early 1943. As scholar Him Mark Lai pointed out, the CYL was "closely connected with American Youth for Democracy" (which was a Marxist-Leninist youth organization during World War II) and its key members "belong[ed] to the Young Communist League."<sup>39</sup>

The mission of the CYL was similar to that of the CHLA in New York, which was to conduct a fund-raising campaign by dramatic performances. At the same time, it published a mimeographed monthly magazine called *Zhandou* [Fighting] (《戰鬪》), and a bulletin named *Qingjiu Tuanbao* [National Salvation Youth League Journal] (《青救團報》) which were used to report on the anti-Japanese war in China and to spread the CCP's programs and propaganda.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Lai, *Chinese American Transnational Politics*, 116-117; Lai, *Him Mark Lai: Autobiography of A Chinese American Historian*, Judy Yung, Ruthanne Lum McCunn and Russel C. Leong, eds. (UCLA Asian American Studies Center and Chinese Historical Society of America, 2011), 86.

<sup>40</sup> Lai, *Chinese American Transnational Politics*, 117; *The Third Anniversary of the Chinese Youth League: Qingjiu Tuanbao Special Edition*, December 29, 1945, *Chinese American Democratic Youth League Miscellany, 1940-1966*, 1, 1:6, AAS ARC 2000/81. Asian American Studies Archives, Ethnic Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley (Hereafter to be referred as AAS Archives); *Zhandou*, Vol.2, Issue6(March, 1945); *Zhandou*, Vol. 2, Issue 7(April, 1945), 1, 1:6, AAS ARC 2000/81, AAS Archives.

After the Second World War ended, in order to echo the CCP's call for renaming the Chinese Youth League in early 1946, the CYL was renamed The Chinese American Democratic Youth League (which was also simply known as Min Qing 民青). The League also amended its Constitution which claimed the aims of Min Qing were "devoted to the interests and welfare of the overseas Chinese youth in general, meanwhile to strive for establishment of a peaceful, democratic and unified 'New China'," moreover it followed the model of the Chinese Communist Youth League to form its cadre setup. The League ceased to print the monthly magazine *Zhandou* but continually published its official bulletin and changed its name to *Min Qing* (《民青》).<sup>41</sup>

### **Promoting Support for the PRC among Overseas Chinese Youths.**

Like the CHLA in New York, at San Francisco's Chinatown Min Qing and the Chinese Workers Mutual Aid Association (加省華工合作會 CWMAA, which was a pro-CCP Chinese American labor organization) co-sponsored a public event to celebrate the founding of the PRC on October 9, 1949. However, halfway through the celebration the event was interrupted by the pro-KMT establishment's hired thugs who broke up the meeting, and circulated leaflets that "named 15 Chinese Americans and a five-thousand-

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<sup>41</sup> "Min Qing jianshi," ["Brief History of Min Qing"], in *Min Qing: The Sixteenth Anniversary of Chinese American Democratic Youth League Special Edition*, Vol. 32, No. 9(December 24, 1955), 1, 1:10, AAS ARC 2000/81, AAS Archives; "Sanfan shi Huaqiao minzhu qingnian tuan zhangcheng' xiugai cao'an" ["Draft on Amending the Constitution of the Chinese American Democratic Youth League in San Francisco"], 1:1, 1:4, AAS ARC 2000/81, AAS Archives.

dollar reward was offered for each one's death.”<sup>42</sup>

However, the suppression from the pro-KMT power structure did not impede activities of Min Qing too much. On Thanksgiving of 1949, more than ten new members joined Min Qing. Members of Min Qing established various study groups which carried names of “Xun Gen Zu” [“Digging up the root”], “Kai Huang Zu” [“Opening up the Wilderness”], “Xin Sheng Zu” [“New Life”], and so forth. All of those groups carried connotations related to communist activities. For example, in an article titled “Xuexi: Xun Gen Zu baogao” [“Study! A Report from ‘Digging up the root group’”], described that Chinese people were in a nation-wide ideological remolding movement following Mao’s revolutionary thoughts, and the author called for Chinese American youths joining the ideological remolding movement as well so that they would serve the people better when they returned to China in the future.<sup>43</sup>

Moreover, there were over two thousand volumes of new books in Min Qing’s library, which supplied rich materials for members reading in their study groups. Members of study groups were usually required to read books on the following topics: (1)

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<sup>42</sup> Lai, *Him Mark Lai: Autobiography of A Chinese American Historian*, 84; Interview with Liu Peichi, in Victor G. and Brett de Bary Nee, *Longtime Californ*, 219; Lai, “A Historical Survey of the Chinese Left in America,” in *Counterpoint: Perspective on Asian America* (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 1976), 72; Zhao, *Remaking Chinese America*, 119.

<sup>43</sup> “Min Qing jianshi”, 5; “Xuexi: Xun Gen Zu baogao,” [“Study! A Report from ‘Digging up the root’ group”], *Min Qing*, Issue Number 26 (November 11, 1950), p1, 1, 1:1, AAS ARC 2000/81, AAS Archives.

“The Philosophy of Life in Revolution” (2) “Before Stepping into a New Society” (3)  
“First Step to Learn the Ideologies of Mao Zedong” (4) “Dialectics and Materialism” (5)  
“Letters to Revolutionary Youth.”<sup>44</sup>

Besides spreading the PRC’s policies and ideology in the activities of the study groups, *Min Qing* and other leftist Chinese American organizations regularly co-hosted “The Current Events Forum” which was used to discuss development achievements of the PRC and its policies toward overseas Chinese and the returned overseas Chinese youths. The Forum urged that “all overseas Chinese should understand the PRC’s policies and support the construction of their motherland,” meanwhile it also called for “all overseas Chinese youths to follow the advice of Chairman Mao by keeping themselves in good physical shape, studying industriously and working hard.”<sup>45</sup> It is clear that *Min Qing* was devoted to nurturing the patriotic leaning of Chinese Americans, a patriotic leaning that was not toward the United States but toward the PRC.

Furthermore, in its official bulletin *Min Qing* published a so-called “Shishi Zhailu”

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<sup>44</sup> “Zhu tushushi de dansheng,” [“To Celebrate *Min Qing*’s Library Established] *Min Qing*, Issue Number 44 (August 4, 1951), p6, 1, 1:1, AAS ARC 2000/81, AAS Archives.

<sup>45</sup> “Si Da Lin , Mao Zedong “Lun Gongchandangyuan yao shanyu he fei Dang qunzhong hezuo: di san ci shishi zuotanhui,” [“Study both Stalin’ and Mao Zedong’ Talks on ‘Communist should be good at cooperating with the Common people’: The Third Current Events Forum”], *Min Qing*, Issue Number 12 (April 29, 1950), p1, 1,1:10,AAS ARC 2000/81, AAAS Archives; “Wei konggu he fazhan renmin de shengli er fendou: di qi ci Min Qing, Min Lian, He Zuo Hui lianhe shishi zuotanhui,” [“Striving for Consolidating and developing the People’s Victories: The Seventh Current Events Forum Co-hosted by *Min Qing*, the San Francisco chapter of the Chinese League for Peace and Democracy, and the Chinese Workers Mutual Aid Association”], *Min Qing*, Issue Number 26 (November 11, 1950), p1, 1, 1:1, AAS ARC 2000/81, AAS Archives.

[“News Chop Suey”] column which was used to interpret international developmental in the proper “communist” line. For example, during the Korean War period, the column published a number of articles to criticize “the American imperialists” for provoking the Korean War while it justified the PRC’s army interfering in the battlefield by describing the Chinese military action as “helping the Korean people to fight against imperialist invasion.”<sup>46</sup>

The Bulletin *Min Qing*’s attitude toward the Korean War attracted the FBI’s attention, and the FBI suspected it as “pro-Chinese Communist, pro-Soviet and anti-United States” and they started technical surveillance of its activities. Surprisingly, the FBI employed informants to translate all publications and documents of *Min Qing* including its Constitutions, the complete volumes of *Min Qing* and its predecessor *Qinjiu Tuan Bao*, and its membership dues records. Throughout these translations the U.S. Justice Department collected an intact list of *Min Qing*’s membership which became an important tool to suppress Chinese American leftists in the Chinese Confession period and afterwards.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, even the president of *Min Qing*, Him Mark Lai was

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<sup>46</sup> “Mei kuojun de benzhi,” [“Exploring why the U.S. dealt the military expansion program”], *Min Qing*, Issue Number 44 (August 4, 1951), p1, 1,1:1, AAS ARC 2000/81, AAS Archives; “Yao heping buyao zhanzheng,” [“Peace Not War”], *Min Qing*, Issue Number 45 (August 18, 1951), p1, 1,1:1, AAS ARC 2000/81, AAS Archives; “Honghonglielie de ‘Weiguo Yuanchao’ yundong,” [“Vigorous ‘Resisting American Aggression and Aiding Korea’ Movement”], *Min Qing*, Issue Number 48 (September 29, 1951), p12, 1,1:1, AAS ARC 2000/81, AAS Archives.

<sup>47</sup> SAC SF to Director, FBI files, 2, 2:1, AAS ARC 20008/81, AAS Archives; SAC LA to Director, September 13, 14, 28, 1956, FBI files on The HCUAA, microfilm, Doe Library, UC Berkeley;

subpoenaed to respond to questions from an unspecified board of examiners about Min Qing and one of its former members, Hansen J.T. Chang.<sup>48</sup>

### **Introducing the Culture of “New China” to Chinatown’s Society**

Although the federal authorities ran a severe surveillance and investigation program toward Min Qing, no members were indicted or tried in court for insurrection or subversion. However, in order to avert further suppression from both the U.S. federal authorities and the Anti-Communist League in Chinatown, the Executive Board of Min Qing, supported by the progressive Chinese American cultural association, the World Theater (世界戲院)<sup>49</sup>, proposed that its activities should be more educational, cultural and recreational than political. In 1954 Min Qing changed its name to Chinese American

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FBI files, Office Memorandum, No.: 105-13332-102, December 8, 1955, 2, 2:7, AAS ARC 2000/81, AAS Archives; FBI files, Office Memorandum, No.: 105-13332-124, Annex file “Translation of Constitution of the Chinese American Democratic Youth League,” file number: SF 105-869, April 25, 1956, 2, 2:1, AAS ARC 2000/81, AAS Archives.

<sup>48</sup> Hansen J.T. Chang was a former member of Min Qing, who once served in U.S. Army and was suspected of being sympathetic to the PRC. Because he was against U.S. policy in Korea, he deserted the army and went to Canada and then to the PRC. See Lai, *Him Mark Lai: Autobiography of A Chinese American Historian*, 92; Lai, *Transcript of Testimony about the Chinese American Youth Club and Hansen J.T. Chang*, n.p., 1955 (unpublished file in possession of the author).

<sup>49</sup> The World Theater was founded by Chinese progressives Fong Ying, Situ Huimin and Lawrence Lowe at San Francisco’s Chinatown in 1949. It was the first theater to show films from the PRC in the early 1950s. However, due to repression from the Anti-Communism League in Chinatown, the activities of the World Theater were largely suspended from the late 1950s. See Foreign Ministry of ROC (Taiwan), “A Report from the San Francisco Consul of the ROC to Overseas Community Affairs Council of the ROC and National Security Bureau of the ROC,” File No.: 外(45)美一字 005071, Annex file, “Guanyu gongfei zai jinshan liyong xiyuan xuanchuan shiyi,” [“As regarding the World Theater spreading the CCP’s propaganda”], No.: 07256, May 10, 1956, in *Zhu Jiujinshan Zong Lingshiguan Gexiang Huibao*, 4/11/1952-12/24/1957 [Various Reports from the San Francisco Consul of the ROC, from April 11, 1952 to December 24], repository at Archives, Institute of Modern History Academia Sinica, Taiwan. Repository No.: 11-33-02-02-060.

Youth Club (CAYC) and it also amended its Constitution, which claimed that Min Qing aimed at building a prestigious cultural and recreational association for Chinese American youths.<sup>50</sup>

In Min Qing, there were a number of Groups, such as a Science Group, a Drama Group, a Chorus Group, a Recreation Group and other groups focused on a particular pastime. These groups could have as few as three to five members or as many as thirteen or fifteen members. They undertook educational, cultural and entertainment activities for the members. For example, in the Science Group the old cadre taught the young members communist philosophy such as Mao's "Criticism and Self-criticism". In the Drama Group, the members adapted communist China's famous opera "The White Hair Girl" [白毛女] and performed it at San Francisco's Chinatown. The Chorus Group members gathered to learn songs such as "The East is Red" [東方紅] and "The Yellow River Cantata"[黃河大合唱], both which eulogized the Chinese Communist Party and its revolutionary spirit. In these groups, they all urged members to act collectively.<sup>51</sup>

Each Saturday evening, the Recreational Group held a "lianyi wanhui" ["Comrade

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<sup>50</sup> Lai, *Him Mark Lai: Autobiography of A Chinese American Historian*, 88, 90.

<sup>51</sup> "Min Qing lianyi youyi wanhui jiemubiao" ["Program Lists of Recreational Evening Meeting of Min Qing"], June 30, 1951, 1,1:23, AAS ARC 2000/81, AAS Archives; "Bai mao nv," ["The White Hair Girl," 白毛女], Min Qing Drama Group adapted, 1956, 1,1:24, AAS ARC 2000/81, AAS Archives; "Huanghe dahechang," ["The Yellow River Cantata"] in *Cong qidai dao zhengqu: Min Qing lianyi youyi wanhui da te hao* [From Waiting for to Striving for: Min Qing's Recreational Evening Meeting, Extra], *Min Qing*, Issue Number 67 (June 28, 1952), 1,1:7, AAS ARC 2000/81, AAS Archives.



Evening Meeting”] where dramas and operas were shown at frequent intervals, and the singing of songs was encouraged at all times. Besides members of Min Qing, visitors were also welcome to enjoy communal life as well as collective entertainment in these activities. Additionally, the Recreational Group offered various sports such as basketball, baseball or track meets regularly. In June every year, Min Qing held a June Friendship Meeting for which outsiders would be invited to participate in Min Qing’s activities so that they could be attracted and join Min Qing as members.<sup>52</sup>

Moreover, all holidays of the PRC were celebrated in Min Qing. For example, March 8<sup>th</sup>, the Women’s Festival[三八婦女節]; May 1<sup>st</sup>, the Workers’ Festival[五一勞動節]; May 4<sup>th</sup>, the Youth Festival[五四青年節]; June 1<sup>st</sup>, the Children’s Festival[六一兒童節]; October 1<sup>st</sup>, the National Day of the PRC[十一國慶節], were all celebrated by ceremonies and articles in their publication.<sup>53</sup>

As the president of Min Qing Him Mark Lai (who served eight times as president from 1951 to 1959) stated: the collective activities of Min Qing aimed to “achieve for its

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<sup>52</sup> “Minzhu qingnian tuan biaoyan jiemu [“Programs of the Recreational Group”], n.d. 1, 1:24, AAS ARC 2000/81, AAS Archives; “Tiyu” [“Sports”], Min Qing, Issue Number 58 (December 24, 1955), 1,1:10, AAS ARC2000/81, AAS Archives. Lai, *Transcript of Testimony about the Chinese American Youth Club and Hansen J.T. Chang*; “Observations by the Translator,” SAC, Houston to Director, December 3, 1953, FBI files on Chinese American Democratic Youth League, pp. 49-52, repository at Him Mark Lai Research files, Case-CADYL, Section 2, in Box 2, Folder 2:3, Call No.: AAS ARC 2000/81, AAS Archives.

<sup>53</sup> “Qingzhu wusi, jiaqiang wo’men de xuexi,” [“Celebrating May 4<sup>th</sup>: We Must Strengthen Our Sentiments for Learning”], Kai Huang Zu, “Xie zai Qingnianjie de yixie hua,” [The ‘Open the Wilderness’ Group, “A few words on the occasion of the May 4<sup>th</sup> Youth Festivals”], in *Min Qing*, Issue Number 87 (May 2, 1953), 1, 1:6, AAS ARC 2000/81, AAS Archives.

members things that each member could not have done alone” by emphasis on mutual aid and group guidance.<sup>54</sup> However, in the view of the FBI and its informants, it seemed that the activities of Min Qing were aimed at getting young people to join together in a “communal life” and creating the space for “communist indoctrination.”<sup>55</sup>

### **“Min Qing: A Young Peoples’ Big family”**

Perhaps it sounded out of place to promote a *collective spirit* in an American society which advocates *freedom and individualism*. However, to the Chinese American youths who mostly had just come to the United States in the early 1950s, Min Qing was like a “big family” which provided them with an educational and recreational grounding. Because at that time Chinatown was segregated from the white society, there were not any recreational facilities for the Chinese youths in Chinatown. Furthermore, due to their poor English language abilities, they could not mix well with native born young people in the United States. And most of them came from poor families where their parents were busy making ends meet and could not always take care of or communicate with their children well.

Subsequently, young people in Chinatown felt their lives were lonely, uneventful

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<sup>54</sup> Lai, *Him Mark Lai: Autobiography of A Chinese American Historian*, 92.

<sup>55</sup> “Observations by the Translator,” SAC, Houston to Director, December 3, 1953, FBI files on Chinese American Democratic Youth League, pp. 49-52.

and aimless, and some youngsters feared that their lives would enter a negative spiral and therefore demanded a change in lifestyle. As a member wrote in *Min Qing*'s bulletin,

“I remember that it was in the summer of last year, that every day in school, I spent the ‘suffocating’ life. On returning home, I was again incarcerated in a dirty room which was like a pig sty. From morning to evening I spent half a year of this jail-like life. Of course, sometimes, I would go outside and walk around and take a look at the way that the Chinese residents pass their time. But, when I saw those big buildings, I did not feel that they were new and curious, beautiful or ugly, nor was there anything to arouse my interest. On the contrary, it caused my heart to become icy cold. I hate these places and feel the cold and cruelty of these surroundings. The mental suffering and the emptiness in my heart cannot be described with words...”<sup>56</sup>

Needless to say, the author thought his life was despondent before joining *Min Qing*.

However, after he joined in the activities of *Min Qing*, he was surprised by the spirit of *Min Qing* and its members, at the same time his attitude toward life and his fellow people also changed, as he described,

“...The Comrades have a cooperative spirit and organize many meaningful activities. The Comrades live together in a group and enjoy a rich cultural recreational life. In this locality, I believe, there is no other organization that can be compared to it in excellence...My arrival in ‘*Min Qing*’ may be compared to finding a bright light. It shows me a road that I should take. Hereafter, I hope that our Comrades will give me lots of instructions and criticism...”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Liang, “Wo weishenme yao jiaru *Min Qing*,” [“Why I Joined the *Min Qing*”], *Min Qing*, Issue Number 89 (August, 1953), 1, 1:12, AAS ARC 2000/81, AAS Archives. Quoted the translation from “ ‘Why I Joined the *Mun Ching*’ by Liang(0081),” SAC Houston to Director, December 3, 1953, FBI files on Chinese American Democratic Youth League, pp.2-3, repository at Him Mark Lai Research files, Case-CADYL, Section 2, in Box 2, Folder 2:3, Call No.: AAS ARC 2000/81, AAS Archives.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

Min Qing claimed, “proper cultural entertainment and activities does not mean the kind one finds in the movies which place too much emphasis on sex, fighting, and murder, nor the kind one finds in the bars and night clubs.”<sup>58</sup> They proclaimed that the League was single-mindedly devoted to the kind of culture and recreation which was educational, constructive and healthy, and provided facilities and instructions for individual or collective learning in culture, science, singing and dancing. By participating in such activities, the members could not only learn the values of collective living and mutual aid but they were also able to get more pleasure and enjoyment out of life as well as increasing their knowledge.

As mentioned, the collective activities of Min Qing attracted a number of Chinese youth who recently came to the United States and who came from poor families. As the former president of Min Qing, Him Mark Lai recalled, “even in very difficult periods, Min Qing still kept its membership around fifty to sixty.”<sup>59</sup>

### **III. The Chinese Confession Program and the Fate of Radical Chinese American Activists.**

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<sup>58</sup> “Qinnian de wenhua yule shenghuo,” [“Youth and a Cultural and Recreational livelihood”] *Min Qing*, Issue Number 144 (December 9, 1955), 1, 1:17, AAS ARC 2000/81, AAS Archives

<sup>59</sup> Lai, “A Historical Survey of the Chinese Left in America,” 74.

**i. Investigation of Immigration Fraud: Not Leftists' problem Only**

On December 9, 1955, the U.S. Consul General in Hong Kong, Everett F. Drumright submitted an 86 pages report entitled "Report on the Problem of Fraud at Hong Kong" to the Department of State. In the report, it put forward the accusation that:

a criminal conspiracy to evade the laws of the United States has developed into so well-organized a system at Hong Kong that:

1. Almost any Chinese with the proper resources may enter the United States even if ineligible under our immigration laws,
2. Adequate security precautions can hardly be taken to exclude Chinese Communist agents or criminal elements,
3. An alien Chinese can purchase American citizenship for (US)\$3,000. Terms: \$500 down, balance after arrival in the U.S., and
4. Thousands of dollars in American pensions have been collected annually by persons not entitled to them.<sup>60</sup>

The report alleged that Communist China was planning "a criminal conspiracy" through a well-organized system in Hong Kong, dispatching immigrants to New York and San Francisco, and it had become the major channel for immigrants with ties to communist China.<sup>61</sup>

During the peak period of McCarthyism, Drumright's report inflamed the "red-scare"

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<sup>60</sup> "Synopsis," in Everett F. Drumright, *Report on the Problem of Fraud at Hong Kong* (December 9, 1955), 2, Action Copy-U.S. Department of State, Box No.: 34, Folder No.: ctn34-2, AAS ARC 2010/1, AAS Archives.

<sup>61</sup> Drumright, *Report on the problem of Fraud at Hong Kong*, 3, 81-84; Xiaojian Zhao, *Remaking Chinese America: Immigration, Family, and Community, 1940-1965*(Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 160.

sentiment of American people toward the PRC and Chinese Americans. The report formed a prelude to the investigation into fraudulent citizenship of Chinese Americans. Afterwards, the federal government started a large-scale coordinated operation to halt the alleged conspiracy.

At the beginning, while the U.S. media reported Drumright's report, they mainly focused on the suspicion of Communist China's conspiracy against American national security. Thus, Chinatown's pro-KMT establishment felt emboldened and thought the federal government would help them purge the pro-CCP dissidents out of the Chinese American communities. The KMT organ *Chinese Journal* even published an editorial to echo the report and expose supposed communist Chinese spies and persecution of overseas Chinese in Hong Kong. However, on February 29, 1956 the grand jury in San Francisco ordered officers of nearly 26 Chinese associations (including the CCBA and other pro-KMT organizations) to receive an inspection on immigration fraud within 24 hours. At this moment the pro-KMT community leaders realized the targets of the U.S. Attorney would not be limited to Chinese American leftists but would target the whole Chinese American community. The investigation by the grand jury frightened and outraged the Chinese American community. "Chinatown was hit like an A-bomb fell," and rumors circulated that Chinese would be put into "concentration camps" like Japanese

in the Second World War period.<sup>62</sup>

Actually, a large number of Chinese Americans were scared of the investigation into immigration fraud because they entered in the United States as “paper sons” and got their citizenship by using fraudulent documents during the Chinese Exclusion period. Even some community leaders were interrogated about their activities in connection with immigration fraud. For example, Albert K. Chow, who was an important member of the KMT’s San Francisco branch and so-called “mayor of Chinatown”, was subpoenaed in the U.S. Attorney’s office for suspicion of being connected to immigration fraud. Another community leader, George K. Jue (Zhou Jiajing) was suspected of helping Chinese to illegally enter in the U.S. by using fraudulent documents. Finally, Jue was sentenced to be deported to the ROC (Taiwan). Ironically, according to the Foreign Ministry documents of ROC, both Chow and Jue were leading members of the Chinese Anti-Communist League in San Francisco, and they led the League to collude with the FBI and INS in the process of harassment and deportation of Chinatown leftists during the early 1950s. However, they were interrogated in the course of investigating immigration

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<sup>62</sup> Him Mark Lai, “Unfinished Business: The Confession Program,” *The Repeal and Its Legacy: Proceedings of the Conference on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Repeal of the Exclusion Acts* (San Francisco, CA: Chinese Historical Society of America, 1994), 47-56; Lai, *Becoming Chinese American: A History of Communities and Institutions* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2004), 26-28; Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and The Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 214-215;

fraud launched in the name of “halting communist China’s conspiracy against American national security.”<sup>63</sup>

Because many Chinese American families were involved in the immigration fraud activities during the Chinese Exclusion period, when a fraud case was discovered in one family, it would often drag in several families. The U.S. government faced great difficulties in that, if the government wanted to investigate thoroughly all fraud cases, it would have to expend too much manpower and money, and furthermore it would be impossible to deport the tens of thousands of Chinese immigrants who had violated the immigration laws. Eventually, in order to solve the problem of Chinese immigration fraud in a relatively short period, the INS carried out the “Chinese Confession Program” which called for the Chinese “fraudulent citizens” to confess their real information so that they had the possibility to get citizenship anew, reflecting their real information. However, the INS did not promise that all confessors could definitely get new citizenship. That is to say, someone could still be deported, as the case may be. The new policy confused the Chinese American community because if one confessed to the INS, it would implicate

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<sup>63</sup> Foreign Ministry of ROC (Taiwan), “Mei yiminju ni song zhou Jiajing lai Tai,” [“The Immigration and Naturalization Service of U.S. is Planning to deport George K. Jue to Taiwan”] in *Mei Yiminju Ni Song Zhou Jiajing Lai Tai; Huaqiao Wenti Zhengce*, [The INS is planning to deport George K. Jue to Taiwan; Concerning Overseas Chinese Problems and Policies], 04/1955-09/1963, ROC Foreign Ministry Files, File No.: 462.6/0010, repository at Archives, Institute of Modern History Academia Sinica, Taiwan. Repository No.:11-07-02-18-04-010; Lai, *Becoming Chinese America*, 29.



other “paper relatives” so that anyone could be deported.<sup>64</sup>

While most of the Chinese American community newspapers felt skeptical about the Confession Program, the liberal newspaper *Chinese Pacific Weekly* published an editorial article to firmly support the INS’s proposal. Its owner and chief editor Gilbert Woo told his readers that “it was a positive means for Chinese to rectify an inherited problem which was not created by them.”<sup>65</sup>

**ii. The 1957 National Conference of Chinese Communities: Battle between the Liberals and the Conservatives**

After the crisis atmosphere of investigating Chinese immigration fraud had permeated the entire Chinese American community in the mid-1950s, Chinatown residents expected Chinese community organizations to get together and fight for their community interests. In 1957 a National Conference of Chinese Communities (全美華僑代表會議), which was convened by New York’s CCBA, was held in Washington D.C. from March 3 to 7. There were 124 delegates from 34 cities throughout the U.S. to participate in the conference with the aim of discussing how to face the Federal Justice’s investigation. Among the delegates, besides leaders of CCBA’s and anti-Communist

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<sup>64</sup> Lai, *Becoming Chinese American*, 30-32; Lai, “Unfinished Business,” 55-56.

<sup>65</sup> Him Mark Lai and Betty Lim, “Gilbert Woo, Chinese American Journalist,” in *Hu Jinnan Wenji* [Gilbert Woo’s Selected Works], Hu Jinnan jinian weiyuanhui, ed. (Hong Kong: Xiangjiang Chuban youxian gongsi, 1991), 45.

Leagues members of various places, a few liberal organizations (such as Chinese American Citizens' Alliance) leaders and liberal journalists were also invited to attend. No representatives of leftist organizations attended the conference. Meanwhile, the Chairman of the conference, Shengtai Liang (who was president of New York's CCBA and chief editor of the KMT organ *Chinese Journal*) invited the Ambassador of the ROC (Taiwan) in the U.S. to give an opening speech.<sup>66</sup>

When Liang proposed that the stance of the conference should be anti-Communist China and pro-KMT Taiwan, the liberal representatives resisted Liang's agenda and rejected to discuss any issues related to China's politics.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, Chinese American journalists also pressured the conference organizers to place the focus on the problems which the Chinese American community faced.

Finally, the organizers compromised on the conference agenda and passed resolutions to lobby U.S. Congressmen for reforming the discriminatory aspects of the immigration policies. The conference also decided to establish a so-called "National

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<sup>66</sup> Foreign Ministry of ROC(Taiwan), "Quan Mei Huaqiao daibiao huiyi," ["The National Conference of Chinese American Communities"], File No.: III 檔 D 期第 10 號, February to November, 1957, in *Quan Mei Huaqiao Daibiao Huiyi Deng An* [Files on the National Conference of Chinese American Communities and other issues], 08/1952-02/1962, Foreign Ministry Files, repository at Archives, Institute of Modern History Academia Sinica, Taiwan. Repository No.: 11-33-02-09-028; Lai, *Becoming Chinese American*, 30; Lai, *Cong Huaqiao dao Huaren: Ershi Shiji Meiguo Huaren Shehui Fazhan Shi* [From Overseas Chinese to Chinese American: A History of the Development of Chinese Society during the twentieth Century] (Hong Kong: San lian shu dian (Hong Kong) you xian gong si, 1992), 361.

<sup>67</sup> Lai, *Cong Huaqiao dao Huaren*, 361; Zhao, *Remaking Chinese America*, 182; Foreign Ministry of ROC(Taiwan), "Quan Mei Huaqiao daibiao huiyi".

Chinese Welfare Council”(全美華人福利總會) which aimed at “consolidation of volitions and views of the Chinese people in the U.S, centralization of their efforts and strength, solution of their difficult problems and promotion of their welfare.”<sup>68</sup> However, after the National Chinese Welfare Council was established, its executive board members were all elected from the pro-KMT establishment. Soon it became a part of the anti-Communist coalition in the Chinese American community similar to the CCBA and had little intention to provide further leadership in finding a solution to the immigration problem and other welfare issues.

### iii. The Chinese Confession Program: A “Left-baiting Project”?

Through the Confession Program, most of those who confessed successfully adjusted their legal status. However, for the Chinese American leftists who had obtained fraudulent citizenship, the Confession Program was a nightmare because their “paper” status was very likely to be exposed due to the confessions of their “paper relatives”, and subsequently they would have to face the fate of indictment and deportation.

The INS officials kept copies of subscription lists of leftist publications (such as

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<sup>68</sup> The National Chinese Welfare Council, “Quan Mei Huare Fuli Zonghui lijie daibiao dahui de jingguo,” [“The Course of Events of Each Convention of the National Chinese Welfare Council”] in *Quan Mei Huaren Fuli Zonghui chengli sanshi zhounian ji di shi'er jie daibiao dahui jinian tekan* [Commemorative publication for the thirteenth anniversary of the founding and the twelfth convention of the National Chinese Welfare Council of America](1987), 10; Zhao, *Remaking Chinese America*, 182-183; Lai, *Becoming Chinese American*, 30.

*China Daily News* and *Min Qing*) and membership lists of groups like the CHLA and Min Qing. By comparing information on those lists to the genealogies of “paper families” which had confessed, the FBI and the INS targeted the Chinese American leftists who were connected to immigration fraud and began to systematically harass them and their families. For example, in August 1962 Maurice Chuck, who was an active member of Min Qing and usually wrote articles for *China Daily News*, was indicted for obtaining his citizenship in 1954 by using a false and fraudulent statement. His father Hwong Jack Hong, who had participated in the confession program before 1962, was forced to undergo the traumatic experience of testifying against his son in court.<sup>69</sup> Him Mark Lai, as a president of Min Qing, was not left alone by the INS even though he was born in the United States. By the early 1960s, the INS officials learnt that his father-in-law was a paper son, and they threatened to deport Lai’s wife, Laura Lai and members of her family. Under pressure, Laura’s father opted to “voluntarily” depart from the United States. As result of the investigation, Laura and her brothers lost their citizenship.<sup>70</sup>

In order to investigate the fraud of leftist immigrants, the INS officials also induced

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<sup>69</sup> Guohua Xiong, *Meiguomeng: Meiji Huaren Huang Yunji Chuanqi* [American Dream: Biography of Chinese American Maurice Chuck] (Guangzhou: Huacheng chubanshe, 2002), 76-111; Zhao, *Remaking Chinese America*, 181; Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 222; Lai, *Chinese American Transnational Politics*, 148.

<sup>70</sup> Laura Lai, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, July 5, 2012; Lai, *Him Mark Lai: Autobiography of A Chinese American Historian*, 94-95.

some leftists who had confessed to become their informants by promising to adjust their status. For example, in the process of the INS investigating a Min Qing member named Huey Fook Hor, the INS investigator implied that if he could testify against more Min Qing members, his application for adjustment of status would be processed as soon as possible. Here follows a partial record of the sworn statement in the case of Huey Fook Hor:

Q. Do you ever see any of the persons who you knew as members of the Mun Ching [Min Qing]?

A. Yes, I see them sometimes in China Town and they used to talk to me, but after they learned that I was a witness in the Jackson Chun case they stopped talking to me and naturally I do not know what's going on.

Q. In view of the attitude that these individuals have taken toward you, would you be willing to again testify in deportation proceedings relating to anyone of the members of the Mun Ching [Min Qing] Club?

A. Yes, but I have testified in case already before and have lost some friends; if I testify a second time, someone will or might scold me and if I continue to testify someone might point a gun at me and, at the present time, I have no status here in the United States. But if I could be adjusted to permanent resident and have a right to remain here, then I would still be willing to testify. Also I heard that some of the members of the club who didn't tell the truth about whether or not it was just a social club—let me repeat—I heard that some of the members of the club who didn't tell the truth about the club have got their green cards and I have been attempting to tell the truth as much as I know about it in regard to the club and cooperating with the Government, but I do not have any status nor do I have a green card or anything.

Q. Your application for adjustment of status is presently being processed and

action will be taken upon it just as soon as possible. Do you understand?

A. Yes.<sup>71</sup>

According to Him Mark Lai's research, during the Confession Program period in New York the INS deported at least eight Chinese American leftists who were members of the CHLA or on the staff of *CDN*. In San Francisco, four members of Min Qing were indicted and tried in court, and more than half of the Min Qing members lost their American citizenship because either they or their parents were connected to the immigration fraud.<sup>72</sup>

Under severe harassment and persecution from both the FBI and INS, the Chinese American leftists and their organizations were largely rooted up. Although the CHLA and *CDN* continued to exist, the influence of the CHLA became feeble and circulations of *CDN* dropped precipitously. Min Qing remained active until 1958, however its members slowly stopped visiting the basement, finally it had to disband in 1959 because the Anti-Communist League pressured the owner of its basement not to renew the lease for Min Qing.

#### **IV. Conclusion of this Chapter**

In the early years of Cold War, two leading Chinese American leftist organizations,

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<sup>71</sup> The INS, Record of Sworn Statement: Case of Huey Fook Hor, April 13, 1966, File No.: All. 407 993, the INS files, 2, 2:12, AAS ARC 2000/81, AAS Archives.

<sup>72</sup> Lai, *Chinese American Transnational Politics*, 148.

the CHLA and Min Qing, actively spread Chinese Communist propaganda. Compared to the CHLA's concentration on nurturing the patriotism of Chinese Americans toward China, Min Qing mainly focused its activities on spreading the PRC's cultural influence around Chinatown and providing a communal cultural and recreational environment for the Chinese American youngsters.

However, due to the severe suppression from both the pro-KMT Chinatown establishment and the U.S. federal justice system, especially in the process of investigating Chinese immigration fraud and the subsequent Chinese Confession Program, the Chinese American leftists and their organizations were largely rooted up. Although the CHLA and *CDN* still existed in New York, both of them lost their voice in Chinese American communities. In order to protect the progressive youth power and interests of the organization, Min Qing decreased political activities and changed into a cultural and recreational club serving Chinese American youths. Even if it just focused on cultural and recreational activities, Min Qing had to disband under pressure from the Chinese Anti-Communist League.

Finally, the pro-KMT establishment rehabilitated its power with the help both from the U.S. Department of Justice and Chiang Kai-shek's Taiwan government and they controlled the Chinese American community for almost a decade until the younger

generation of radicals arose in the late 1960s. It caused two kinds of phenomena: on the one hand, many Chinese American activists had grown deeply tired of China's politics and they began the search for a new activism and tried to re-identify themselves, such as Him Mark Lai and Maurice Chuck. On the other hand, due to the disbanding of Min Qing, the youngsters in Chinatown could not find a suitable recreational association, so that many of them became juvenile delinquents. The pro-KMT establishment not only failed to find a way to solve the perceived problem but it also tried to cover up the general reality. This also became one objective factor to inspire the younger generation's movement.



## **Part2. Transnational Communication of Black American Activists and Chinese Americans' Response to the African American Civil Rights Movement**

In the conventional historiographies written on Chinese Americans in the Cold War-Civil Rights Movement era, few scholars examine the relations between African Americans and Chinese Americans. Especially in the literature reviews they overlook the questions related to African American Civil Rights Movement such as whether there were Chinese American activists directly or indirectly participated black civil rights activism, how Chinese Americans reacted African American Civil Rights Movement and the succeeding Black Power Movement and how African American movements empowered young Chinese Americans' activism. In this part, I try to shed light on these questions.

Chapter 3 examines how the Chinese Communist Party influenced black activism via Chinese American activist-Tang Mingzhao, chapter 4 explores how Chinese Americans looked at the African American Civil Rights Movement by examining the Chinese American community press.

### Chapter 3. Transnational Ties between A Chinese American Leftist and African American Activists in the “People’s Diplomacy” of the PRC

#### I. Introduction of This Chapter

After establishment the PRC, the United States and its allies adopted containment policy to isolate communist China—one of the factors why the PRC chose to side with the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, in order to promote its international prestige, the PRC established several associations (such as the Chinese People’s Committee for World Peace and the Chinese People’s Association for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries) to launch “people’s diplomacy” and also founded periodical magazines (such as *China Reconstructs* and *Peking Review*) to promote an image of China’s positive change after the revolution.<sup>1</sup>

However, the climate of international geopolitics during this time changed rapidly. When the Soviet became somewhat closer with the United States and turned to confront China in the late 1950s, the PRC changed its foreign policy to both oppose American imperialism and Soviet revisionism and attempted to unify the Third World to mobilize

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<sup>1</sup> Kuisong Yang, “Mao Zedong de ‘Lengzhan’ guan,” [Mao Zedong’s Standpoint on the “Cold War”] *Twenty-First Century*, Vol.66 (August 2001): 61-70; Zhongyun Zi, “Cong ‘Lao bu ke po’ dao fan mu cheng chou,” [From “An Indissoluble Bond of Friendship” Turning into Enemies of Each Other: Examining the Sino-Soviet Alliance from the Perspective of the World Peace Movement] *Yan- Huang chungqiu* [Yan-Huang Historical Review], Vol. 12 (2014):24-33; Huafeng Xu, “‘Zhongguo jianshe’ de chuanganban yu xin Zhongguo chengli chuqi de dui wai xuanchuan,” [The Establishment of *China Reconstructs* and the Foreign Publicity in the Initial Period of the PRC] *Zhonggong dangshi yanjiu* [Journal of the Chinese Communist Party History Studies], Issue 5 (2016).

for “world revolution.” Around the same time, the African American Civil Rights Movement began to reach its peak. Recognizing a strategic alliance, the PRC started to support black American struggles and launched its so-called “people’s diplomacy” to invite African American leaders to visit China and learn about the Chinese revolutionary spirit. On the one hand, their travel experiences in China were used for propaganda and produced an imagined utopian China in black American society, especially among black nationalists. On the other hand, African American activists established a bond of friendship with the Chinese government and acquired support from China.<sup>2</sup> But how was “people’s diplomacy” managed and what was its mechanism? How was the African American Civil Rights Movement interconnected with China’s “people’s diplomacy” through the radical black activists’ visits to the PRC? Who built the bridges between the Chinese Communist Party and the radical African American activists?

There is no clear official definition of China’s “people’s diplomacy.” However,

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<sup>2</sup> Yang, “Mao Zedong de ‘Lengzhang’ guan,” 61-70; Zi, “Cong ‘Lao bu ke po’ dao fan mu cheng chou,” 24-33; Xu, “‘Zhongguo jianshe’ de chuangan yu xin zhongguo chengli chuqi de dui wai xuanchuan”; Yanqing He, “Mao Zedong de guoji zhanlüe yu di san shijie,” [The International Strategy of Mao Zedong and the Third World, 1956-1966] *Zhonggong dangshi yanjiu* [Journal of the Chinese Communist Party History Studies], Issue 3 (2005): 81-87; Libing Wu, “Jian lun Mao Zedong de ‘Shijie gemin’ zhanlüe,” [A Brief Research on Mao Zedong’s “World Revolution” Strategy] *Fujian Dangshi Yuekan* [Fujian Historical Monthly of the Chinese Communist Party], Vol. 12 (2010): 6-9; Zhiguang Yin, “Fankang de Zhengzhi: Ershi shiji wushi niandai Mao Zedong de di san shijie yu hou lengzhan de lengzhanshi xushu pipan,” [The Politics of Resistance: Mao Zedong’s Perspective on the Politics “Third World Countries” in the 1950s and a Review of Post-Cold War Narrative of Cold War History] in *Remapping: An Asian Studies Series*, Vol. 3 (Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 2014): 24-33; Zhan Yu, “Meiguo minquanyundong zhong de Zhongguo yinsu,” [Research on Chinese Factors in the African American Civil Rights Movement] *Quanqiushi Pinglun* [Global History Review] Vol.7 (2014):144-168.

because this Chinese policy is considered to have been highly significant in the normalization of diplomatic relations between the PRC and Japan, many scholars who study Sino-Japanese relations have attempted to define it relative to their academic field. According to Casper Wits, in the early years of the Cold War when the PRC was isolated by the U.S. and its ally Japan, Premier and Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai developed “people’s diplomacy,” as a strategy “of creating informal channels between China and Japan that could serve to build a network of personal ties outside the immediate government sphere, ties that would ideally become so strong they would result in official government-to-government relations.”<sup>3</sup> Although “people’s diplomacy” is defined in the context of Sino-Japanese relations, it is generally valid for the type of similar communication with people of other countries with which the PRC did not maintain official relations.

In fact, the aim of “people’s diplomacy” was not always to establish formal diplomatic relations with other countries. Sometimes it aimed to improve Chinese prestige and influence around the world and/or spread the Chinese Communist ideology internationally. One important way well suited to “people’s diplomacy” was to contact and invite cultural figures or famous activists to visit China in the name of cultural

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<sup>3</sup> Casper Wits, “The Japan Group: Managing China’s People’s Diplomacy Toward Japan in the 1950s,” in *East Asia*, Vol. 33, Issue 2 (2016), 92.

exchange or the peace movement. Several “people-to-people” organizations responsible for this aspect of Chinese diplomacy fell under the patronage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and were coordinated by the International Department of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.<sup>4</sup> In particular, there were two leading organizations: the Chinese People’s Committee for World Peace (usually abbreviated to the Chinese Peace Committee) and the Chinese People’s Association for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries.

Actually, in the process of African American activists’ pilgrimage to the PRC, a representative of the old generation of Chinese American leftists, Tang Mingzhao played an important role in establishing a bond of solidarity between them. Simultaneously, the black power movement profoundly influenced the symbolism and tactics of radical activism in the Chinese American community during the tumultuous late 1960s. For example, in February 1969 young Chinese American activists imitated the Black Panther Party and established the Red Guard Party which mimicked China’s Red Guards (hong weibing 紅衛兵), the main protagonists in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). More details concerning this point will be discussed in chapter 6.

## **II. Black Activists’ Pilgrimage for Revolutionary Spirit**

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 94-95.

### i. The Du Bois' Travel to China

Even before the founding of the PRC, W.E.B. Du Bois, a prominent black intellectual figure in New York, participated in assemblies in opposition to the Korean War, and publicly supported the China Welfare Appeal which was a charitable organization founded in New York in April 1949 and enjoyed the patronage of Soong Ching-ling.<sup>5</sup> Du Bois' peace activism was favorably covered by China's press and he was also portrayed as a "Guoji youren" [friendly internationalist] well-known to the common Chinese people.<sup>6</sup> China had tried to invite Du Bois to visit China, but because the State Department declined to renew his passport, he could not come to China until the Supreme Court judged that the State Department did not have the authority to deny passports based on citizens' political beliefs in June 1958.

On November 11, 1957, William Patterson (who was a leading African American member of the CPUSA and well acquainted with Du Bois' wife, Shirley Graham Du Bois) wrote to the editors of *China Reconstructs* to inform them of Du Bois' desire to visit

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<sup>5</sup> China Welfare Appeal was founded in New York on April 19, 1949, and its honorable chairman was Soong Ching-ling, Talitha Gerlach became board Chairperson. The honorary members included Kuo Mo-jo, Paul Robeson and W. E. B. Du Bois. At its founding dinner, Du Bois also gave a speech. See Lai, *Chinese American Transnational Politics*, 145; "China Welfare Appeal Dinner Program, April 1949," and "The China welfare fund, on April 19, 1949" (draft of Du Bois' speech) W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312) Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

<sup>6</sup> Johnson, "From Peace to Panthers," 240; Peking, New China News Agency(NCNA), English News, "Sponsoring Committee Organized," September 11, 1952; Peking, New China News Agency, English News, "People of the World Denounce Germ Warfare," March 29, 1953.

China.<sup>7</sup> After receiving the letter, Guo Moruo, who was Chairman of the China's Committee for Defense of World Peace, and Soong Ching-ling promptly cabled Du Bois with an official invitation from the Chinese national affiliate of the World Peace Council, and arranged that the funds and final approval for the trip of the couple were issued in the name of "Zhongguo renmin dui wai wenhua jiaoliu xiehui" [the Chinese People's Association for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries].<sup>8</sup>

On February 14, 1959, W. E. B. Du Bois and his wife, Shirley Graham Du Bois arrived in Beijing. They were treated as honorary guests of the state. Tang Mingzhao, who was executive secretary of the Chinese Peace Committee, stood at the airport to receive the couple. In China they were warmly received by the Chinese leaders. On February 23, 1959 Premier Zhou Enlai prepared a banquet for celebrating Du Bois' ninety-first birthday at Peking Hotel. Before the banquet it was arranged that the couple would visit Peking University where Du Bois gave a speech entitled "China and Africa." Du Bois was also inducted as an honorary member to the Chinese Academy of Sciences.<sup>9</sup> Then

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<sup>7</sup> Foreign Ministry of PRC, "Meiguo heiren xuezhe Du bo yi si fang Hua ji qi zi lai Hua xuexi deng wenti," [As for Affairs of Du Bois' visiting China and His Son Studying in China], Folio 111-00292-01(1), Annex file: Letter from William L. Patterson to Chen Hanseng, November 11, 1957; Johnson, "From Peace to Panthers," 241.

<sup>8</sup> Johnson, "From Peace to Panther," 241; Frazier, *The East Is Black*, 44.

<sup>9</sup> "Meiguo zhuming heiren xuezhe, shijie Heping Lingshihui lishi, Du bo yi si he furen dao Jing," [Du Bois, the Famous Afro-American Scholar and a Member of the World Peace Council, and His Wife Arrived in Beijing] *People's Daily*, February 14, 1959; "Wo dui wai wen xie he Heda sheyan, huanying Du bo yi si boshi he furen," [China Peace Committee and Chinese People's Association for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries Welcome Dr. Du Bois and His Wife with a Banquet] *People's Daily*, February 18, 1959; Shirley Graham Du Bois, *His Day*

the couple travelled from Beijing to Shanghai, and from Shanghai to Guangzhou by train while accompanied by a group of Chinese officials, including Tang Mingzhao who arranged the places of where the Du Boises would visit. In Wuhan they were received by Mao Zedong.<sup>10</sup>

The couple were impressed by the sense of optimism, discipline and “revolutionary unison” in Chinese society. Du Bois praised the development of Chinese industrial sector which, modeled on the Soviet Union’s mode of economic development, was undergoing transformation in its First Five-Year Plan (from 1953 to 1957). Throughout their visit, they watched “the laying of concrete for roads and railways for trains and cable cars, and construction of factories, buildings, sewer lines, and irrigation pathways.”<sup>11</sup> During this visit, the experiences that Du Bois witnessed overturned the image that he had from his first visit to China in 1936 when the country was divided by foreign nations, and foreign powers controlled China’s capital, commerce, mines, rivers and manufacturing.<sup>12</sup>

As a result, Du Bois thought China could be a successful model of anti-colonial

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*Is Marching On: A Memoir of W. E. B. Du Bois* (Philadelphia and New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1971), 276-280; Frazier, *The East Is Black*, 45-46; Johnson, “From Peace to Panthers,” 241-242.

<sup>10</sup> “Mao Zhuxi jiejian Du bo yi si he Si te lang,” [Chairman Mao Receives Du Bois and Strong] *People’s Daily*, March 14, 1959.

<sup>11</sup> Frazier, *The East Is Black*, 46.

<sup>12</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its First Century* (New York, NY: International Publishers, 1968), 44-53; Frazier, *The East Is Black*, 46.



struggle and he hoped its economic advancement could aid de-colonization efforts in

Africa. His speech “China and Africa” at Peking University details these views:

China is flesh of your flesh, and blood of your blood. China is colored and knows to what a colored skin in this modern world subjects to its owner. But China knows more, much more than this: she knows what to do about it. She can take the insults of the United States and still hold her head high... Come to China, Africa, and look around. Invite Africa to come, China, and see what you can teach by just pointing...<sup>13</sup>

Du Bois advised African countries to build good relations with China. His recommendation conformed to Mao and the PRC’s foreign policy of establishing a Sino-African solidarity relationship in the Third World revolutionary movement. For Du Bois, the developmental experience of Mao’s China was inspiring not only because the accomplishments of Chinese revolution embodied how non-white groups constituted “capitalism’s greatest opposing forces,” but also for the potential that the China’s model had to usher in anti-colonial and anti-racist resistance in Africa, the Americas and Caribbean.<sup>14</sup> As such, he articulated revolution in three stages: “The first was the Russian Revolution. The second was the revolution of China to free yellow labor. The third coming revolution, in black Africa, is to free black labor, and thus to complete Negro emancipation in the United States.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Du Bois, “China and Africa,” in *Peking Review*, Vol. 2, No. 9 (March 3, 1959).

<sup>14</sup> Frasier, *The East Is Black*, 48.

<sup>15</sup> Du Bois, “Africa and Afro-America,” in W. E. B. Du Bois and Aptheker Herbert, *Writings by W.E.B. Du Bois in Periodical Edited by Others*, Vol. 4, 1945-1961 (Millwood, NY: Kraus-

The Du Bois' trip was widely broadcast by various media, and the news about their activities in China was reported in newspapers from New York to San Francisco, via Hong Kong. Moreover, through the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the news of their travels in China was also circulated in African American communities.<sup>16</sup> Du Bois expressed his perceptions towards China based on "on-the-ground experiences," and his accounts challenged the anti-China propaganda of western reporters who had never even visited the country.<sup>17</sup> However, because their travels were arranged and chaperoned by a group led by Tang who aimed to provide the Du Bois' with an idealized depiction of Chinese life and politics, they presented only a curated version of the reality of Mao's China. For example, when the Du Bois' visited China in 1959, the country had just embarked on the Great Leap Forward, which ultimately resulted in a tremendous famine, however, there was no mention of this disaster in Du Bois' works and speeches. The couple was strongly convinced that China's path was a model to free Africans and African Americans. They acted as *China Reconstructs* had by helping to propagate China's achievement to the outside world.

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Thomson Organization, 1982), 220.

<sup>16</sup> Graham Du Bois, *His Day is Marching On*, 277; There were several articles to favorably report Du Bois' travel in China in *The Pittsburgh Courier*, for example, "Du Bois Has Lunch with Mao Tse Tung," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, March 21, 1959; Shirley Graham, "China's Expansion Makes it 'The Land of Tomorrow'," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 11, 1959; "Ex-Pow in China Tells Shirley: 'I Know I Am Doing the Right Thing,'" *The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 25, 1959.

<sup>17</sup> Du Bois, *Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois*, 53; Frasier, *The East Is Black*, 59-60.

## ii. Robert F. Williams and China

Reports on the Du Bois' travel in China and Du Bois' works (which included W. E. B. Du Bois' poem "I Sing to China"<sup>18</sup>) resonated in African American communities. In particular, his accounts had a great influence on African American nationalists such as Robert F. Williams, who not only accepted Du Bois' favorable arguments for China, but believed that "China, as a representative of the oppressed colored people, could genuinely support black American civil rights struggles."<sup>19</sup> After the death of W. E. B. Du Bois in August 1963, the Chinese government sought to recruit another African American leader favorable to China's politics who could perform a similar role to Du Bois. Not surprisingly, Robert F. Williams's activism then attracted the attention of Chinese officials.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, "I Sing to China," in *China Reconstructs*, Vol. 8 (Shanghai: China Welfare Institute, 1959), 24-26.

<sup>19</sup> In the Papers of Robert F. Williams, there are miscellaneous notes and writings of W. E. B. Du Bois' works on China including "I Sing to China," "China and Africa," and "The Vast Miracle of China Today," it can be presumed that Williams had read Du Bois' works on China. See "Miscellaneous Notes and Other Writings, [1959-1962 and undated]" in Timothy B. Tyson, ed., *The Black Power Movement, Part 2: The Papers of Robert F. Williams* [microfilm] (LexisNexis Academic & Library Solutions; Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 2002), Microfilm Reel 5, Group 1, Series 2; Yu Mu, "'Shengli shi wo men de': Luobote Weilian fufu fangwenji," ["We Will Win": Interviewing with Robert F. Williams and His Wife, Mabel Williams], in *Shijie zhishi* [World Affairs], Vol. 18 (1963), 22.

<sup>20</sup> There are two angles to approach why Robert F. Williams's activism attracted the attention of Chinese officials. Firstly, according to American scholar Robeson Tai Frazier, before Williams was exiled to Cuba, he had begun to use *The Crusader* as a vehicle to criticize the U.S. government's efforts of controlling the United Nations and isolating the PRC "from the mainstream of international life." See Frazier, *The East Is Black*, 130-131; Secondly, Chinese scholar Zhan Yu states that Williams's "armed self-defense for African American civil rights" conformed to Mao's ideological framework of "anti-imperialist revolutions in the World." At the same time, it probably prompted the CCP to reach out to Williams "on the point of anti-Soviet revisionism," because Williams felt resentful towards the Soviet Union and the CPUSA's support of Martin Luther King's non-violent activism while condemning Robert Williams's "meet

The first official contact between Williams and the PRC began with Williams' letter to China in order to request Mao to issue a statement in support of African American civil rights efforts.<sup>21</sup> Twenty days before the "March on Washington", on August 8, 1963, Mao issued the statement "Oppose Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism," in which he publicly declared China's support for the black liberation movement in the United States. His proclamation also positioned U.S. liberal democracy and capitalism as the paramount agents of U.S. racial oppression and worldwide imperialism.<sup>22</sup> After the statement was issued, over 10,000 people rallied in Beijing to echo the call. Williams soon cabled to the Chinese government with his gratitude and stated that Mao's statement and actions by Chinese people had elevated black people's struggles in the United States and brought it into the fold of world revolution.<sup>23</sup> Williams later published an article proclaiming that Mao's statement was as momentous as President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 1863.<sup>24</sup>

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violence with violence." See Yu, "Meiguo minquanyundong zhong de zhongguo yinsu," 144-168.

<sup>21</sup> Yuan Mu, "Bu qu de heiren zhanshi: fang Meiguo heiren lingxiu Luobote Weilian," [Unyielding African American Warrior: An Interview with African American Leader Robert F. Williams], *People's Daily*, October, 1963

<sup>22</sup> See "Chairman Mao Tse-tung's Statement: Calling Upon the People of the World to Unite to Oppose Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism and Support the American Negroes in Their Struggle Against Racial Discrimination." (August 8, 1963), *Peking Review*, Vol. 6, No. 33(August 16, 1963).

<sup>23</sup> Havana, NCNA-English, "American Negro Leader Expresses Appreciation of Chairman Mao's Statement," August 10, 1963; Peking, NCNA-English, "People's Daily Editorial Supports Just Struggle of American Negroes," August 12, 1963; Peking, NCNA-English, "U.S. Negro Leader Cables Thanks to Chinese People," August 12, 1963.

<sup>24</sup> After Mao issued the statement on August 8, Robert F. Williams published an article entitled "Mao Tse-tung's Emancipation Proclamation for African Americans" on August 14, 1963 in

In September of 1963 the Chinese Peace Committee invited Robert and his wife, Mabel to visit China and to participate in the fourteenth annual National Day celebrations in Beijing, where the couple were warmly received by Chinese leaders such as Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and Zhu De. Receiving such honorary treatment, the couple was exuberant in their celebration of Chinese life and politics. In an article entitled “China: Miracle in the East” which was written to the Baltimore Afro-American magazine, *The Afro*, Williams condemned the U.S. government and the mainstream press for its attempt to isolate the PRC and to deceive American people by spreading misinformation about China. He even wrote a letter to U.S. President from the Peking Hotel on November 17, 1964, which criticized “the U.S. State Department’s monstrous conspiracy of misinformation” and advised the U.S. government to change its “containment” policy toward the PRC.<sup>25</sup>

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Havana, Cuba. In the article, he stated: “it is significant that 100 years after Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, the great revolutionary leader and emancipator of the People’s Republic of China, Mao Tse-tung, has proclaimed in the name of the Chinese people the right of the Afro-American to liberty and equality. His proclamation marks a new era in the almost 400 years struggle of black Americans for human rights. His appeal to all of the civilized people of world to support our struggle against the oppressive, racist and imperialist savages of the USA lifts it to proper perspective on the international scene.” See Havana, NCNA-English, “American Negro Leader publishes Article on Chairman Mao Tse-tung’s Statement,” August 26, 1963.

<sup>25</sup> “Mao zhuxi, Liu zhuxi and Zhu weiyuanzhang fengbie jiejian Weilian fufu he Shiqiao fufu,” [Chairman Mao, Chairman Liu and Chairman Zhu respectively met couple of Williams and couple of Ishibashi], *People’s Daily*, October 2, 1963; The article entitled “China: Miracle in the East,” which was written by Robert F. Williams at Peking Hotel in November, 1963. It was published in *The Afro*, changing the title to “Are We Mistaken Asia? Letter from China.” See Robert F. Williams, “Are We Mistaken Asia? Letter from China,” *The Afro* (December 19, 1964), 4-5; “Letter to U.S. President,” FBI files, Section 5, 1963-1965, in Timothy B. Tyson, ed., *The Black Power Movement, Part 2: The Papers of Robert F. Williams* [microfilm] (LexisNexis Academic & Library Solutions; Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 2002),

Undoubtedly, propaganda battles in the Cold War years grew increasingly heated on both sides. On the one hand, as Williams mentioned, there was much misinformation about the PRC spread around the United States. In fact, much of that distorted information was fabricated and distributed by the intelligence agency of the KMT government in Taiwan.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, the critiques made by Williams must also be contextualized because, like Du Bois, what Williams observed in China was what historian Yunxiang Gao has called an “arranged reality” that the Chinese government “created for distinguished political tourists.”<sup>27</sup> The couple was guided to factories, communes, and

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Microfilm Reel 17, Group 2, Series 4.

<sup>26</sup> Since Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang government retreated to Taiwan in 1949, the KMT government (in Taiwan) began to formulate so-called “Fan Gong Fu Guo Fang'an” (反共復國方案) [“Anti-communism and National Rejuvenation Plan”], and also to establish special intelligence agency named “Haiwai Dui Fei Douzheng Gongzuo Tongyi Zhidao Weiyuanhui,” (海外對匪鬥爭工作統一指導委員會) [Overseas Anti-communism Unified Guiding Committee] which was founded in November 1956. Its honorary director was Chiang Ching-kuo, son of Chiang Kai-shek. Its executive director was Zhou Zhirou who was the Defensive Minister of the Kuomintang government in Taiwan. Its secretary-general was Zheng Yan-fen, who was director of the Third Sector of the Kuomintang's Central Committee and supervised intelligence works of Kuomintang government and affairs of the KMT's overseas party. The special intelligence agency aimed to fabricate and deliver anti-PRC and anti-CCP propaganda around the “Free World” countries and to work for the intelligence services of the KMT government in Taiwan. Because the KMT government considered the United States as its principle ally, to spread propaganda internally in the United States had become extremely crucial. The PRC was depicted as war-like, full of terror and starvation. See Foreign Ministry of ROC (Taiwan), “Jia qiang dui Mei xuanchuan,” [To Promote Propaganda toward the United States], File No.: 403/0006, repository at Archives, Institute of Modern History Academia Sinica, Repository No.: 11-07-02-03-02-003; Chuan-Rui Yeh, “Zhongguo Guomintang haiwai dangwu fazhan, 1950-1962” [Development of Kuomintang's overseas Movements, 1950-1962] (Master Thesis, National Chi Nan University, 2011), 114-116.

<sup>27</sup> In Gao's article, “W. E. B. and Shirley Graham Du Bois in Maoist China,” she points out that the honorable treatment of W. E. B. Du Bois and his wife in China reflected “elite techniques of hospitality.” What the couple had seen was the “arranged reality” created for distinguished political tourists by the CCP and the communist government. See Yunxiang Gao, “W. E. B. and Shirley Graham Du Bois in Maoist China,” *Du Bois Review*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (2013): 73.

churches, and especially the minority autonomous regions. This itinerary was strategically organized so that Williams would compare minority problems between China and the United States. As a result of his impressions in these areas, Williams strengthened his critique of racism in the United States and unwittingly spread Chinese propaganda whereby an enviable China was created in the imagination of black nationalists.

In October of 1964, Williams and his wife Mabel visited China for the second time to participate in the National Day celebrations. Chinese officials helped them to produce a documentary film, “Robert Williams in China,” which documented the couple’s travels around the country. It became a masterpiece of propaganda about China’s economy and society. So impressive was the promise of Chinese revolution that in July 1966 the couple relocated to Beijing where they would become a part of the community at No. 1 Tai Chi Chang, the official building of the Chinese Peace Committee. Tang Mingzhao and several expatriate Americans (including Anna Louise Strong, Frank Coe and George Hatem, who organized the “American Group”) also lived in the same building. The group regularly discussed strategies for the Chinese Peace Committee to support African American struggles with the Williams’.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> According to the biography of Tang Mingzhao’s daughter, Tang Wensheng, Tang Mingzhao had lived at No. 1 Tai Chi Chang since he returned to the PRC with his family in the early 1950s. See

Given permission by Chinese authorities, the Williams continued to publish the *Crusader* and to host Radio Free Dixie. In China Williams didn't need to pay for any publication costs and postage. The Peking Foreign Language Press subsidized the printing of *The Crusader*, and then workers sent it through Hong Kong to the U.S. directly by the mail. The *Crusader* printings increased from around 15,000 copies per issue in Havana to between 30,000 and 40,000 in Beijing. And a Chinese transmitter also allowed Radio Free Dixie to be broadcast in African nations periodically. Furthermore, Williams also asked the Chinese government to increase its shortwave broadcasts aimed at African Americans.<sup>29</sup>

Besides helping to export positive images of China to the outside world, Williams' media efforts also played a great role in exporting Chinese communism to U.S. radicals, particularly black activists and thinkers. For instance, in several articles of the *Crusader*, Williams "frequently positioned the guerrilla warfare of Cuban, Chinese, and Vietnamese

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Daoyi Zong, "Tang Wensheng: Zhou Enlai de zuihou yiwei yiyuan," ["Tang Wensheng, the last interpreter for Zhou Enlai"] *Dangshi Bolan* [General Review of the Communist Party of China], Vol.2(1996), 6; Ninety-First U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Statements of Robert F. Williams: Hearings with Subsequent Staff Interviews*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, Part 2, March 24 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), 127,131; Ninety-First U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Statements of Robert F. Williams: Hearings with Subsequent Staff Interviews*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, Part 3, March 25, 1970 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), 202-203.

<sup>29</sup> Ninety First U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Testimony of Robert F. Williams: Hearings*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, Part 1, February 16, 1970 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), 9-10, 38-40; Ninety First U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Statements of Robert F. Williams: Hearings with Subsequent Staff Interviews*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, Part 3, March 25, 1970 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), 189-190; Frazier, "Thunder in the East Asia," 935-941.



peasants as a model for U.S. black militancy.” After absorbing Mao’s theories on the guerrilla warfare of Chinese peasants and Che Guevara’s book, *Guerrilla Warfare*, Williams produced a new concept of revolution called “Urban Guerrillas” which inspired leaders of the Black Power Movement including Max Stanford (a leader and thinker of the Revolutionary Action Movement), Bobby Seale (a co-founder of the Black Panther Party) and Huey Newton (a leader of the Black Panther Party).<sup>30</sup>

The Williams’ relocation to China coincided with the commencement of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Not only did they strongly support it, but they considered it as the greatest event in the history of mankind.<sup>31</sup> Williams also actively transmitted the experience of the Cultural Revolution to the African American radicals. Less than a year into the Cultural revolution, Williams wrote in the *Crusader* entitled “Reconstitute Afro-American Art to Remold Black Souls.” Imitating Mao’s words, Williams urged black artists to discard the shackles of the old traditions and only to make art that served the revolution:

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<sup>30</sup> Robert F. Williams, “USA: The Potential of A Minority Revolution,” *The Crusader*, Vol.5, No.4 (May & June, 1964); Williams, “USA: The Potential of A Minority Revolution, Part II,” *The Crusader*, Vol. 7, No.1 (August, 1965); Williams, “USA: The Potential of A Minority Revolution, Part III,” *The Crusader*, Vol 9. No.2 (September and October, 1967); Frasier, “Thunder in the East,” 941; Frasier, *The East Is Black*, 139-140, 147; Kelley and Esch, “Black Like Mao,” 14-26.

<sup>31</sup> “Zhongguo wuchanjieji wenhua da gemin wansui: waiguo pengyou zuotan zhongguo wuchanjieji wenhua da gemin de weida de shijie yiyi,” [“Long Live Chinese Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution: Foreign Friends Held symposium to Discuss Its Great Significance toward the World”] *People’s Daily*, February 12, 1967; Peking, NCNA-English, “Robert Williams on Cultural Revolution,” February 21, 1967; Frasier, “Thunder in the East,” 945.

The Afro-American artist must make a resolute and conscious effort to reconstitute our art forms to remold new proud black and revolutionary soul.... It must create a new theory and direction and prepare our people for a more bitter, bloody and protracted struggle against racist tyranny and exploitation. *Black art must serve the best interest of black people. It must become a powerful weapon in the arsenal of the Black Revolution.*<sup>32</sup> [emphasis by author]

The Revolutionary Action Movement echoed Williams's call, and the leaders immediately called for "a full-scale black cultural revolution in the United States," and they also derived many ideas from Mao's "Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art" in their newsletter and pamphlet.<sup>33</sup>

However, the Williams's favorable attitudes towards the Cultural Revolution meant that the couple believed in and propagated an idealistic image of the revolution while ignoring its devastating impact on Chinese life. Like the Du Bois' image of China, the Williams' was also largely produced and manipulated by the Chinese government.

### **III. Chinese Factors in Black Power Movement**

Circulation of Williams's radical publications and travel writing for the African American community made him a significant symbolic leader across a spectrum of black nationalist groups. They claimed their militant struggles were following the teachings of Robert Williams and thoughts of other international revolutionary leaders, such as Mao Zedong and Che Guevara. Moreover, the reports about the Chinese Cultural Revolution

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<sup>32</sup> Robert F. Williams, "Reconstitute Afro-American Art to Remold Black Souls," *The Crusader*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (July, 1967).

<sup>33</sup> Kelley and Esch, "Black Like Mao," 31.

transmitted by Williams inspired African American communities in the late 1960s. The radical black activists also pursued a “Black Cultural Revolution,” and some established the Black Revolutionary Party which thoroughly followed Mao’s thoughts and Mao’s statements toward African American struggles, and meanwhile Mao’s works, *On New Democracy* (*Xin Minzhu Zhuyi Lun*, published in January 1940) were serially published in *The Call* (which was founded in Kansas city in 1919 and considered as one of the top six African-American weeklies in US), made “African [American] brothers show the relevance of Mao Tse-tung Thought.”<sup>34</sup> Among black radical militant groups, the most influential were: The Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) and The Black Panther Party (BPP).

#### **i. The Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM)**

Since the founding of the Revolutionary Action Movement in 1962, it kept close ties with Robert Williams. Leaders of the RAM such as Max Stanford went to Cuba to visit

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<sup>34</sup> Ninety First U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Statements of Robert F. Williams: Hearings with Subsequent Staff Interviews*, 2nd Session, Part 3, March 25, 1970 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), 199; “Cultural Revolution Part of Struggle,” *The North Star*, Vol. 4 (December, 1968), 2. See “Miscellaneous black publications (2) [1964-1975]” in Tyson, ed., *The Black Power Movement, Part 2: The Papers of Robert F. Williams*[microfilm], Microfilm Reel 8, Group 1, Series 4; “Hail the Formation of the Black Revolutionary Party USA,” “African Brothers Show Relevance of Mao Tse-Tung Thought,” *Black Revolutionary: Official Journal of the Black Revolutionary*, Vol. 1, Issue1 (May 1971). See “Articles concerning Williams (newspaper and periodical), 1971(1),” in Tyson, ed., *The Black Power Movement, Part 2: The Papers of Robert F. Williams* [microfilm], Microfilm Reel 9, Group 1, Series 4.

Williams and elected him as “Chairman-in-Exile of the Revolutionary Action Movement and Premier of the African American government-in-exile.”<sup>35</sup>

According to Max Stanford, the goal of RAM was “[to] apply Marxism-Leninism Mao Tse-Tung thought” to the conditions of Afro-American and “[to] advance the theory that the Black liberation movement in the U.S. was part of the vanguard of the world socialist revolution.”<sup>36</sup> Robert Williams’s *Crusader Magazine* was assigned as reading material for RAM members. It influenced RAM leaders—for example, the articles on Williams’s theory of “Urban Guerrilla” directly inspired Max Stanford to write his famous work, *Black Guerrilla Warfare: Strategy and Tactics*. Moreover, Max Stanford referred to Mao’s guerrilla principles: “The enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue.”<sup>37</sup> He advocated for black nationalists to use these guerrilla tactics in their militant struggles. And RAM leaders also formulated RAM’s “Code of Cadres” which were extremely similar to a set

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<sup>35</sup> Ninetieth U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, *Subversive Influence in Riots, Looting and Burning (Part 2): Hearings before the Committee on Un-American Activities*, First Session, October 31 and November 1, 1967 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968), 1070; Ninety First U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Statements of Robert F. Williams: Hearings with Subsequent Staff Interviews*, 2nd Session, Part 3, March 25, 1970 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), 197-199, 205-206; Kelley and Esch, “Black Like Mao,” 15.

<sup>36</sup> Maxwell C. Stanford, “Revolutionary Action Movement: A Case Study of an Urban Revolutionary Movement in Western Capitalist Society,” M.A. thesis, Atlanta University, 1986, 197.

<sup>37</sup> This short summary of the Chinese Red Army’s tactics was known in Chinese as the “Sixteen-Character Formula” because each of its four clauses consisted of four characters, had been invented by Mao Zedong and Zhu De in May 1928. It was later regarded as the quintessence of Mao’s guerrilla principles and compiled in *Mao’s Selected Works*, Volume 1.

of revolutionary ethics worked out by Mao for Chinese Communist Party cadres and members of the PLA. In a word, RAM leaders “saw themselves as urban guerrillas, members of an all-black version of Mao’s Red Army.”<sup>38</sup>

Furthermore, RAM leaders saw African American freedom struggles as part of international revolutions happening in Asia, Africa and Latin America. They identified their revolutionary work as “part of Mao’s international strategy of encircling Western capitalist countries and challenging imperialism.” As the RAM evolved, it also developed a theory of “Revolutionary Black Internationalism,” and advocated for creation of “a black international” and “a People’s Liberation Army on a World scale” in order to destroy the “dictatorship of world by the Black Underclass through World Black Revolution.”<sup>39</sup>

RAM’s extremely radical activism had been under the surveillance by the FBI and U.S. Police. In the summer of 1967, 17 members of RAM including Max Stanford were arrested in New York and Philadelphia for plotting the assassination of Civil Rights leaders Whitney Young and Roy Wilkins.<sup>40</sup> Afterwards under the repression of FBI, the

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<sup>38</sup> Max Stanford, “Black Guerrilla Warfare: Strategy and Tactics,” *The Black Scholar*, Vol.2, No.3 (November 1970), reprinted in Robert Chrisman and Nathan Hare, eds. *Contemporary Black Thought: The Best from The Black Scholar* (Indianapolis & New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1973), 199-210; Stanford, “Revolutionary Action Movement,” 92; Kelley and Esch, “Black Like Mao,” 16-17.

<sup>39</sup> Kelley and Esch, “Black Like Mao,” 18-19.

<sup>40</sup> Ninetieth Congress, House of Representatives, *Subversive Influence in Riots, Looting and Burning (Part 2): Hearings before the Committee on Un-American Activities*, First Session,

activism of RAM was weakened and it finally dissolved in 1969. Although RAM failed to accomplish its mission in practice, it provided an organizational example and constructed theoretical justification for revolutionary black nationalism, which inspired many radical activists such as Huey Newton and Bobby Seale who were former RAM members and later founded the Black Panther Party.

## ii. **The Black Panther Party**

There were several black radical organizations influenced by Maoism in the 1960s, however, the Black Panther Party was the most visible and influential one promoting Mao Zedong Thought in practice. The Party was founded in Oakland, California in October 1966, just a few months after the outbreak of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. The co-founder and leader of Black Panther Party, Huey Newton had read the four volumes of *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung* before founding of the Party. At the beginning of the establishment of the Party, the leaders identified Mao Tse-Tung Thought and Malcom X's self-determination as ideologies of their party. Mao's famous saying, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun" (Qiangganzi li chu zhengquan) became frequently quoted to justify their militant activism, moreover the Programs and Rules of the Black

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October 31 and November 1, 1967(Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968), 1071.

Panther Party also borrowed from Mao's works. For example, 26 Rules of the Party were quotes from discipline principles in *Mao Tse-Tung Selected Works*, and the later "Eight Points of attention, Three Main Rules of Discipline" (which were put forward by Mao Zedong in 1927, which became Discipline Principles of the People's Liberation Army of China) formed the Rule of the Black Panther Party.<sup>41</sup>

Because most of the new members of the Black Panther Party were "young, inexperienced, not yet politically fluent" and more importantly, few of them could speak or write Chinese, instead of seriously reading Mao's selected works and developing a revolutionary ideology, the panthers engaged in sloganeering and reading Mao's "Little Red Book" (which refers to *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung*<sup>42</sup>). As scholar Bill

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<sup>41</sup> Kelley and Esch, "Black Like Mao," 21; Huey Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1973), 110; Bill V. Mullen, "By the book: *Quotations from Chairman Mao* and the making of Afro-Asian radicalism, 1966-1975," in *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History*, Alexander C. Cook, ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2014), 247; Chao Ren, "'Concrete Analysis of Concrete Conditions': A Study of the Relationship between the Black Panther Party and Maoism," *Constructing the Past*, Vol. 10, Issue 1(2009), 31; Kathleen Cleaver and George Katsiaficas, eds. *Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party: A New Look at the Panthers and Their Legacy* (New York & London: Routledge, 2001), 286-288.

<sup>42</sup> *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung* was a book of statements excerpted from speeches and writings by Mao Zedong. It was originally compiled by the editorial office of *The People's Liberation Army Daily* in May 1964. At the beginning it was just used as an inspirational political and military document, then the political climate changed it became a handbook of learning Mao's thought in the Cultural Revolution period. The book was reprinted many times and many editions were published in foreign languages by Peking Foreign Language Press from 1966 to 1976. Because the book was printed in small size and bound in bright red covers, it became commonly known as the *Little Red Book*. According to statistics of Chinese government, until the end of the Cultural Revolution, the book was published 1 billion and 55 million copies (which included 4 Chinese versions, 12 versions of Chinese minority group language edition, 1 braille edition and 37 versions of foreign language edition). See Huoxiong Liu, "Mao Zedong zhuzuo de haiwai chuanbo," ["Study on Circulation of Mao's Works Abroad"] *Wenshi Tiandi* [History of World], Vol. 3 (2014), 4-8.

V. Mullen stated, “[To the panthers] *Mao’s Quotations* provided a recruitment tool” that was used to build a party and to foment national liberation struggle, and it also “offered a blueprint for translating events such as the Great proletarian Cultural Revolution onto African American battles being waged miles away.”<sup>43</sup> Among the slogans of *Mao’s Quotations*, the most popularly cited by the panthers was “Serving the People.”(Weirenmin fuwu) In order to undertake this task, the Black Panther Party carried out the Free Breakfast for Children Program which aimed to supply food for children for whom it was “impossible to obtain and sustain any education when one had to attend school hungry.” The panthers stated it was “a socialist program, designed to serve the people.”<sup>44</sup>

After 1969 leaders of the Black Panther Party such as Stokely Carmichael, Eldridge Cleaver and Elaine Brown successively visited China. In September 1971 Huey Newton and other two panthers were invited to visit China and to participate in the twenty-second annual National Day celebrations in Beijing. When the delegation arrived in Beijing on September 29, Tang Mingzhao stood at the airport to receive them. Premier Zhou Enlai warmly received Newton and members of the delegation, and held a reception party at the Great Hall of the People for all foreign guests who were invited to participate Chinese

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<sup>43</sup> Mullen, “By the book,” 246.

<sup>44</sup> Cleaver and Katsiaficas, *Liberation, Imagination and the Black Panther Party*, 288.



National Day celebration.<sup>45</sup> After they returned to San Francisco airport on October 8,

Newton expressed his experiences of traveling to China at the Press:

“[It was] a sensation of freedom—as if a great weight had been lifted from my soul and I was able to be myself, without defense or pretense or the need for explanation. I felt absolutely free for the first time in my life—completely free among my fellow men.”<sup>46</sup>

During the heyday of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Newton saw the trip as a pilgrimage to the holy land of his revolutionary beliefs and the trip further confirmed and consolidated his acceptance of Maoist revolutionary doctrines.

Through circulation of Chinese periodicals (*China Reconstructs* and *Peking Review*), Mao’s works and reports on the Chinese Cultural Revolution which transmitted by Robert Williams’s self-produced media, Chinese communism was secretly disseminated among African American nationalists. It did not only become an important factor impacting the Black Power Movement but it also fueled the imagination of young Chinese Americans in the early 1970s.

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<sup>45</sup> Peking, NCNA, “Meiguo Heibaodang sanwei lingdaoren daoqing,”[“Three Leaders of the Black Panther Party arrived at Beijing”] September 30, 1971; Peking, NCNA, “Relie qingzhu Zhonghuarenmingongheguo chengli ershier zhounian: Guowuyuan wenhuazu, Duiwaiyouxie shenghui zhaodai geguo pengyou,”[Ardently Celebrating the Twenty-second Annual National Day Celebration: Cultural Office of the State Council and Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries Held Receptions for Foreign Friends] October 2, 1971; “Zhou zongli, Guo Moruo fu weiyuanzhang, Geng Biao buzhang, Ding Xilin fu huizhang huijian Meiguo pengyou,” [Premier Zhou Enlai, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress Guo Moruo, Minister of International Department Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party Geng Biao, Vice Chairman of Chinese People’s Association with Foreign Countries Ding Xilin Received American Friends] *People’s Daily*, October 5, 1971.

<sup>46</sup> Huey Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide*, 110.

#### **IV. Conclusion of this Chapter**

Despite the anti-communist fever of the Cold War period, there were many African American activists who traveled to China. Their pilgrimage to the PRC as a part of “people’s diplomacy,” which formed the basis for solidarity between Chinese Communists and the black activists, was facilitated and orchestrated by Tang Mingzhao. As an old generation Chinese American leftist, Tang acted as a go-between for the establishment of communications between both sides in way which significantly helped the Chinese government to spread its propaganda and Maoism abroad. Moreover, although some of the black international activists could be considered mouthpieces of China’s propaganda, there is no doubt that their international travels and connections greatly influenced the African American Civil Rights Movement and contributed to its evolution from “peace” to “panthers.”

As the tactics of black activism shifted from the non-violent rhetoric of the Civil Rights Movement towards militancy with the rise of the radical Black Power Movement, Maoism and the Chinese Cultural Revolution exerted considerable influence. Radical black nationalists learned to employ lessons from Mao’s revolutionary spirit and the Chinese struggle against semi-colonial rule in order to fight against racism and produce radical institutional change domestically. They also weaved their revolutionary struggles into Mao’s international strategy of encircling western capitalist countries and

challenging American imperialism. Consequently, through the prestige and organizing tactics of the Black Panther Party, Chinese Communism became an inspiration for radicals across the U.S. There was no doubt that the Black Power Movement also influenced and empowered young Chinese American radicals and their activism.

However, in the conventional historiographies written on Chinese American in the Cold War-Civil Rights era, few scholars examine the relations between African Americans and Chinese Americans. Some previous studies even claimed that Chinese Americans had become “model minority” while African Americans were striving for their civil rights. It is necessary to clarify how Chinese Americans looked at the African American Civil Rights Movement and its succeeding Black Power Movement. In order to deal with this question, Chapter 4 chooses the Chinese American community press as a source because it reflects different views of community members reviewing historical events occurring in American society.

#### **Chapter 4. Response to the African American Civil Rights Movement in the Chinese American Community Press**

##### **I. The Chinese American community and Its Press in the Cold War- Civil Rights Movement Period**

###### **i. Stereotyping Chinese American in the Eye of the Outsiders**

The African American Civil Rights Movement, which profoundly impacted

American society, coincided with the height of anti-communist fervor in the Cold War period. Interestingly, while African Americans struggled to end racial segregation and discrimination against black people and to change unequal laws, Chinese Americans were perceived as well-behaved people or praised as a “Model Minority”<sup>1</sup> group due to being “anti-communist, law-abiding and well-assimilated into white society”<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, it was not true that all of the Chinese Americans were incorporated into the “Model Minority” myth. As chapter 3 mentioned, some Chinese American leftists supported the African American movements and acted as a go-between for the establishment of communication between the Chinese Communists and the African American radical activists in the exchange of the “People’s Diplomacy” of the PRC and helped the black nationalists to disseminate Maoism into black communities.

Therefore, it is necessary to examine how Chinese Americans looked at the African

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<sup>1</sup> The concept “model minority” was first put forward by social scientist William Peterson in his article, which was published in *New York Times Magazine* on January 9, 1966, entitled “Success Story, Japanese American Style.” Peterson wrote, “Japanese Americans could suffer racism and the stripping of their properties...they could be deprived of all the rights as American citizens. But because they overcame such obstacles, they were now a model for success.” Soon after another article entitled “Success Story of One Minority Group in U.S.” appeared in *U.S. News and World Report* on December 26, 1966, which shifted the focus from Japanese to Chinese and attributed their success to “a tight network of family and clan loyalties.” Chinese were exalted for their “strict discipline” leading Children to “attend school faithfully, work hard at their studies—and stay out of trouble.” See Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America* (New York and London: Oxford University, 2001), 188-189; Stephen Steinberg, “The Myth of Ethnic Success: Old Wine in New Bottles,” *The Oxford Handbook of American Immigration and Ethnicity*, Ronald H. Bayor ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 338-354.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen D. Wu, “Race and Asian American Citizenship from World War II to the Movement.” (Ph.D. diss., the University of Chicago, 2006), 9.

American civil rights movement in the context of the Cold War. Did they really detach themselves from African American civil rights activism, meanwhile boasting of themselves as a “Model Minority” group as they were labeled by the outside world? In order to examine the responses of Chinese Americans to the African American Civil Rights Movement, this chapter focuses on the Chinese American community press as a source and a vehicle because the community press reflect different views of community members regarding historical events occurring in American society.

By analyzing the coverage in the community press on significant events of African American civil rights activism and reports on the reality of life in the black ghettos, this chapter tries to examine what kinds of views the different groups of Chinese Americans had towards the African American Civil Rights Movement, as well as towards black people and their community.

#### **ii. The Situation of Chinese American Newspapers during the Cold War-Civil Rights Era**

According to Him Mark Lai’s works, *Chinese Newspapers published in North America, 1854-1975* and *A History Reclaimed: An Annotated Bibliography of Chinese Language Materials on Chinese America*<sup>3</sup>, there has been a long history of circulation of

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<sup>3</sup> Karl Lo and Him Mark Lai compiled, *Chinese Newspapers Published in North America, 1854-1975* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Chinese Research Materials Association of Research, Association of Research Libraries, 1977). Him Mark Lai, *A History of Reclaimed: An Annotated Bibliography of Chinese Language Materials on the Chinese America* (Berkeley, CA: Regents of the University of California Press, 1986).

the Chinese American community press since the first wave of Chinese immigrants came to the U.S. Before WWII most of these newspapers were written in Chinese because their readers were usually born in China and segregated in Chinatown due to the Chinese Exclusion Act.

After the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed in 1943, more and more U.S. born Chinese Americans came of age, and they began to enroll in American public schools and had very little knowledge of Chinese. In order to meet the desires of those people, some newspapers tried to start an English edition and several all-English Chinese-American newspapers also emerged. Because many newspapers were founded by China's political groups in the United States, the fate of these Chinese newspapers was usually determined to a large extent by the tides of China's political fortunes and the coverage found in these newspapers was also influenced by China's political partisanship.<sup>4</sup>

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Because the past frames of reference and perspectives on Chinese Americans relied mainly on English language resources, they usually lacked the perspectives of Chinese themselves. Him Mark Lai's two works systematically compiled the Chinese language resources published in Chinese American communities. These two bibliographies did not only list and locate where the Chinese language resources were collected but they also became precious historical sources for scholars to examine Chinese Americans' experiences and their attitudes towards the outside world. The former one listed and compiled where the Chinese newspapers were collected, and Lai also gave a brief introduction entitled "A Short History of Chinese Journalism in the United States and Canada." The last one listed over 1,500 available Chinese language works that can be found in libraries and institutions in the U.S. This bibliographical work categorized the reference resources as: general works and handbooks; publications of organizations and institutions, and special publications; biographies and travel accounts; belle letters and essays; newspapers and periodicals; manuscripts; and miscellaneous.

<sup>4</sup> Him Mark Lai, "A Short History of Chinese Journalism in the United States and Canada." in Lo and Lai, *Chinese Newspapers Published in North America, 1854-1975*, 1-15.

These newspapers can be divided into two types by their partisan orientation to China's politics: Left and Right<sup>5</sup>. However, since the domestic and international political climate changed, especially while the Cold War climate hindered Chinese Americans to get involved in China's politics further, many independent and outwardly neutral newspapers also emerged<sup>6</sup>.

Regarding these independent newspapers, even though their publication organs claimed to have “no official connections to any political parties,”<sup>7</sup> they actually presented the views of their own interest groups with a certain level of partisanship, or sometimes the political tone of these independent journals was determined by partisanship of the chief-editors or columnists. For example, *China Daily News* (紐約華僑日報), which usually had a left-wing slant, but it was not an official organ of the Chinese Communist Party. The supposedly “neutral” independent papers such as *the China Times*(金山時報), *Chinese American Weekly*(中美週報) and *Chinese American Times*(中美時報) were

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<sup>5</sup> As Lai suggested, the left-wing newspapers appear to affiliate with Chinese “Marxist sympathizers”, while the right-wing newspapers mainly refer to pro-Kuomintang organs. See Him Mark Lai, “A Short History of Chinese Journalism in the United States and Canada.” 8-11.

<sup>6</sup> Him Mark Lai defined the so-called “independent” newspapers to be “not officially affiliated with any political party” which had a certain appeal. See Lai, “A Short History of Chinese Journalism in the United States and Canada,” 11.; Xilin Guo also pointed out, “independent newspapers were on the scene to report on American and Chinese news from a relatively neutral ground and to struggle for their freedom of speech against the forces of the Cold War.” See Xilin Guo, “Independent Chinese Language Newspapers during the Cold War,” in Xiaojian Zhao and Edward J. W. Park eds. *Asian Americans: An Encyclopedia of Social, Cultural, Economic, and Political History*, Vol.2: G-O (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2014), 542-545.

<sup>7</sup> Lai, “A Short History of Chinese Journalism in the United States and Canada,” 12.

close to the Kuomintang line because these newspapers were controlled by chief- editors who were usually pro-Kuomintang and firmly against the Chinese Communist Party, though sometimes they may moderately criticize some policies of the Kuomintang.<sup>8</sup> Compared to these newspapers with a clear partisan leaning, *Chinese Pacific Weekly*(太平洋週刊) claimed to hold a balanced position in reporting, especially on China's politics. Due to its liberal reporting, it acquired great fame within and outside the Chinese American community. As its editor Mr. Gilbert Woo stated, “Chinese Pacific Weekly aims to be a fair and critical paper, not a so-called ‘neutral’ paper.”<sup>9</sup>

In this chapter, in order to analyze their respective typical responses to Afro-American civil rights activism, I choose the leading and well-circulated newspapers of each group: the “leftist” *China Daily News* (北美華僑日報), the “rightist” or pro-KMT “independent” newspapers *Chinese American Weekly*(中美週報) and *Chinese American Times*(中美時

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 1-15; Xilin Guo, “Independent Chinese Language Newspapers during the Cold War,” 542-543; Xiaojian Zhao, *Remaking Chinese America: Immigration, Family, and Community, 1940-1965* (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 104-125; Brooks, *Between Mao and McCarthy*, 61,111.

<sup>9</sup> The academic world of the U.S. generally defines the term “liberal” to be close to the “left”. However, in the politics of Chinese American community, the term was interpreted as a political group which became “much less about China’s future and much more about winning elections in America and achieving greater civil rights for people of Chinese ancestry in the United States.” See Charlotte Brooks, *Between Mao and McCarthy: Chinese American Politics in the Cold War Years* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 3-12. Gilbert Woo was a genuinely liberal journalist and established the liberal Chinese weekly, *Chinese Pacific Weekly*. See Zhao, *Remaking Chinese America*, 108-110, 121-125; Him Mark Lai and Betty Lim, “Gilbert Woo, Chinese American Journalist,” in Hu Jingnan ji nian wei yuan hui ed. *Hu Jinnan Wenji* (Hong Kong: Xiangjiang chu ban you xian gong si, 1991), 35-53; Gilbert Woo, “Zhongli yu Gongzheng,” (“Neutral” and “Fair”) *Chinese Pacific Weekly*, December 11, 1948.



報). As for detailed information of the “liberal” *Chinese Pacific Weekly*(太平洋週刊) and its arguments on African American civil rights activism, it will be discussed together with Gilbert Woo’s liberal activist life in chapter 5.

## II. The Image of Black Civil Rights Activism in “Leftist” Newspaper *China Daily News*

### i. A Brief Introduction to *China Daily News*

*China Daily News* was founded by members of the Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance (CHLA 紐約華僑衣館聯合會, which has been described in more detail in Chapter 2) on July 7, 1940. The day after its foundation, the editorial board published editorials to encourage Chinese Americans to exercise their political rights as American citizens, and meanwhile to participate in fund-raising campaign in order to help China to resist Japanese aggression.<sup>10</sup>

Different from the papers which were openly party organs, *China Daily News* initially assumed a more moderate stance and attracted a wider readership including not only leftists, but also liberals and other moderate figures in the Chinese community. Ji Gongquan became editor-in-chief, and Eugene Moy edited the literary section. Tang Mingzhao was the manager of the new paper. After one year Ji left the *China Daily News*

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<sup>10</sup> Yu, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves*, 77.

to work at the Office of War Information in New York (which was transferred to the State Department of the United States Information Service after WWII). Soon Tang would also work there with Ji.<sup>11</sup> As the editor-in-chief of *China Daily News* he was succeeded by Eugene Moy.

However, after WWII, due to the change in the international political climate in the early Cold War years, anti-communist sentiment grew drastically in the U.S. domestic sphere. Because some founding members of the *China Daily News* were communists or sympathetic to the Chinese Communist Party, the newspaper had become a target for investigation by FBI. Finally, in March 1952, Eugene Moy and 3 other members of CHLA were arrested, sentenced and charged for violation of “the 1917 Trading with the Enemy

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<sup>11</sup> Ji Gongquan is father of Ji Chaozhu (who studied at Harvard University for two years before he returned to PRC with his family. After the Korean War broke out, he was sent to the headquarters of The Chinese People's Volunteer Army as a translator and soon he became interpreter of Chinese top leaders like Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong.) Ji is a famous Chinese politician and Law specialist. Tang Mingzhao is a famous Chinese American politician to actively participate in China's politics. After he secretly returned to China, he became a deputy director of the Liaison Department of the Committee for Resisting the USA and Aiding Korea in October 1950. Later he was elected a deputy for overseas Chinese to the first National People's Congress in 1954. And he was recommended by China's government to the UN and served as undersecretary-general of the UN from 1972 to 1979. Both Ji and Tang are the members of Chinese Communist Party. See Him Mark Lai, *Chinese American Transnational Politics*, Madeline Y. Hsu, ed. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 113; Yu, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves*, 192; Ji Chaozhu, *The Man on Mao's Right: From Harvard Yard to Tiananmen Square, My Life Inside China's Foreign Ministry* (Random House, 2008); Wang Shigu, “Meizhou huaqiao ribao.” [*China Daily News*] in *Huaqiao Huaren Baike Quanshu: Meiti & Chuban juan* [The Encyclopedia of Chinese Overseas: Volume of Media & Publication], Zhou Nanjing, ed. (Beijing: Zhongguo Huaqiao Chubanshe, 1999), 228-229; Lin Weiguo, “Jigongquan xiansheng de lumei shengya”(Mr. Ji Gongquan's experiences in the United State) in *Wen Shi Jin Hua*, Vol.6 (Historical Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference of Hebei Province, 1999); Fang Dihui, “Yi Tangmingzhao tongzhi” (Mourn Comrade Tang Mingzhao) in *World Affairs Journal*, Vol.2 (World Affairs Press, 1999).

Act” because of the advertisement for the PRC’s bank and the remittance to it. This almost destroyed *China Daily News*. Although the paper faced these difficulties, it did not lose its stance and continued its pro-PRC reporting while criticizing Kuomintang control of the Chinese American community.<sup>12</sup>

*China Daily News* contained 5 sections and 1 supplement entitled “Xinsheng”, 8 full pages in two sheets of folio paper and it became one of the largest newspapers in New York Chinatown with a daily circulation of over 4,000 in the mid-1940s. Its readership did not only cover the Chinese communities on the East Coast of the U.S., but it also spread to the West Coast, Canada and South America. However, because of the double political persecution from the American government and the Kuomintang which discouraged the readers from buying the paper in the 1950s and 1960s, *China Daily News* faced a sharp drop in circulation and serious financial difficulties so that it had to change to 4 full pages in 1955, from 1963 it changed to a semiweekly publication and the circulation was reduced to less than a few hundred.<sup>13</sup>

## ii. One Movement after Another: The Depiction of African American Civil

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<sup>12</sup> See more in Yu, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves*, 94-196; Him Mark Lai, *Chinese American Transnational Politics*, Madeline Y. Hsu, ed. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 23-32, 112-13; Wang Shigu, “‘Meizhou huaqiao ribao’ an.” [The Case on *China Daily News*] in *Huaqiao Huaren Baike Quanshu: Meiti & Chuban Juan* [The Encyclopedia of Chinese Overseas: Volume of Media & Publication], Zhou Nanjing, ed. (Beijing: Zhongguo Huaqiao Chubanshe, 1999), 229-230.

<sup>13</sup> Wang, “Meizhou huaqiao ribao.” 228-229.

### Rights Activism in *China Daily News*

From the moment *China Daily News* was founded, it formulated strategies to unite the other ethnic groups (here mainly referring to the Jewish Americans and African Americans) in U.S. society; not only with the aim of struggling against discrimination together but also helping to form a “united front” to aid China in resisting Japanese aggression. As historian Renqiu Yu suggested:

“Despite constant calls for unity with black people, there is no evidence that Chinese Americans established substantial relationships with black organizations. The CHLA was exceptional among Chinese American groups in its effort to contact black organizations. ... The most meaningful progress in Chinese-black relations during the war years came from the discussions led and encouraged by *China Daily News* on the relationship between two ethnic groups and what kind of attitude the Chinese should have toward black people.”<sup>14</sup>

Many articles were published in *China Daily News* criticizing the “incorrect” attitude of many Chinese Americans toward minority groups such as Jews and blacks and attributing this negative attitude to the bad influence of the dominant “white racist culture.” One article titled “On the Black Attitude to China” dealt not only with what the title indicates, but also with the poor treatment and verbal insults toward blacks in Chinese restaurants; blacks complained that even some Chinese leaders (such as Madame Chiang Kai-shek) had also used contemptuous phrases about African Americans in their remarks toward white politicians. Finally, the article concluded that “we should understand that

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<sup>14</sup> Yu, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves*, 121.

blacks and we Chinese are like each other-we are the nations being discriminated against and oppressed. We have no reason to discriminate against our black brothers.”<sup>15</sup>

Because the paper consistently maintained its sympathy for the position of African Americans, many articles on African American civil rights activism could usually be read in *China Daily News*. Especially in 1963 when African American activism surged throughout the United States, the paper published many reports and articles on the African American movement from the following perspectives: exposing the essence of racial discrimination towards African Americans while looking back on the history of U.S. slavery and its emancipation; eulogizing the struggles of black people against racial discrimination while condemning white racists and U.S. government repression towards black protestors; and praising certain characteristics of African American civil rights activism from a pro-communist China stance.

### **What Have the Bitter History of U.S Slavery and Its Emancipation Taught Us?**

Several articles in the newspaper sought to find the roots of African American civil rights activism and the fundamental factors of exploitation endured by black people by reviewing African American history. For example, a columnist’s article entitled “Meiguo heiren xuelei pian” [“The bitter history of African Americans”], looked back at the

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<sup>15</sup> *China Daily News*, July 1, 1942, p.2, quoted at Yu, *To Save China, To Save Ourselves*, 123.

miserable history of the ancestors of the African Americans who were forcibly taken to the American continent from Africa and enslaved in the plantations of the Southern states from generation to generation. They had created considerable wealth for American society, however their exploited status by the white ruling class remained fundamentally unchanged. Even after the abolishment of slavery in U.S. on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1863, African Americans were still considered “second-class citizens” to be segregated and discriminated against almost in every area. “The miserable history and bitter reality of their lives caused African American to struggle for their civil rights. Those days what occurred in Alabama was a typical case.”<sup>16</sup>

Another article entitled “Meiguo feichu nulizhi yibaizhounian” (“At the Centenary Anniversary of the Emancipation of Slaves in the United States”), acclaimed that “the emancipation of slaves became a glorious historic moment for the U.S. and also assured triumph in the U.S. Civil War.” In conclusion, it called for an abolishment of all discrimination and segregation of African Americans.<sup>17</sup> Obviously, these articles attributed discrimination endured by black people to the history of colonialism in Africa

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<sup>16</sup> Xin Zhang, “Meiguo heiren xuelei pian,” (“The bitter history of African American”) *China Daily News*, May 18, 1963, p4. Here “the Occurrence in Alabama” referred to “the Birmingham Campaign” organized by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in early 1963, which aimed to strive for African American civil rights by the campaign of “non-violent direct action.”

<sup>17</sup> Zhou Wen, ““Meiguo feichu nulizhi yibaizhounian” (“At the Centenary Anniversary of Emancipation of Slavery in the United States”), *China Daily News*, April 17, 1963, p4.

and slavery in the Southern U.S. states.

### **How Did African Americans Strive for Their Civil Rights?**

As the above articles suggests, African American activism in Alabama symbolized their struggle to fight against discrimination and persecution and to strive for their civil rights. In fact, the experience of African American civil rights protesters in Birmingham had become a landmark event in the history of the African American Civil Rights Movement. In the so-called “Birmingham Campaign” Dr. Martin Luther King was arrested and jailed on April 16, 1963, and he wrote the seminal "Letter from Birmingham Jail." There were also reports on African American civil rights protests in Birmingham in *China Daily News*. However, it is very interesting that there were no reports on or descriptions of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the paper, and also no reports on his famous “I have A Dream” speech which was delivered at the occasion of the “March on Washington” on August 28, 1963. But an article entitled “Bominghan heiren shiwei ji” (The story on African American demonstration in Birmingham) did give a detailed descriptions of the scene of the protests:

Before African Americans in Birmingham launched demonstrations, they proclaimed their goals as: school desegregation; employing blacks in municipal organizations; formulating an agenda to end discrimination in accommodating the public and to open up more job opportunities for black people. However, while the African Americans started their “non-violent” protests, they were promptly repressed by the reactionary municipal

government and police. The police general was a white fat-man like a magnate who bullied and jail black protestors. ... The African Americans mainly protested by praying at church, demonstrations, sit-ins, while the police tackled them with police dogs, water taps and police rods, and the police arrested over 2,400 African American protesters. ... There was a new phenomenon that some whites, who did not tolerate atrocity towards blacks in Birmingham, demonstrated with the black people arm by arm to protest the discrimination towards African Americans.<sup>18</sup>

The article expounded that reactionary white racists and the ruling class feared black people gaining equal rights, and that they therefore had to severely suppress black people's protests. But then the article does not focus on the white-black racial dichotomy, but rather on support for African American civil rights activism by white civil rights activists.

What is more, at the beginning of the article are quoted some famous sayings from *The United States Declaration of Independence* such as "All Men Are Created Equal", adding the criticism that "The occurrence of African American protests since April 3, 1963 really revealed what 'equality' and 'human rights' mean for black people in the United States."<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the article also reported that because of the shock about what happened to African Americans in Birmingham, many white figures demonstrated in front of the White House and requested the Federal Government to curtail the persecution of

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<sup>18</sup> "Bominghan heiren shiweiji" (The story on African American demonstration in Birmingham), *China Daily News*, June 12, 1963, p4.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.



black people in Birmingham. However, President Kennedy declined to interfere and avoided responsibility by asking the Alabama State government to solve the problems.<sup>20</sup>

Interestingly, there was another article entitled “Heiren xuesheng Mierdisi de zaoyu” (“The bitter experiences of black student James Meredith”), describing the experience of black student, James Meredith who tried to enroll into Mississippi State University where the enrollment of black people was rejected by the Governor’s executive orders. The end result was that James Meredith successfully enrolled into the university because President Kennedy and Robert Kennedy, the Attorney General dispatched Federal forces to help him to enter successfully. Suddenly, the Kennedy brothers became “heroes” in the fight against racial discrimination towards black people. At the University, however, James Meredith was continually threatened by white racists. Finally, he had to withdraw from the university because he needed to be constantly protected by the Federal forces and his family members were threatened too.

Moreover, even though he managed to enter Mississippi State University, the situation of other black people did not change. At the end of the article the author wrote in a cynical tone: “As regards James Meredith’s bitter experiences, the Kennedy brothers, who were praised as ‘heroes’ for fighting against racial discrimination, did not know or

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

did not want to know. Because after they had become famous ‘heroes’, they lost interest in Meredith’s fate and the fate of all black people in Mississippi.”<sup>21</sup> These two articles in *China Daily News* distinctly criticized President Kennedy and his government for using dual tactics in their treatment of the claims of African American civil rights activists. The paper describes the hypocrisy of the Kennedy administration that continued to take part in discrimination against black people and persecute them, while it attempted to deceive African Americans that the government was in fact an advocate of their human and civil rights.

Accompanying the news that Medgar Evers (who was field secretary of the Mississippi NAACP) was assassinated by KKK members on June 12, 1963, the African American activist movement grew rapidly all around the Southern States, and *China Daily News* also ran numerous reports on the civil rights protests. However, when analyzing these reports, there is a common point that can be concluded: class was considered a bigger problem rather than race. Impartial whites could fight against discrimination towards black people together with African Americans, while the racists were usually upper class white figures. For example, in a columnist’s article entitled “Mizhou Jiekexun cheng shouru ji” (“Outrage towards African Americans in Jackson,

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<sup>21</sup> Lin Jia, “Heiren xuesheng Mierdisi de zaoyu,” (“The bitter experiences of black student, James Meredith”) *China Daily News*, January 3, 1963.

Michigan”), the author concluded at end of the article, “In Jackson, whites are 95,000, blacks are 52,000. The black people demanded for racial equality, however, their justice requirements were firmly rejected by white racists who were occupying all positions of the ‘municipal committee’ which represented the interests of politicians and upper-class figures.”<sup>22</sup>

### **What Are the Characteristics of Reporting on the African American Civil Rights Movement in the *China Daily News*?**

Although *China Daily News* faced a difficult position because of harassment from both the federal authority and the pro-KMT community establishment since the early 1950s, it still persisted in its pro-PRC stance, criticizing U.S. government policies while continuing to condemn the Kuomintang’s control of the Chinese American community. The paper likewise maintained its pro-PRC angle in reporting on African American civil rights protests.

Twenty days before the “March on Washington”, on August 8, 1963, Mao Zedong issued the statement “Oppose Racial Discrimination by US Imperialism” at the request of fugitive NAACP figurehead Robert F. Williams while Mao met African leaders. On August 12, 1963 over 10,000 people were asked to assemble in Beijing to celebrate Mao’s

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<sup>22</sup> Mai jia, “Mizhou jiekexun cheng heiren shouhai ji,” (Part 1) (“Outrage towards Afro-Americans in Jackson, Michigan”), *China Daily News*, June 26, 1963, p4; Mai jia, “Mizhou jiekexun cheng heiren shouhai ji,” (Part 2), *China Daily News*, June 29, 1963, p4. Translated and reproduced from “The Battle of Jackson,” in *Newsweek*, June 10, 1963, (U.S. Affairs Section), 16-17.

statement and to support the struggle of African American fighting against racial discrimination in U.S.<sup>23</sup> *China Daily News* gave a headline report in its front page to announce the news of Mao's statement and the Chinese people's supportive assembly for African American's struggle. Furthermore, the paper reprinted the full-text of Mao's statements on page four.

On the front page the headline article used "bold type" for its quotation of Mao's words while he met African leaders: "Racial problems are essentially a class problem. Our coalition is not a racial alliance but a league of colleagues and friends."<sup>24</sup> The article relayed Mao's words and supported the official position of the Chinese Communist Party to advocate for "revolutionary fighting against US imperialism, colonialism and its puppet regimes worldwide."<sup>25</sup> According to the paper, Mao led China to win the revolution and he was supposed to be a representative of the entire colored world. However, Mao declined to establish a race coalition but rather wanted one based on class struggle: the oppressed class versus the reactionary class (including so-called imperialists, colonialists and their puppet power). In the beginning of the statement it described the

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<sup>23</sup> "Shoudu shengda jihui zhichi Meiguo heiren fandui zhongzuoqishi de yingyong douzheng." ("Rally supports struggles of African Americans in Beijing") *People's Daily*, August 12, 1963, sec.1.

<sup>24</sup> "Mao Zedong zai jiejian feizhouwaibing shi huyu" (Mao's speech when he met African leaders), *China Daily News*, August 17, 1963, p1.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

African Americans as an exploited and oppressed class.

It then described how the class consciousness of African Americans was awakening by listing the main cases in which African Americans struggled against racial discrimination and for freedom and equal rights. The statement asserted: “the speedy development of the struggle of the Afro-Americans is a manifestation of sharpening class struggle and sharpening national struggle within the United States; it has been causing increasing anxiety among U.S. ruling circles.” Then he singled out the Kennedy government as a target of criticism and a symbol of the reactionary ruling class. Mao’s statement condemns the Kennedy administration for treating civil rights claims of African Americans by using “dual tactics”: on the one hand, it continually ignored and participated in discrimination and persecution against African Americans and even sent troops to suppress their rightful protests; while on the other hand, the Kennedy government wanted to project an image of endeavoring to protect African American civil rights in order to deceive black people and make them exercise “restraint”. Subsequently, the statement says: “the fascist atrocities of the U.S. imperialists against the black people” have exposed the hypocritical nature of so-called American democracy and freedom.

There is no doubt that *China Daily News* approved of Mao’s opinion in the statement and it also reported on African American civil rights activism from this

perspective: attributing the origin of racial discrimination towards African Americans to the “evil” of slavery and colonialism of the U.S, criticizing the US government’s dual tactics and defining the nature of the racial problem to be a class problem.

These reports described the experience of persecution of African Americans in general and the police violence they endured in particular. However, after 1966 they started using the word “zaofan” (造反 revolt), that was borrowed from the Chinese Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, describing African American civil rights activism as having changed its form from “non-violence” to “violence against violence”. As an article entitled “‘Qiyue zaofan’ hou de niute heiren” (“African Americans in Newark, NJ after the so-called ‘July Revolt’”) described:

Newark was considered as a ‘money-spinner’ by the white-dominated society. However, they did not have any interest in changing the facilities of black ghettos. They thought it is not necessary to change them because the whites will escape to live in suburbs. ...A black activist said in an interview, “as for problems in the black ghetto, such as unemployment, police-violence, damaged schools and outmoded education, severe exploitation from white tenants and shop-owners, deficient public facilities of hygiene and recreation; we tried many times to struggle legally to change our environment and strive for our equal rights, yet no matter whether it was the Federal government or the municipal government, they didn’t care about our claims. Therefore we had to take violent action.” ... What has happened in Newark was a liberation movement for African Americans, and since then they have known the importance of “self-determination” for African Americans. The black people had to make the white ruling class acknowledge their power by employing “violence to violence”. However, the reactionary white ruling circles still

persisted to severely suppress the black movement.<sup>26</sup>

Apart from the descriptions of oppressive conditions of African Americans in Newark, this report contained the new message that black people abandoned the stance of “non-violence”. They began to use “violence to violence” to fight against racial discrimination and persecution from the white ruling class. Moreover, the consciousness of “self-determination” had also awakened in African Americans. Obviously, the pro-PRC *China Daily News* had been influenced by it and tried to report on African American activism from that angle.

To conclude, *Chinese Daily News* maintained its left-wing outlook and conformed to Mao’s statement supporting African Americans’ fight against US imperialism and internal colonialism in its reports. However, it did not exhort its readers to support African American activism nor to learn black people’s struggling tactics to serve Chinese Americans and their communities.

### **III. Attitude towards African American Activism in Right-wing Newspapers: *Chinese American Weekly* and *Chinese American Times***

#### **i. A Brief introduction to *Chinese American Weekly* and *Chinese American***

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<sup>26</sup> “‘Qiyue zaofan hou de niute heiren,’” (African Americans in Newark, NJ after the so-called “July Revolt”) *China Daily News*, August 5, 1967, p4.

### *Times*

During the World War II period, the CCP and the Kuomintang (KMT) formed a united front against the Japanese. This resulted in a change in the internal politics in the Chinese American community (including left, right, and neutral), uniting occasionally for helping China's resistance against Japan. However, after the defeat of Japan and the start of the civil war, the Chinese American community became polarized again. Those right-wing segments that once supported Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang government in Chinese American communities also split. Some still supported Chiang's government, others resigned from their jobs in the Kuomintang's party organs and began to establish "independent" newspapers which sometimes moderately criticized the Kuomintang government's poor policies but upheld their firm stance against Chinese communism<sup>27</sup>.

*Chinese American Weekly* editor Woo Chin-fu and the English language *Chinese American Times* editor William Yukon Chang are two examples of this.

Woo Chin-fu was born in China and emigrated to the U.S. in the 1930s as a student. After graduation he worked as an editor at the KMT organ *Chinese Nationalist Daily of New York* until 1942. Then he left and founded the nominally independent *Chinese-American Weekly* magazine in New York in the same year. The new magazine contained

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<sup>27</sup> See Lai, *Chinese American Transnational Politics*, 109-153; Charlotte Brooks, *Between Mao and McCarthy: Chinese American Politics in the Cold War Years* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 51-81; Zhao, *Remaking Chinese America*, 104-115.



11 sections, 40 pages printed on A3 size paper. It mainly featured a political commentary, a current events section, and a special section for publishing literature by Chinese American writers. Due to its varied sections attracting large readership, the circulation rose to 6,000 within three years and was distributed nationally for most of the next three decades. It became the longest-running and the most successful Chinese American news magazine. The commercial success of the *Chinese American Weekly* led Woo to found the daily newspaper *The United Journal* (Lianhe ribao 聯合日報) in 1952.<sup>28</sup>

William Yukon Chang was born in Hawaii. After he graduated from St. John's University in Shanghai, he worked for the Kuomintang government's Chinese News Service and the English-language paper *China Press* in China. As the Chinese Civil War raged and the KMT government gradually yielded control in the greater part of mainland China, Chang left China for New York in 1948 and earned an MA from New York University. He founded the monthly *Chinese American Times* in 1955. The paper became the first English language Chinese American community newspaper which was operated not from Chinatown but from Forest Hills, Queens which was a hub for middle class

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<sup>28</sup> See Brooks, *Between Mao and McCarthy*, 61, 78, 302; Him Mark Lai, "The Chinese-American Press." *The Ethnic Press in the United States: A Historical Analysis and Handbook*, Sally M. Miller ed. (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1987), 35; Guo, "Independent Chinese Language Newspapers during the Cold War." 543; Xinjie Lu, "Zhongmei zhoubao" [Chinese American Weekly] in *Huaqiao Huaren Baike Quanshu: Meiti & Chuban juan* [The Encyclopedia of Chinese Overseas: Volume of Media & Publication], Zhou Nanjing, ed. (Beijing: Zhongguo Huaqiao Chubanshe, 1999), 527; Zhao, *Remaking Chinese American*, 108.

Chinese Americans in the 1950s and 1960s. It attracted the readership of Chinese Americans born in the U.S. by reporting events of interest to the Americanized Chinese. After the U.S. government gradually removed the discrimination laws restricting Chinese immigrants, cases of family union became popular so that the amount of native-born Chinese Americans rapidly increased. This increasing population enlarged the market for *Chinese American Times* and led to its publication lasting for almost two decades. The paper became an important resource for examining how native-born Chinese Americans observed historical events occurring in U.S. society.<sup>29</sup>

Due to the similar experiences of the two editors (who had worked in the Kuomintang newspapers before they established their “independent” newspapers), both newspapers shared the same anti-communist stance and sometimes they also moderately criticized Taiwan. The *Chinese American Weekly* tended to comment on China’s politics, while the *Chinese American Times* confined most of its reports to local issues related to Chinese American communities<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> Brooks, *Between Mao and McCarthy*, 111, 297; Shigu Wang, “Meiguo huaren de yingwen baokan.” [Chinese American English Language Newspapers] in *Huaqiao Huaren Baike Quanshu: Meiti & Chuban juan* [The Encyclopedia of Chinese Overseas: Volume of Media & Publication], Zhou Nanjing, ed. (Beijing: Zhongguo Huaqiao Chubanshe, 1999), 217; Yan Gu, “Zhongmei shibao” [Chinese American Times] in *Huaqiao Huaren Baike Quanshu: Meiti & Chuban juan*, 527; Lai, “The Chinese-American Press,” 35-36; Zhao, *Remaking Chinese America*, 78-93; Karl Lo and Him Mark Lai compiled, *Chinese Newspapers Published in North America, 1854-1975*, 77; Charlotte Brooks, “#2: Office of the Chinese-American Times,” *Asian American History in NYC: Finding Asian American Past in the Five Boroughs*, May 22, 2013. <http://blogs.baruch.cuny.edu/asianamericanhistorynyc/?p=110>

<sup>30</sup> Brooks, *Between Mao and McCarthy*, 78, 111, 168; Guo, “Independent Chinese Language

**ii. Containing the Red Menace and the Black Menace: narratives in the *Chinese American Weekly* and *Chinese American Times***

After the Chinese Communist Party defeated the Kuomintang and established the PRC, which was followed by China's intervention in the Korean War in 1950 and the rise of McCarthyism, the international and domestic sociopolitical factors compelled Chinese Americans to establish publicly their anti-communist credentials and to demonstrate their loyalties to both Chiang Kai-shek's Taiwan regime and the United States. Moreover, the performance of anti-communism also provided a narrative to persuasively demonstrate that the Chinese Americans were proper members of American society<sup>31</sup>.

In addition to the need for flaunting their anti-communism, the geopolitical atmosphere of the Cold War and racial conflicts between white and black in the domestic sphere required Chinese Americans to play the well-assimilated "model" in American society. It did not only function to stress the idea that U.S. democracy was superior to communism but it also had to function as a successful example in resolving the problem of race for inspiring assimilation of blacks into modern American society.<sup>32</sup>

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Newspapers during the Cold War," 542-545.

<sup>31</sup> See Ellen D. Wu, *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority* (NJ: Princeton University, 2014), 112-122; Ellen Dionne Wu, 2006 Ph. D. dissertation, "Race and Asian American Citizenship from World War II to the Movement" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Chicago, 2006), 1-40. Chiou-Ling Yeh, *Making An American Festival: Chinese New Year in San Francisco Chinatown* (CA: University of California Press, 2008), 29-55.

<sup>32</sup> Cheng, *Citizens of Asian American*, 3.

In this socio-political context, the articles in the *Chinese American Weekly* and the *Chinese American Times* reported on the following issues: highlight why the fight against communism became more important than the fight against racism; describe tales of how the African American middle class formed not through political activism but through individual effort, cultural assimilation, and political accommodation; and emphasize how important it was to safeguard the image of the Chinese American label of “model minority”, distinctly different from African Americans.

#### **Black People, don't be Tempted by Communists to Destroy American Democracy.**

With Chinese American communities largely under the control of the Kuomintang's power, the right-wing or pro-Kuomintang “independent” press contributed greatly to the process of propagating the anti-communist narrative. Interestingly, the supposedly “non-partisan”, and “objective”<sup>33</sup> *Chinese American Weekly* borrowed the racist term of “Yellow Peril”<sup>34</sup> (which was used to denigrate Asian immigrants) to attack the CCP's

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<sup>33</sup> Woo Chin-fu founded *Chinese American Weekly* and *The United Journal* respectively in 1942 and 1952. The two newspapers consisted of *The United Journal* Group. Both were published by Chinese American Press. Each volume of the weekly printed the five characteristics of The United Journal group. The first point is “no-partisan,” and the second point is “free-broadcasting” and “objective.”

<sup>34</sup> Yellow Peril was a discriminatory term implying that East Asian people were a mortal danger to the rest of the world. According to American historian Gina Marchetti's definition, Yellow Peril was “Rooted in medieval fears of Genghis Khan and the Mongolian invasion of Europe, the Yellow Peril combines racist terror of alien cultures, sexual anxieties and the belief that the West will be overpowered and enveloped by the irresistible, dark, occult forces of the East.” See Gina Marchetti, *Romance and the "Yellow Peril"* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994),

domestic policy of “People’s Communes” (人民公社). In a column article titled “Zhonggong renmingongshe yu ‘huanghuo’” (The CCP’s “People’s Commune” policy and “Yellow Peril”), the author wrote:

The CCP is now establishing the so-called “People’s Communes” around the Chinese mainland. If the policy becomes successful, it will not only cause suffering to Chinese people in the mainland, but it will also be a nightmare for the Free World. We, the people of the Free World, have a great responsibility to prevent it from coming true. Otherwise, the Free World will certainly face catastrophe caused by the CCP’s aggression just as the Europe suffered aggressions from Mongolia in the middle of the 13th century. (It was later called “Yellow Peril”) ... The People’s Commune is the worst policy. It will motivate the CCP regime to destroy civilization and invade the Free World and we will suffer because it is made by the worst and most radical communist party.”<sup>35</sup>

In the early period of Asian immigration to the U.S. they were called “yellow peril”

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2. In 1920, the Harvard historian Lothrop Stoddard published the book *The Rising Tide of Color* which warned that the colored people would get together to destroy the white world supremacy under the leadership of China or Japan. And he gave the example of Japan’s victory over Russia in the war of 1905. See Stoddard, Lothrop "The Rising Tide of Color" quoted from *Yellow Peril! An Archive of anti-Asian Fear*, John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats eds. (London: Verso, 2014), 216-217. In 1951, an influential evangelical Christian writer, Dan Gilbert wrote an article titled “Why the Yellow Peril Has Turned Red!” for a monthly anti-communist magazine *The National Republican*. Like many anti-Communist intellectuals in the McCarthy era, Gilbert considered that “losing” China and the Korean War was evidence that the U.S. had been defeated by Yellow Peril which had turned to red. He thought communism was “an Asiatic theory of government.” “It grows out of heathenism and barbarism.” “Communism is anti-God. When Communism takes over, it simply means that the Devil takes over.” As he suggested, the culture of Yellow Peril is Confucianism, absolutely different from the western Christian culture. When the Yellow Peril was reinforced by the “Red Terror”, it would spread “the deeds of the devil and the crimes of communism all over the world.” Finally, it prayed for God to protect the “White World Supremacy” from Yellow Peril and communism. See John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats, eds. *Yellow Peril: An Archive of Anti-Asian Fear*, 298-301. In fact, Asian immigrants in the U.S. were called “Yellow Peril” in the past, and there are lots of satiric cartoons that portrayed Asian immigrants in the U.S. as Yellow Peril.

<sup>35</sup> Dong Ming, “zhonggong renmingongshe yu ‘huanghuo’,” (The CCP’s “People’s Commune” policy and “Yellow Peril” in *Chinese American Weekly*, Vol. 738, December, 18, 1958.

and faced extreme racial discrimination. The whites considered Asian immigrants as “foreigners of a different race in this country, who would not assimilate with us, would be dangerous to our peace and security.”<sup>36</sup> They convinced Asians would create the “peril” of Asian immigrants invading western civilization and overturn the white supremacy. Therefore, the exclusion laws were considered necessary. Ironically, why did the descendants of Chinese immigrants use the racist phrase to refer to their ancestral land? It did not only reflect the heated atmosphere of anticommunism in the Cold War period but it also points to the attitude of the right-wing or pro-KMT’s independent press toward racial problems in American society.

In another editorial article titled “Zhonggong yu ‘zhongzuzhuyi’” (The CCP and ‘Racism’), the editor Woo Chin-fu denounced the CCP for discarding Confucian principles of “proper rite” (禮), “righteousness or justice” (義), “humaneness” (仁) and “cherishing peace” (珍愛和平), and joining the Soviet Union in launching revolution. Woo criticized them like this: “The CCP professes Marxism and Leninism, however, Karl Marx is a Jew and Lenin is a Russian, they are all white people. Their theories might be helpful to their countrymen respectively. The CCP did not consider the Chinese racial reality and borrowed the white’s theories so that our country and nationality was

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<sup>36</sup> John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats, eds. *Yellow Peril: An Archive of Anti-Asian Fear*, 234.

overturned. Nowadays, the CCP agitates for African blacks, Southeast Asian people, and the Latinos to challenge the Free World in the name of ‘anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism.’”<sup>37</sup>

According to Woo’s criticism, he at least considered Chinese (including overseas Chinese) as a different racial group from the whites, but he wanted to be more associated with white Free World to prevent communism from spreading revolution.

Besides siding with white Free World for anti-communism, Chinese American conservatives viewed the black movement’s aggressive nonviolence in Alabama with “concern and dismay” so that they counseled black people to be patient and argued that the U.S. government would formulate laws to eventually solve the racial problems.<sup>38</sup> In comparison with many articles in the leftist *China Daily News* reporting on news of African American civil rights activism, there were few news reports directly reporting on African Americans protesting racial discrimination and persecution in the *Chinese American Weekly*, except some political commentaries related to African American activism or U.S. racial problems in the editorial page.

Due to editor, Woo Chin-fu’s deep aversions to the Chinese Communist Party, the

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<sup>37</sup> Woo Chin-fu, “Zhonggong yu ‘zhongzuzhuyi’” (The CCP and “Racism”), in *Chinese American Weekly*, vol. 1076, July 18, 1963.

<sup>38</sup> Brooks, *Between Mao and McCarthy*, 213-216.

commentaries usually ingeniously changed perspectives from anti-racism to anti-communism. One editorial article commented on the Harlem riot of 1964, entitled “Niuyue heiren shiwei baodong” (Black People Insurrection in New York City). The wording of “baodong” (暴動 insurrection), which was used to describe black people fighting against racial persecution, reflected Woo’s contemptuous and unfavorable emotions toward African American activism.

The incident was sparked by New York City police shooting a 15-year-old black child, which ignited black people’s rage, with the New York chapter of the NAACP organizing a demonstration in Harlem, New York and at the New York Police head office on July 18, 1964. However, the situation got out of control with many black people throwing bricks to the police officers, leading to police shootings and the arrest of many protestors. Afterwards aggressive protests and demonstrations lasted several days and nights. Instead of criticizing the New York City police’ violently persecution of African Americans however, Woo worked on the presumption that communists had instigated African American violent protests to “bury” American democratic society and he further disingenuously changed the subject to anticommunism. He gave the arguments as follows:

The communists might exist everywhere. They managed to instigate the conflicts and problems existing in every country so that they can grasp the



chance to make the country “red.” In the industrialized countries, they instigated conflicts between the working classes and capitalists; in the agricultural states, they instigated conflicts between peasants and landlords; in the newly decolonized states, they instigated nationalists to fight against so-called imperialism. ... The United States of America is the only exceptional country. It doesn't have the above-mentioned problems. Moreover, welfare towards the working-class is quickly improving, the working-class might be the people who hate communists most. But in the U.S. there is still one big problem—the racial barriers between black and white. Therefore, it is obvious that communists can instigate racial conflict between white and black to destroy American democratic society. <sup>39</sup>

Then he fervently suggested African Americans should pay enough attention to whether they were deceived by the communists who might enthusiastically agitate for black people to join in violently protesting. Meanwhile he urged black people to wait for gradually changing discriminating rules and to obey the laws if it was really necessary to protest.

Regarding the racial conflict between white and black in American society, the editor of *Chinese American Weekly*, Woo Chin-fu gave his distinctive views in an editorial article entitled “Cong heiren douzheng kan Meiguo qiantu” (Forecasting prospects of the United States from the perspective of racial conflicts). The article mentioned the African American protest movement that occurred in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963. Woo suggested:

“Even though what has happened in Birmingham astonished the whole of

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<sup>39</sup> Woo Jin-fu, “niuyue heiren shiweiyundong,” (Black People Insurrection in New York City) in *Chinese American Weekly*, vol. 1130, July 31, 1964.

American society, the racial problems between white and black will be eventually resolved because there is no cultural confrontation between them. Moreover, black people have the same religion as the whites and learn the same language as the whites. ... There is no difference between the white and the blacks whatsoever. Black people have all been assimilated into the white American society. ... There were just a few backward-minded whites people who considered themselves superior to black people and discriminated the blacks.”<sup>40</sup>

Finally, he concluded that racist whites would eventually change their minds and stop discriminating African Americans, therefore African Americans should be patient to wait for gradually changing discrimination laws.

Compared to the left-wing *China Daily News* which actively reported news on African American civil rights activism focusing on the bitter experiences of African Americans, the brutal violence of the polices and cruel persecution by white racists and the dual tactics of the governments, *Chinese American Weekly* took the position of the government calling upon the African Americans to exercise “restraint” and obey the rules. Furthermore, it condemned communists meddling in African American activism in order to overturn American democracy.

### **Black People Have Become Middle Class**

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<sup>40</sup> Woo Jin-fu, “Cong zhongzu douzheng kan Meiguo qiantu,” (Forecasting prospects of the United States from perspectives of racial conflicts) in *Chinese American Weekly*, vol. 1076, May 16, 1963.

On August 28, 1963, African American civil rights leaders held the “The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom” to call for civil and economic rights for African Americans. Almost one month before the march, *Chinese American Weekly* published an article titled “Meiguo heiren zhongchanjieji xingqi” (Story on the Rising of the African American Middle Class) in its feature-article section to report on the living conditions of the African American middle class in Washington D.C. It vividly described how many members of the African American middle class there were, how they were geographically distributed, and what they consumed.

At beginning of the article, it presented stereotyped images of African Americans such as that they were “living in dirty house in the ghetto, with no chance to promote their living conditions, and no board and lodging for them once they left ghettos.” However, the author promptly denied these negative images of African Americans by citing statistics and reports from unidentified resources. The article emphasized that more and more African Americans had joined the middle class and that were almost on the same level with whites in terms of their living conditions, and often had high-income professions such as doctors, dentists, lawyers. Many of them had already become officials in State or Federal government through their individual endeavors. As the columnist stated:

Although these days African American activists have planned to take political actions to strive for civil rights in Washington D.C., the

condition of African Americans in Washington D.C. is a model for other cities. Here the African American middle class live very harmoniously with the whites. They can participate equally in many activities. An African American leader said, “Black people who are well-behaved and have enough properties can have intimate associations with the whites and can also become good friends.”<sup>41</sup>

However, the article also presented the anxieties of leaders of African American middle class who worried about high unemployment and bad living conditions of black people in the ghetto which could cause more violent riots, as follows:

An African American leader from the middle class said, “[T]he images of the real Washington D.C. were not violent, criminal, and black ghettos. However, the blacks who are from Mississippi and Alabama created violence and caused big social problems. Because of those newcomers, we are lacking enough jobs. We need to confess that the nature of problems is existing in our community.” Another black civil rights leaders also confessed that, “the black Christians yelled ‘the whites are all devils’, but we don’t think so. However, it is difficult to control those illiterate masses because they live in ghettos and have no jobs.”<sup>42</sup>

The assertions made in the article are doubtful because the source for the surveys on which they are based is unclear. Nevertheless, the article promotes the view that the African American middle class achieved their social mobility through individual efforts, cultural assimilation and political accommodation instead of political activism. And the author finally concluded that the rise of the African American middle class provided a

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<sup>41</sup> Deng Ming, “meiguo heiren zhongchanjieji xingqi” (“Story on Rising of African American Middle Class”), in *Chinese American Weekly*, vol. 1067, July 18, 1963.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

model and would lead to a rapid change in the black community.

### **We are Not Black**

Before the 1940s, Chinese immigrants were “aliens ineligible for citizenship.” However, with repealing the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943, many literate Chinese American acquired opportunities to enter the middle class and assimilate into mainstream society and move to suburban white neighborhoods. Moreover, with lifting racial restrictions that previously barred persons of Asian descent from the provisions of the 1945 War Brides Act and the 1946 Fiancee Act, Chinese American bachelor society benefited from the change into a family society.

Furthermore, the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 eliminated racial restrictions that prevented Asians from becoming naturalized American citizens. These benefits supposedly led to their “success”; which increased public perceptions and comparisons between Asian Americans and African Americans, and subsequently led to the invention the “model minority” myth of Chinese Americans.<sup>43</sup> To many Chinese Americans, they maintained that Chinese Americans were different from black people and felt comfortable

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<sup>43</sup> Brooks, *Between Mao and McCarthy*, 217; Zhao, *Remaking Chinese America*, 78; Cheng, “Out of Chinatown and into the Suburbs: Chinese Americans and the Politics of Cultural Citizenship in Early Cold War America,” 1067-1090; Office of the Historian, U.S. Department of State, “The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (The McCarran-Walter Act)” in *Milestones: 1945-1952*. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/immigration-act>.

with the “model minority” label concocted by outsiders.

In the *Chinese American Weekly*, an editorial article titled “Bu ying zi jiang wei ‘er deng gongmin’” (“Don’t put yourself down as a ‘second-class citizen’”) (September 17, 1964) was typical. It called upon Chinese Americans to vote for candidate Lyndon B. Johnson in the 1964 presidential election. Some statements are worth quoting:

It is the most basic right of citizenship to vote in the election of the federal and state officials and Congressmen. If someone is deprived of such rights, it means that he/she is reduced to being “second class”. If someone is not deprived of the rights, but he/she does not go to vote, it means that the person puts down himself/herself as a “second class citizen”. If we, Chinese Americans, are deprived of the basic rights like black people in the South, that is because other people discriminate us. So, we have to struggle for our rights. However, *we are not black. We are not forced to be “second class citizen” like blacks...*<sup>44</sup> (Emphasis by author)

In this article, the editor of *Chinese American Weekly*, Chin-fu Woo clearly claimed that Chinese Americans were different from African Americans who were still fighting for their voting rights in the Southern states. Woo thought Chinese Americans had survived discrimination to win their civil rights so that he could urge them to actively participate in the process of political accommodation. It was not exceptional that the editor of *Chinese American Weekly* compared Chinese Americans with African Americans in order to call for political accommodation into mainstream society. As a

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<sup>44</sup> Chin-fu Woo, “Buying zijiangwei ‘erdeng gongmin’” (“Don’t put yourself down as a ‘second-class citizen’”) in *Chinese American Weekly*, vol.1137, September 17, 1964.

matter of fact, in that particular period the “success” of Chinese Americans was used by mainstream society (including media, and politicians) to critique the experiences and activities of African Americans.

Early in 1957 *New York Times Magazine* published an article titled “Chinatown Offers Us a Lesson”, which marveled that crime and juvenile delinquency were low in New York Chinatown because “the strongly integrated family offered parental guidance and affection; a deterrent to delinquency.” As the author stated: “[due to] growing up in an insulated and emotionally snug family life, the child develops characteristics that seem particularly ‘Chinese’-reservoirs of patience, unflagging capacity for work and a dislike for physical violence. (The man who strikes the first blow is the weaker because he resorts to violence when words fail him.) The child also learns to distrust demonstrativeness, and to be tolerant toward others.” Furthermore, the article argued that even the inevitably somewhat “Americanized” third generation Chinese Americans thought they remained fundamentally Chinese and that segregation within their own society was not a problem because “[isolation] within a signally law-abiding community is rationalized by the Chinese as being their only possible attitude in the face of discrimination against them.” Finally, the author suggested the example set by Chinese Americans would be a lesson to

“help dispel confusion and astonishment over our proliferating delinquency problems.”<sup>45</sup>

Chinese Americans were also described as a “model” group by mainstream media in order to criticize African Americans who attempted to improve their condition relying on welfare rather than depending on their own efforts in the mid-1960s. One article titled “Success Story of One Minority Group in U.S.,” which was published in *U.S. News & World Report* on December 26, 1966, gave a detailed report on how Chinese Americans as “a racial minority pulled itself up from hardship and discrimination to become a model of self-respect and achievement” in U.S. society. It emphasized that Chinese people in Chinatown were taught that “people should depend on their own efforts-not a welfare check-in order to reach America’s ‘promised land’.”<sup>46</sup>

By comparing this with African Americans who complained of hardships endured by them and held the idea that “hundreds of billions should be spent to uplift Negroes,” the article proclaimed that 300,000 Chinese Americans had overcome their difficulties (including anti-Chinese hostility and the discrimination of exclusion laws, etc.) by depending on their “traditional values of hard work, thrift, and morality.” And it also posited that while “successful” middle class Chinese Americans moved out to the suburbs,

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<sup>45</sup> William A. McIntyre, “Chinatown Offers Us a Lesson,” *New York Times Magazine*, October 6, 1957. Reprinted in *The Daily News of the Virgin Island*, December 11, 1958, available at <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=757&dat=19581211&id=kHdaAAAIBAJ&sjid=P0cDAAAIBAJ&pg=6497,3240779&hl=ja>

<sup>46</sup> “Success Story of One Minority Group in U.S.,” *U.S. News & Report*, December 26, 1966.



foreign-born Chinese who came to U.S. for unification with their families moved into Chinatown and made it overcrowded (“worse than in Harlem”), however they preferred to stay in the enclave because “the tight-knit family networks provided an economic safety net and a moral policing apparatus that prevented juvenile delinquency.”<sup>47</sup>

The *U.S. News and World Report* argued Chinese Americans were definitively different from blacks because “a tight network of family and clan loyalties” in Chinese American communities paved the way for socioeconomic mobility, and some U.S. politicians in the 1960s also considered family life and values of Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans as a “model” for inspiration on how to eradicate black people’s “tangle of pathology” which was caused by the “deterioration of the Negro family.”<sup>48</sup>

The most famous example was the release of Deputy Secretary of Labor Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s paper “The Negro Family: The Case for National Action” in August 1965, just days before the Watts Riots occurred in Los Angeles. The document (which was also known as the Moynihan Report) brought federal attention to the wretched

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> See Daniel Patrick Moynihan, “A Family Policy for the Nation,” *America: The National Catholic Weekly Review*, September 18, 1965, reprinted in Lee Rainwater and William L. Yancey, *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy* (Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1967), 384-394; Thomas Meehan, “Moynihan of the Moynihan Report,” *New York Times Magazine*, July 31, 1966; Daniel Patrick Moynihan, “Memorandum for the President,” March 5, 1965, in *Daniel Patrick Moynihan: A Portrait in Letters of an American Visionary*, ed. Steven R. Weisman (New York, 2010); Moynihan, “The Negro Family: The Case for Nation Action,” reprinted in Rainwater and Yancey, *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy*, 39-124; Wu, *The Color of Success*, 171-172, 208, 244.

circumstances (e.g. poverty, the high unemployment rate, delinquency and crime) in African American communities. Moynihan argued that the “deterioration of the Negro family”—caused first and foremost by the black matriarchy family structure—had become the root cause of the “deterioration of the fabric of Negro society” and the impoverished conditions.<sup>49</sup>

One month after the Moynihan Report was released, Daniel Patrick Moynihan published an article titled “A Family Policy for The Nation” in the magazine *America: The National Catholic Weekly Review* which stated: “No people came to our shores poorer than did the Chinese and Japanese,” yet according to census dates, “they are today incomparably the highest social and economic group in the nation” because they have fostered a culture of “singularly stable, cohesive, and enlightened family life” which was quite the opposite of African American households and the “black matriarchy family structure.”<sup>50</sup> In a memorandum to President Johnson, Moynihan emphasized Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans had got “probably the most close knit family structure of any group in America,” whose family life and values helped them overcome racial discrimination and mistreatment and led to the situation where they “have become a prosperous middle-class group.” Furthermore, he suggested Chinese Americans and

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<sup>49</sup> Moynihan, “The Negro Family: The Case for Nation Action,” 39-124.

<sup>50</sup> Moynihan, “A Family Policy for the Nation,” 389.

Japanese Americans would be the best example to follow when designing federal family policy for “solv[ing] the Negro problem for once and all.”<sup>51</sup>

Chinese Americans had been depicted as a “model minority” group which was used to complicate and reinforce the dominant black-white paradigm in a national racial order. As historian Ellen D. Wu suggested in her work *The Color of Success*: “Moynihan’s exhortation anticipated and assisted the rise of the model minority cottage industry—the production of new racial knowledge about Japanese and Chinese (and eventually other ethnic Asians) emphasizing in tandem socioeconomic advancement and not-blackness.”<sup>52</sup>

In fact, many Chinese Americans felt rather comfortable with this image and exhorted young Chinese Americans to keep these virtues intact. Chicago’s Chinese American Youth Organization released “An Open Letter to Chinese American Youth” to call upon their peers to avoid the “so-called wrong crowd” in the social and political era of the African American movement in order to constantly maintain Chinese American low delinquency rates. Meanwhile it encouraged them to join its organization for molding Chinese American youth into “stronger citizens for a stronger America and a stronger

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<sup>51</sup> Daniel Patrick Moynihan, “Memorandum for the President,” March 5, 1965, in *Daniel Patrick Moynihan: A Portrait in Letters of an American Visionary*, Steven R. Weisman, ed. (New York, 2010), 95.

<sup>52</sup> Ellen D. Wu. *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 244.

Free World.”<sup>53</sup>

Likewise, there were some articles with the same tone in the youth-oriented *Chinese American Times*. An article entitled “The American Dream”, quoted from the New York Chinatown Junior Chamber of Commerce’s program<sup>54</sup> which included two parts: “Tribute to President J.F. Kennedy” and “Salute to Chinese- American Youth”. In the quotation of “Tribute to President J.F. Kennedy,” it extolled that President Kennedy “personified and symbolized the great American dream” because his experience (a descendant of Irish Immigrants and a devout Catholic who became U.S. President) and his belief (that respective rich heritages of various ethnic groups could contribute to help fashion America into a great country) made him genuinely “a leader of all varied groups.”

Then it stated that:

We also share President Kennedy’s belief in the “melting pot” thesis. We are alike in that we are descended from immigrants. It is our hope that we Chinese Americans who are children of two cultures, namely, the Chinese and the American, will take the best from each culture in becoming an integrated Chinese- American.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Mark R. Chan, “An Open Letter to Chinese American Youth,” *Chinese American Progress*, May 22, 1962.

The Chicago’s Chinese American Youth Organization, which was an affiliate of Chicago’s Chinese American Civic Council, was founded in 1959. See Rosalind Lew, “Chicago’s Chinese Youth Organize for Civil Activities,” *Chinese American Progress*, October 6, 1959.

<sup>54</sup> The New York Chinatown Junior Chamber of Commerce was an affiliate of the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce (abbr. Jaycee) which aims to provide training and experience unlike any other organization for young adults in order to provide leadership roles to young men and women. See “The United States Junior Chamber of Commerce: National Jaycee History” <http://www.nonprofitpages.com/elkcityjaycees/page8.html>

<sup>55</sup> “The American Dream,” *Chinese American Times*, Vol. XII, No. 9 (September, 1966), 2.

If the above-mentioned quotations urged Chinese Americans to actively integrate into mainstream society, the following article, entitled “Salute to Chinese American Youth” shows Chinese Americans could serve as a “model” to inspire other minority groups in realizing the American Dream:

... [T]he Awards will highlight the successful integration of the best in Chinese culture with the best in American culture. One of the best aspects of Chinese culture has been the strong family structure with the inner self-control and discipline. The Chinese family pride, the Confucian concept of filial piety, the respect for elders—all have been responsible for establishing the acknowledged record of a low juvenile delinquency rate.

America has offered these descendants of Chinese immigrants: OPPORTUNITY. Opportunity to become productive, useful citizens regardless of our race, color or creed; opportunity to contribute to America’s greatness.

America provides the opportunity for growth and progress for every group. The *Chinese-American is but one example of the successful integration into the American way of life* [Emphasis by author].<sup>56</sup>

These statements thoroughly conformed to the “myth” promoted by the U.S. mainstream society: the representation of Chinese Americans as self-contained, socioeconomically advanced, and politically acquiescent, had become a powerful example of the success of the American Dream which could be attained through individual effort, cultural assimilation, and political accommodation.

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

Chinese Americans were “definitely not-black”, yet they were also not absolutely accepted into American white society. Chinese Americans were still categorized as a different racial group from the whites even though they had achieved great socioeconomic success. This can be seen in the dispute between the Boston School Committee and the Massachusetts State Board of Education on whether Chinese American children in public school should be classified as white.<sup>57</sup> The *Chinese American Times* carried an editorial article, titled, “We’re ‘Chinese’....,” reprinted from the English-language newspaper in Taiwan, *China News*<sup>58</sup>. In the article, it referred to the dispute on Chinese American racial classification between the Boston School Committee and the Massachusetts State Board of Education. At the beginning of the article, it expounded, “Chinese usually take the view that the whole business of race is stupid...we are proud of being Chinese, not of being members of the ‘yellow’ race...[T]o be Chinese is a national and cultural matter. It has nothing to do with race.” Then it mentioned that Chinese “[had] been charged with having

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<sup>57</sup> Because the enrollments in the two public schools in Boston Chinatown section were almost completely Chinese, in order to remove them from the racially imbalanced category, the School Committee in Boston officially classified Chinese American children in those public school as white. However, such classification was rejected by the State Board of Education. As William Saltonstal, chairman of the State Board of Education, said: “I have been brought up to believe there is a white race, a black race, a yellow race, and the Chinese are of the yellow race.” The controversy attracted the debates on racial problems of Chinese American not only in mainstream society but also in Chinese American communities. See “Chinese in ‘White’ Group,” in *Chinese American Times*, Vol. XII, No. 11 (November, 1966), 1.

<sup>58</sup> *China News* was founded on June 6, 1949. It was the only English-language daily newspaper in Taiwan at that time. Its founder, James Wei became the sixth Director of the Government Information Office. In 1988 the *China News* was taken over by I-Mei Foods and later its title was changed to *Taiwan News*.

a superiority complex,” and stated the Chinese own culture and conduct were “a bit ahead of some others, whether from far or near.” Furthermore, it argued that the dispute on racial problems of Chinese Americans “shame[d] the fine city of Boston and the great State of Massachusetts” because Chinese made so little sense that Chinese were classified as white, and Chinese American were proud to be an exceptional national and cultural group which was labeled as “superior” by outsiders.<sup>59</sup>

By examining these quoted articles in *Chinese American Times*, it can be concluded that: for these Chinese Americans, they accepted the myth of the “Model Minority” promoted by the white society. As historian Chiou-Ling Yeh stated, “[t]he insistence of the model minority image transformed the racialized position of Chinese Americans in the dominant society.”<sup>60</sup> These Chinese Americans were more closely associated with whites than African Americans. As a model, they were used by the federal government to discipline other minorities, especially in the civil rights movement era when their example was used to criticize black activism. In exchange, Chinese Americans were rewarded with “permission” to participate in white America through economic activity and granted “permission” to participate in white American activities.

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<sup>59</sup> “We’re ‘Chinese’ . . . .,” *Chinese American Times*, Vol. XII, No. 11 (November, 1966), 2.

<sup>60</sup> Chiou-Ling Yeh, *Making An American Festival: Chinese New Year in San Francisco’s Chinatown* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 73

#### **IV. Conclusion of this Chapter**

The growing prominence of the black civil rights movement had a conflicted influence on the Chinese American community. While the Chinese Americans witnessed the crackdown on African American protestors, the violent scenes did not only arouse their anger and disgust, but also prompted their debates about the tactics of African American activism and the proper solutions to American racial problems. A variety of voices debating the black civil rights movement were recorded in the Chinese American community press.

On one hand, the leftists conformed to the Chinese Communist Party's standpoints that the nature of racial discrimination towards African Americans was a class problem and advocated solving the internal exploitation by violent revolution. On the other hand, the rightists, who thought black activism was a challenge and feared communist manipulation of the black movement to destroy American democracy and who wanted to maintain the myth of the "Model Minority," suggested to undertake only mild reforms to solve the racial problems.

Both sides mainly discussed American racial problems from the angle of China's political partisanship. Both, however, overlooked the fact that Chinese Americans also endured the same institutionalized racial discrimination as black people did. They observed and commented on African American civil rights activism through a gesture of



spectator or a kind of consciousness of “foreignness” which served to racialize the identity of Asians, as scholar Natsu Taylor Saito has described.<sup>61</sup> It was this consciousness of “foreignness” that led to the wrong impression that Chinese American had nothing to do with the African American Civil Rights Movement, however the reality was as described in Chapter 3, that the older generation Chinese American leftists’ activism helped to establish a bond of solidarity between the Chinese Communist Party and African American radical activists.

The following Part 3 will explore another kind of Chinese American activism which tried to keep its distance from China’s politics while at the same time actively supporting African American movements. In this dissertation, Chinese Americans participated in such activism are classified as “liberals,” who thought they were duty-bound to support black civil rights activism and tried to learn from the tactics of black activists and wanted to use these in their own struggles for civil rights. Gilbert Woo was one of the representatives of those Chinese American liberals. The next Chapter will give the descriptions on his activist life in detail.

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<sup>61</sup> As Natsu Taylor Saito stated, “foreignness” consciousness of Asian American attributes to their racialized identity in American society, furthermore “helps reinforce racial, social and economic hierarchies in the United States.” See Natsu Taylor Saito, “Model Minority, Yellow Peril: Functions of ‘Foreignness’ in the Construction of Asian American Legal Identity,” *Asian American Law Journal*, Vol. 4 (January 1997), 71-95.

### **Part 3. Fighting as a New Ethnic Group**

This part will mainly describe how younger generation activists emerged and struggled for Chinese American communities under the influence of both the African American Civil Rights Movement and the rise of Chinese American liberal power. Moreover, by exploring the primary resources (such as Chinese American community newspapers, newsletters of Chinese American activist organizations, biographies and autobiographies of activists, and the oral history interviews with Chinese American activists), it aims to clarify how the torch of progress passed down from old activists to young activists, and meanwhile to examine how Chinese American identities and Chinese American communities changed due to this activism.

## **Chapter 5. Chinese Americans and the African American Movements**

This chapter describes the rise of liberal power and the establishment of their organizations in the Chinese American community during the African American Civil Rights Movement era. In addition to this, it also explores how they viewed African American civil rights activism and what they learnt from their black counterparts. It is divided into 3 sections as follows:

### **I. Gilbert Woo, the Chinese American Democratic Club (CADC), Attitudes towards African Americans and Their activism in *Chinese Pacific Weekly***

Gilbert Woo was born on December 25, 1911 in an immigrant family in Toishan County, Guangdong Province of China. Woo's grandfather, Woo Choeng Kuen was a business man who immigrated to the U.S. in the late nineteenth century and managed an import-export business. Woo's father, Woo Yin was born in San Francisco. Just after the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake, Woo Yin returned to China and got married. After Gilbert was born, his father went back to San Francisco and left Gilbert and his mother in Toishan. Later Gilbert got a good education in China so he could write Chinese article very well. He even co-edited two magazines (the *Gongtou Special Issue* and *Shingshing Magazine*)

with other elite progressive youths in his county. In 1932 Gilbert Woo arrived in San Francisco and started his new life.<sup>1</sup>

**i. Avoiding China's Politics and Focusing on Community Needs.**

In San Francisco's Chinatown, from the early 1930s to the mid-1940s, Gilbert worked for two Chinese community newspapers: *Chinese Times* (organ of the Chinese American Citizens Alliance in San Francisco) and *Chinese Nationalist Daily* (the Kuomintang paper in San Francisco), successively. Because his liberal attitudes towards reporting conflicted with the positions of the two papers, he resigned from both, and decided to start a new paper-*Chinese Pacific Weekly* with a liberal editorial policy. In fact, from the moment the paper published its first issue on October 5, 1946, it displayed these distinct characteristics: reporting with a liberal editorial policy, promoting community solidarity, and recommending its readers to pay more attention to community interests and to participate in the politics within American society rather than China's politics.<sup>2</sup>

As Him Mark Lai commented: "*Chinese Pacific Weekly* was unusual in that it was

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<sup>1</sup> Dehua Zheng, "Hu Jinnan Zhuan," ["Biography of Gilbert Woo"] in *Hu Jinnan Wenji*, Hu jinnan jinian weiyuanhui, ed. (Hongkong : Xiangjiang chu ban you xian gong si, 1991), 26-28; Him Mark Lai and Betty Lim, "Gilbert Woo, Chinese American Journalist," in *Hu Jinnan Wenji*, Hu jinnan jinian weiyuanhui, ed. (Hongkong : Xiangjiang chu ban you xian gong si, 1991.), 34-38; Him Mark Lai, "A Voice of Reason: Life and Times of Gilbert Woo, Chinese American Journalist," in *Chinese American: History and Perspectives*, Vol. 6 (1992), 83-87.

<sup>2</sup> Lai and Lim, "Gilbert Woo, Chinese American Journalist," 39-48; Lai, "A Voice of Reason: Life and Times of Gilbert Woo, Chinese American Journalist," in *Chinese American: History and Perspectives*, Vol. 6 (1992), 92-100; Xiaojian Zhao, "Disconnecting Transnational Ties: The *Chinese Pacific Weekly* and the Transformation of Chinese American community after the Second World War," in *Media and the Chinese Diaspora: Community, Communications and Commerce*, Wanning Sun, ed. (NY: Routledge, 2006), 31-32; Zhao, *Remaking Chinese America*, 108-109.

nonpartisan, neither pro-KMT nor Communist. The paper did not claim to be politically neutral but attempted to be impartial and factual in its reporting. The coverage also possessed its own distinctive perspective, reflecting the concerns of its relatively liberal Chinese American constituency.”<sup>3</sup> However, the paper was accused of being pro-Communist by the pro-KMT establishment in Chinatown, which caused problems in attracting advertisers, subscribers, and hampered circulation in the early period of publication of *Chinese Pacific Weekly*. Woo did not yield and still upheld his liberal editorial policy, meanwhile the paper also published translations of critical reports from other liberal English language newspapers in order to give its reporting more depth and to add to the credibility of the paper. *Chinese Pacific weekly* built its readership among Chinese Americans who had both a Chinese and western education background, including many of the middle class who advocated modernizing Chinatown and improving Chinatown business opportunities. Moreover, Woo’s editorial and columns also attracted many young readers who were active in the cultural clubs.<sup>4</sup>

*Chinese Pacific Weekly* became the first weekly in San Francisco Chinatown established after World War II. It was published in a tabloid format and each volume

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<sup>3</sup> Lai, “A Voice of Reason,” 99.

<sup>4</sup> Gilbert Woo, interview. In *Longtime California’: A Documentary Study of An American Chinatown*, Victor G. and Brett de Bary Nee, eds. (CA: Stanford University Press, 1972), 222-227; Lai, “A Voice of Reason,” 104-107.

contained between 16 pages and 32 pages. The weekly featured front-page news, a commentary column titled “Suibi” (Informal essays) written by chief editor Gilbert Woo, a gossip column called “Xing guo Dubanjie” (Passing by Dupont Street) which consisted of short items, and a special section for publishing articles on Chinese American history.<sup>5</sup> According to historian Xiaojian Zhao, Woo’s *Chinese Pacific Weekly* enlarged its readership for over three decades. Available data reveals that 3,325 copies of the *Chinese Pacific Weekly* circulated in 1957, and the number increased to 4,230 in 1967 and 4,263 in 1975.<sup>6</sup>

While the Chinese American community was enveloped in the panic about the investigation of Chinese immigration fraud in the mid-1950s, *Chinese American Weekly* played a significant role in providing reliable information and guidance for the Chinese American public. Gilbert Woo also endeavored to establish a new community organization which could help Chinese Americans to participate in American politics and fight for Chinese community interests. Therefore, after the National Chinese Welfare Council was founded at the 1957 National Conference of Chinese Communities, Woo actively supported it. However, his enthusiasm quickly cooled because the association

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<sup>5</sup> Shigu Wang, “Taipingyang zhoubao.” [The Chinese Pacific Weekly] in *Huaqiao Huaren Baike Quanshu: Meiti & Chubanjian* [The Encyclopedia of Chinese Overseas: Volume of Media & Publication], Zhou Nanjing, ed. (Beijing: Zhongguo Huaqiao Chubanshe, 1999), 343-344; Lai, “A Voice of Reason,” 104-107.

<sup>6</sup> Zhao, “Disconnecting Transnational Ties,” 32.

was controlled by the pro-KMT establishment who used it for partisan propaganda.<sup>7</sup>

In September 1958, Gilbert Woo co-founded the Chinese American Democratic Club of San Francisco (CADC, 華裔民主黨協會) with Chinese American members of the Democratic Party, Lim P. Lee, William Jack Chow and other native born Chinese American liberals who were tiring of the partisan struggles related to China's politics in Chinatown and wanted to shift the attention to the welfare interests of Chinese American community. Rather than helping to elect American Democratic candidates in Chinatown, the organization claimed its goals were "[to] fight for Chinese American rights, improve the treatment of immigrants, and promote the welfare of overseas Chinese society." Gilbert Woo's newspaper *Chinese Pacific Weekly* became the mouthpiece of this new liberal organization.<sup>8</sup>

After the CADC was founded, its first task was to help the Democratic candidate Pat Brown to win the 1958 gubernatorial election in California. Brown's rival candidate was Senator William F. Knowland, who was a Republican and maintained a very intimate relationship with Chiang Kai-shek's government in Taiwan and as a nickname was called

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<sup>7</sup> Him Mark Lai, "A Voice of Reason: Life and Times of Gilbert Woo, Chinese American Journalist," in *Chinese American: History and Perspectives*, Vol. 6 (1992), 108.

<sup>8</sup> "Huayi Mingzhudang xiehui chengli," ["The Chinese American Democratic Club founded"], *Chinese Times*, September 9, 1958, p4; Him Mark Lai, *Cong Huaqiao dao Huaren: Er'shi shiji Meiguo Huaren shehui fazhan shi* [From Overseas Chinese to Chinese American: Chinese American Social Development History in Twenty Century] (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing (H.K) CO., LTD, 1992), 370; Charlotte Brooks, *Between Mao and McCarthy: Chinese American Politics in the Cold War Years* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 189, 192.

the “Senator from Formosa (Taiwan).” At the beginning of the election, the “Senator from Formosa” claimed his position was firmly anti-Communist and in support of “Free China” (Taiwan) in order to acquire the ballot from Chinese Americans. Knowland’s electoral staff believed the Senator’s anti-communist stance would attract the pro-KMT Chinese community leaders who would help them persuade Chinese Americans to vote for Knowland.<sup>9</sup>

However, the Senator’s negative attitudes toward civil rights issues and immigration problems became major targets for attack by the Chinese American liberals. On the contrary, the Democratic Party candidate Pat Brown focused his attention on local problems that Chinese Americans faced. Furthermore, the Democratic Congressman Phillip Burton, who had a good friendship with Gilbert Woo and Lim P. Lee and was known for his concerns for Chinese American civil rights issues, urged the CADC members to unite and canvas for Brown so that it would not only help the Democratic Party to win the election but it would also be helpful for Chinese American’s civil rights and welfare in the future.<sup>10</sup>

Tens of thousands of slate cards and flyers, which propagated Brown’s policies toward Chinese Americans in the fields of civil rights and welfare, were printed both in

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<sup>9</sup> Brooks, *Between Mao and McCarthy*, 186-189.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



English and Chinese and distributed to voters in Chinatown by the CADC members. Gilbert Woo made a series of Democratic candidate profiles in *Chinese Pacific Weekly* a few weeks before the election, and he especially stressed their policies toward Chinatown residents. Although the article did not directly call on its readers to vote for Brown, it was clear that the paper sympathized with the candidate. Moreover, in other articles about the election Woo urged his readers to vote because it was significant right and responsibility for a citizen of the United States, and he also criticized the fact that, although some candidates said they were “friends” of Chinese and asked Chinese Americans to vote from them, they did not have any policy that benefited Chinese Americans and in reality still thought they were second-citizens, or “Chinamen.” Obviously, Woo hinted that one of such candidates was the “Senator from Formosa.”<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, the CADC organized for Democratic candidate Brown to visit Chinatown and he gave a speech which reminded Chinese American voters that a focus on China’s politics had failed as a political strategy. And Brown also urged voters to consider “whether Knowland’s support for ‘Free China’ offset his lackluster record on

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<sup>11</sup> “Sifa tingzhang houxuanren moshi,” [Attorney general candidate Mosk] *Chinese Pacific Weekly*, May 30, 1958, p13; “Huabu jingxuan de zhongzhong,” [All kinds of Chinatown campaigning] *Chinese Pacific Weekly*, October 23, 1958, p2; “Huaren zhi you,” [So-called “friend” of Chinese] *Chinese Pacific Weekly*; September 18, 1958 in *Hu Jinnan Wenji* [Gilbert Woo’s Selected Works], Hu Jinnan Jinian Weiyuanhui, ed. (Hong Kong: Xiangjiang chuban youxian gongsi, 1991), 548-550; Brooks, *Between Mao and McCarthy*, 192.

civil rights and immigration issues.”<sup>12</sup>

As a result of the election, Pat Brown beat the “Senator from Formosa” and became the new governor of California in 1958. According to a report, the senator Knowland won 60 percent of ballots in Chinatown, however, he received only 49 percent while Brown won 51 percent in November.<sup>13</sup> Therefore it meant that after the CADC was established in September, 1958, in less than two months it persuaded a great number of Knowland supporters to vote for Brown finally.

The election showed that the politics in San Francisco’s Chinatown had changed direction even though the pro-KMT establishment still controlled the community. Through the election, the CADC did not only build influence in Chinatown but its members also consolidated relationships with liberal members in the American Democratic Party who would push Chinese Americans to further participate in American politics. Such political participation would be helpful in striving for Chinese American civil rights and meeting the Chinese community needs. In 1964, Gilbert Woo was invited by President Lyndon Johnson to attend a reception at the White House. Through recommendation of Congressman Philip Burton, Lim. P. Lee was appointed as the first

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<sup>12</sup> “Bulang fanmgwen huabu,” [Brown visited Chinatown] *Chinese Pacific Weekly*, November 3, 1958, p22.

<sup>13</sup> “Bulang yu Naolun da ge pingshou,” [Brown and Knowland tied in Chinatown] *Chinese Pacific Weekly*, November 6, 1958. The Weekly just reported the initial election numbers on November 6, but the result of final count showed that Brown won in Chinatown.

Chinese American postmaster for San Francisco in 1966.

ii. **Creating an Embryo of “Asian American” Identity**

Because Chinese Americans were a very small group in the late 1950s, in order to strengthen their impact in influencing the result of elections, Philip Burton gave the CADC a constructive suggestion that Chinese Americans should build “a non-white bloc,” especially a coalition with other Asian ethnic people. Gilbert Woo and other CADC members accepted Burton’s suggestion.<sup>14</sup>

Although there had been animosities between Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans during the World War II era because of Japan’s war against China, the times had now changed. The Chinese American liberals had tired of China’s politics and they also thought Japanese Americans endured the same persecution and harassment in the Second World War as they themselves faced after 1949. Moreover, most of the CADC members were native born Chinese Americans, it was more realistic for them to unite other Asian groups to fight for civil rights. For example, in an article published in *Chinese Pacific Weekly*, titled “Jiasheng Yuandongren de xuanpiao” [The ballots of California’s Orientals], Woo tried to convince his readers that it was very meaningful to push the “Orientals” unity for a bloc vote:

In this year’s California election for senator, the ballots of “Orientals” have a

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<sup>14</sup> Brooks, *Between Mao and McCarty*, 212.

decisive function. In terms of numbers, California together has ninety thousand Japanese, seventy thousand Chinese and forty-five thousand Filipinos. Among them, the issues are not identical, but because of the nature of many issues as applicable to all, they can make up an “Oriental” bloc in the political arena.<sup>15</sup>

Interestingly, Woo borrowed the phrase “Yuandong ren” (which translated into “Oriental”) to describe all Asian groups in the United States and presumed it could become a base at least for common political activism.

Besides Gilbert Woo, another Chinese American journalist and native born CADC member, Charles Leong wrote an article titled “the Nisei<sup>16</sup> group whose problems are more parallel to ours than any other racial group” in his newly-founded paper *The Chinese News* to introduce Japanese American life and experience to his Chinese readers. Moreover, he held a feast for a group of Asian and Asian American Journalists in 1955. After the feast, the participants were determined to found an “Oriental Journalist Association.”<sup>17</sup>

Almost at the same period, the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) also began to publish about Chinese American’s experiences of discrimination in its organ *Pacific Citizen*. And the JACL also echoed its Chinese counterpart in using “Oriental” to

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<sup>15</sup> “Jiasheng Yuandongren de xuanpiao,” [The Ballots of California’s Orientals] *Chinese Pacific Weekly*, September 21, 1956, p21. Quoted from the translation of Brooks, *Between Mao and McCarthy*, 211.

<sup>16</sup> “Nisei” is a term referring to the second generation of Japanese American.

<sup>17</sup> Brooks, *Between Mao and McCarthy*, 210-211.

refer to Asian groups in its news reports. For example, in 1962 while Gilbert Woo and his CADC peers mobilized the voters of Asian groups to back Korean American Alfred Song in the election for state legislator, the JACL's paper *Pacific Citizen* celebrated Song as the first "Oriental" citizen to get the position.<sup>18</sup>

The majority of scholars, who study Asian American history, share the view that an "Asian American" identity was formed in the creation of the Asian American Movement, especially after the young Asian American activists were deeply impacted by the Anti-Vietnam War Movement.<sup>19</sup> However, in the late 1950s and the early 1960s, while the Chinese American liberals and other Asian group activists fought for their civil rights, they had realized the importance of unifying all Asian groups' power. They borrowed the old word "Oriental" which was used to stereotype Asian people by the westerners, by creating a new consciousness among those who had immigrated from the Asian ancestral land and experienced the same discrimination. They created an embryo of "Asian American" identity which led them to struggle together for civil rights and to transmit such spirit of struggle to the young generation.

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<sup>18</sup> "First California Assemblyman of Oriental descent hails from Hawaii," *Pacific Citizen*, February 22, 1963, p1; Brooks, *Between Mao and McCarthy*, 211-212

<sup>19</sup> William Wei, *The Asian American Movement* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University, 1993), 2, 37-43; Daryl Joji Maeda, *Rethinking the Asian American Movement* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 6, 116-120; Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, *Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism, and Feminism during the Vietnam Era* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013), 8-9.

### iii. Coexisting with African Americans and Actively Supporting their non-violent Struggles

Apart from Chinese American community affairs, racial discrimination in American society was also an important subject of Gilbert Woo's commentaries. In his editorial column he did not only decry racial discrimination towards Chinese Americans (such as discrimination in employment and housing, prohibiting miscegenation between Chinese Americans and white Americans) but he also criticized the racial persecution of African Americans. When he was still a columnist for the paper *Chinese Nationalist Daily*, he had already written an article titled "Meiguo de zhongzu chongtu" ("Racial confrontation in the United States") to indicate that racial discrimination was not "innate" and "instinct" but "born in the environment of stubborn 'white supremacy'." He called upon taking appropriate steps to nurture the spirit of friendship and coexistence between different races from childhood. Otherwise, he admonished that racial discrimination towards minority groups would be "A stain on American Democracy"<sup>20</sup>. In another column article entitled "Heiren shou qishi" ("Racial Discrimination Suffered by Black People"), Woo borrowed the experience of a Chinese American soldier (who had served in American Southern states) to meticulously describe racial discrimination towards African

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<sup>20</sup> Gilbert Woo, "Meiguo de zhongzu chongtu," (Racial confrontation in the United States) *Chinese Nationalist Daily*, June 6, 1944, in *Hu Jingnan wenji*, 45-46.

Americans in the South: “a black soldier cannot sit on the seat in bus even though he is handicapped and has many medals, but has to just stand in the back of the bus; black people cannot drink water in the room where there were white people, but can only take a little to drink outside; black people can care for white children, but black children are not allowed to play with white children...” At the end of the article, he even suggested that China’s Delegates, who would participate in the conference for establishment of the United Nations, should offer a proposal for the “eradication of racial discrimination and safeguarding racial equality.”<sup>21</sup>

Thanks to Gilbert Woo, *Chinese Pacific Weekly* kept its liberal position to report on African Americans and their civil rights activism from the following perspectives: to be impartial, advising Chinese Americans to discard prejudice towards African Americans and aim for coexistence with African Americans; for the benefit of Chinese Americans themselves, fervently suggesting Chinese Americans should sympathize with and support African American civil rights activism; and learning and taking that experience back to Chinese American communities for serving and changing their communities.

#### **“Coexistence with African Americans in Ping Yuen”<sup>22</sup>**

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<sup>21</sup> Gilbert Woo, “Heiren shou qishi” (“Black people were trapped in racial discrimination”) *Chinese Nationalist Daily*, March 12, 1945, in *Hu Jingnan wenji*, 67-68.

<sup>22</sup> Ping Yuen is a federal public housing project in San Francisco Chinatown. After Congress passed the Housing Act of 1949, the San Francisco Housing Authority got the funds to complete the projects which were planned before WWII. The leaders of San Francisco Chinatown took this

If Chinese Americans could be indifferent to racial discrimination endured by African Americans and their struggles for civil rights in the South, the experiences of confrontation with African Americans in San Francisco pushed them to consider how to get along with African Americans, especially in relation to San Francisco's public housing projects. Due to the myth of the "model minority," Blacks saw them as more readily accepted as neighbors by whites, and this caused an increase in black hostility towards Chinese Americans. Moreover, because Chinese Americans had always been accustomed to reside together (such as in Ping Yuen), African American critics accused Chinatown as being "merely symbolic of the way Chinese Americans were adopting the same practices as white homeowners who also preferred to 'live together with the same race'."<sup>23</sup> Therefore Ping Yuen became a target where for African Americans in their struggle for living space. In 1952, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) sued the San Francisco Housing Authority for preventing African Americans from living in the San Francisco public housing project to the California Superior Court,

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opportunity to lobby for constructing the Ping Yuen federal public housing project. When Ping Yuen's first units were completed in 1951, the San Francisco Housing Authority held a big ceremony. Because at first most of the rooms were occupied by Chinese Americans and they didn't like to let black people in their neighborhood, civil rights groups such as the NAACP called Ping Yuen a symbol of discrimination. It amplified the controversies between Chinese Americans and African Americans. See more in Charlotte Brooks, *Alien Neighbors, Foreign Friends: Asian Americans, Housing, and the Transformation of Urban California* (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 187-193.

<sup>23</sup> Brooks, *Alien Neighbors, Foreign Friends*, 224-226.



and then took the case to the U.S. Supreme Court. Even though the NAACP finally triumphed, the Court's ruling placed the focus on the hostility towards the possibility of black neighbors in San Francisco's Chinatown.<sup>24</sup> In face of such conditions, Gilbert Woo gave an editorial commentary in the "Suibi" (Informal Essays) column of *Chinese Pacific Weekly*, entitled "Heiren yiru Ping Yuan" ("Black people will live in Ping Yuan") which kept the liberal position as usual. He stated:

When our mind of selfishness overcame our mind of reason, we hoped we could perpetually monopolize Ping Yuen in which just Chinese Americans would be allowed to live. However, when we become clear-headed, the mind

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<sup>24</sup> In 1952, an African American woman called Mattie Banks, who lived in a substandard single room with her two daughters, applied for accessing federally-funded public housing project-North Beach Place. However, her application was rejected by the San Francisco Housing Authority under the Authority's neighborhood pattern policy. The decision of the Housing Authority shocked Banks, and she decided to ask for help from San Francisco NAACP's Legal Redress Committee. The NAACP saw Bank's case as a good chance to strategically attack segregated public housing in California. In September 1952, as legal representation of Mattie Banks, the San Francisco NAACP filed a suit against the Housing Authority in the California appellate Court, demanding that Banks was admitted to the San Francisco Public Housing project North Beach Place (which was occupied by Italian American families), and that the Authority should abrogate its unconstitutional segregation policy of public housing in the City. Yet the Authority claimed that its neighborhood pattern policy ensured "[that] scarce public housing resources were allocated equitably among the City's racial and ethnic groups," meanwhile it did not violate *Plessy v. Ferguson*'s doctrine of "separate but equal." As a result, even though the appellate court did not overrule *Plessy* clearly, it invalidated the neighborhood pattern policy on constitutional grounds. However, the San Francisco Housing Authority didn't surrender to the appellate Court's decision and asked California Superior Court to hear the case, but the Superior Court affirmed the lower court's decision. Then the certiorari petitions were sent to the US Supreme Court, finally the Supreme Court denied both certiorari petitions of the litigants a week after it decided the case of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. Because in *Brown* case the Supreme Court specifically overruled *Plessey*, the San Francisco NACCP considered it ultimately got a triumph. See *Banks v. Housing Authority of City and County of San Francisco*, 120 Cal. APP. 2d 1, 260 P.2d 668 (1953), *cert. denied*, 347 U.S. 947 (1954); Reuel E. Schiller, "Conflict in the 'Tranquil Gardens': Banks v. Housing Authority of San Francisco and the Definition of Equality in Multi-Racial California," (Forthcoming) in *UC Hastings Scholarship Repository* (University of California, Hastings College of the Law, 2015), 4-29; "Discrimination Against Minorities in the Federal Housing Programs," *Indiana Law Journal*, Vol. 31, Issue4, Article 5 (Summer 1956), 501-505; Brooks, *Alien Neighbors, Foreign Friends*, 224-227; "NAACP San Francisco Branch," *Found SF*, reprinted from the *Historical Souvenir Booklet of Black History Week*, published by the African American Historical and Cultural Society (February 1978), [http://foundsf.org/index.php?title=NAACP\\_San\\_Francisco\\_Branch](http://foundsf.org/index.php?title=NAACP_San_Francisco_Branch)

of selfishness will torture our conscience and spirit. Hadn't we always demanded the eradication of racial discrimination towards us? Didn't we loudly protest the discrimination of Chinese Americans by whites? How can we discriminate African Americans just as whites did to us in the past? ...A new era has come the Supreme Court has declared all apartheid policies in school and housing projects must be eradicated. It is shocking that not only the "white supremacists" in the South but also some conservative Chinese Americans are hostile to African Americans.<sup>25</sup>

At the end of the article, Woo called on Chinese Americans to accept the fact that African American would soon integrated into Ping Yuan and to coexist with them peacefully.

Even though the California court identified Ping Yuen as one of seven segregated public housing projects where the San Francisco Housing Authority was required to change its neighborhood pattern policy, and African American civil rights activists had protested Ping Yuen as a segregated project for many years, until the 1960s nothing changed. To the Housing Authority, the interests of Chinese living in Ping Yuen and keeping their homogeneity were "not merely for social but for an economic purpose" because the beautiful Chinese architecture of Ping Yuen and the visibility of supposed exotic Chinese customs could help draw tourism to the City.<sup>26</sup> In community meetings of San Francisco's Chinatown the leaders of Chinese American establishments spread aversion towards the idea of African American being integrated into Ping Yuen, and they

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<sup>25</sup> Gilbert Woo, "Heiren yiru pingyuan," ("African American will integrate to Ping Yuan") *Chinese Pacific Weekly*, June 5, 1954.

<sup>26</sup> Brooks, *Alien Neighbors, Foreign Friends*, 225; Schiller, "Conflict in the 'Tranquil Gardens'," 19.

used ugly stereotypes to stigmatize black people. It is worth mentioning that two Chinese American leaders, Charles Jung<sup>27</sup> and T. Kong Lee<sup>28</sup> who were the sole Chinese American members in the San Francisco Housing Authority, successively voted in objection the ordinances for fair housing in the City. When the NAACP sued the Housing Authority in the *Banks* case (see Note 120) in the early 1950s, Charles Jung supported the San Francisco Housing Authority's position to defend the neighbor pattern policy. Jung was not only a non-white member in the Authority, but he was also president of the Chinese American Citizens Alliance (CACA) and director of Chinese Chamber of Commerce in San Francisco Chinatown. Once again, in 1961 when the San Francisco Board of Supervisors intended to make a city fair housing ordinance for solving segregated housing problems, T. Kong Lee openly opposed it while using his title as former president of Chinese Chamber of Commerce. Coincidentally, both T. Kong Lee and Charles Jung embraced the idea that Ping Yuen was a triumphant symbol of their civil rights advocacy; a part of what had helped craft Chinatown's "post-1949 tourism strategy"

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<sup>27</sup> Charles Jung (1907-1985) was San Francisco attorney and a member of Chinese American Citizens Alliances. He was also an active Republican and the first Chinese American to serve on the San Francisco Housing Authority Board. See Brooks, *Between Mao and McCarthy*, 299.

<sup>28</sup> T. Kong Lee (1905-1994) was a businessman and president of Chinese American community newspaper *Chinese Times* and a longtime Republican Party activist. He immigrated to Canada in 1917 but later settled in San Francisco. Lee served in the Chinese American committee of Republican Party for numerous Republican candidates. He became a member of the board of the San Francisco Housing Authority in the early 1960s. See Brooks, *Between Mao and McCarthy*, 300.

and promote its cold war image of “anti-communism and obedience.” The actions of Chinese American leaders enraged African American civil rights activists in San Francisco, and they accused “Chinese Americans of free-riding on the legal work of the NAACP and other civil rights organizations; taking advantage of the fight against housing discrimination while refusing to shoulder any of the burden of the struggle.”<sup>29</sup>

Lee’s view was just one voice in the Chinese American community, however his actions may have convinced many African Americans that Chinese Americans in general refused to coexist with black people. Gilbert Woo worried about this situation and wrote an editorial entitled “Gongping juzhu ti’an” (“As for the City’s Fair Housing Ordinance”) as part of the “Suibi” (Informal Essays) column of *Chinese Pacific Weekly* to comment Lee’s move. Woo criticized Lee’s view of opposition to the fair housing ordinance in the City by using his former title. As he stated:

We are baffled as to why T. Kong Lee opposed the City to make an ordinance for preventing racial discrimination in the allocation of the public housing projects. We have endured discrimination on housing problems for dozens of years. Even during the conference for the establishment of the UN in 1945, Chinese Americans were still in the trial battle with whites for living in the white suburbs. Until 1947 the US Supreme Court held “[that] the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment prohibited courts from enforcing restrictive covenants that forbid

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<sup>29</sup> Brooks, *Alien Neighbors, Foreign Friends*, 224-227; Schiller, “Conflict in the ‘Tranquil Gardens,’” 29-35; Chiou-ling Yeh, *Making An American Festival: Chinese New Year in San Francisco’s Chinatown* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 29-55.

the sale of property to people of a specific race,”<sup>30</sup>and we, Chinese Americans had only just dared to live outside Chinatown. How could we reverse to uphold racial discrimination [towards black people], or to oppose the fair housing ordinance in the City?<sup>31</sup>

Finally, once again Woo urged Chinese Americans to abandon their bias towards African Americans and to coexist with them.

### **We Should Support the African American Civil Rights Movement**

From the early 1960s the African Americans undertook their large-scale non-violent civil rights struggles. In the Chinese American community, while there was disgust among conservatives and indifference among most common people, the Chinese American liberals in the CADC thought the struggle was necessary and correct and tried to accept the aims and methods of black people’s struggle.

After the Birmingham campaign in 1963, the CADC launched a fundraising drive for the NAACP and some club members who were also clergy members in San Francisco’s

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<sup>30</sup> Gilbert Woo mistook the date when the US Supreme Court gave the ruling. He referred to the case *Shelley v. Kraemer* (1948). In 1945, when the Shelley family, who were African American, purchased a house in St. Louis, Missouri, Louis Kraemer and other white property owners sued to prevent the Shelleys from taking possession of the property by a restrictive covenant which had been in place on the property since 1911. The restrictive covenant stipulated that “people of the negro or Mongolian Race” could not occupy the property. Missouri Superior Court upheld the covenant, and side against the purchasers. Then a petition was sent to the Supreme Court of the United States, and the Supreme Court reversed the Missouri court’s decision and held that “[t]he Fourteenth Amendment prohibits a State from enforcing restrictive covenant that would prohibit a person from owning or occupying property based on race or color.” See “*Shelley v. Kraemer* 334 U.S. 1 (May 3, 1948),” in *Justia: US Supreme Court*, Vol. 334, <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/334/1/>; Donald M. Cahen, “The Impact of *Shelley v. Kraemer* on the State Action Concept,” *California Law Review*, Vol. 44, Issue 4, Article 4 (1956); Schiller, “Conflict in the ‘Tranquil Gardens’,” 16.

<sup>31</sup> Gilbert Woo, “Gongping juzhu tian” (“As for the City’s Fair Housing Ordinance”), *Chinese Pacific Weekly*, November 9, 1961.

Chinatown went to Birmingham and participated in the demonstration led by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).<sup>32</sup> The president of the CADC, Harry Law entreated the Chinese American community to support the African American non-violent movement because many Chinese American civil rights gains were a direct the result of the efforts of black people.<sup>33</sup>

Gilbert Woo wrote an editorial commentary titled “Heiren de douzheng” [Commentary on the African Americans’ struggles] to support African Americans striving for their civil rights, while at the same time also pondering how Chinese Americans considered African American movements. As he stated:

Nowadays, the African American struggles for civil rights in the South is revolutionary. It had all of the factors of any revolution: awareness of oppressed people, fearlessness of death, not being afraid to revolt and make sacrifices. Now the black people are determined to struggle for equal rights even though they might have to sacrifice their lives ... We, Chinese Americans, should sympathize with African Americans and support their struggle for equal rights. This is the sole way for us and we are duty-bound to support them. Because we have benefited from the civil rights struggles of black people ... We should support all of the Afro-American movement for equal rights ... We do not like Chinese American discrimination of African American people. We have endured the discrimination from the white society for several decades, just now our status has been a little raised. Do we have any reason to discriminate black people? This is nonsense and it also violates

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<sup>32</sup> “Shi nai no Chukokujin ga NAACP ni bokin wo tsunoru kyanpen wo yateiru,” [Local Chinese Start Help NAACP Fund Drive] *Hokubei Mainichi* [North American Daily], June 27, 1963, p1; Brooks, *Between Mao and McCarthy*, 215-216; “Heiren de douzheng,” [Black People’s Struggles] *Chinese Pacific Weekly*, June 6, 1963, in *Hu Jinnan Wenji* [Gilbert Woo’s Selected Works], The Gilbert Woo Memorial Committee, ed. (Hong Kong: Xiangjiang chuban gongsi, 1991), 582.

<sup>33</sup> Brooks, *Between Mao and McCarthy*, 216.

our traditional moral rules which told us “Do not do to others what you would not have them do to you.”<sup>34</sup>

Clearly, Gilbert Woo thought the future of Chinese Americans was closely linked with the future of the other ethnic minorities (including African Americans). Meanwhile, Gilbert Woo warned that, if Chinese Americans could not see through the tactics of whites and did not side with the black people, they would face the same fate of being discriminated continually just as the blacks endured today, as he stated in the following:

Right now [whites] have the Negroes as their adversaries and they do not have time to deal with us. They are even slightly more courteous to us, but that is not their real intention. If one day the white people in the South and the ultra-right in the North form a united front and force the Negroes into submission, the Chinese will also suffer the same fate. Our future is closely linked with the future of the other ethnic minorities in America.<sup>35</sup>

The rising of the black-led civil rights movement, resulting in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, benefited Chinese Americans and their communities greatly. It inspired Gilbert Woo who recognized that the Chinese American struggle for equal status in the United States should be part of this movement.

### **“What Can We Learn from African American Civil Rights Activism?”**

Gilbert Woo wrote several editorials to push Chinese Americans to learn the skills and tactics of black people’s struggles so that they could change their own community

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<sup>34</sup> Gilbert Woo, “Heiren de douzheng,” (Afro-American’s Struggle) *Chinese Pacific Weekly*, June 6, 1963.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

and attain equal rights and status, especially in reference to the problems of housing and employment. For example, in an article entitled “Junzi guqiong” [“Should a gentleman really endure poverty?”], Woo stated:

I have pointed out many times, “the African American Civil Rights Movement is not just struggling for the superficial equality in law but it is also a movement of black people demanding equal economic interests.” ...However, the big shortcoming of Chinese people is that they still persist in the outmoded so-called philosophy that holds that “A gentleman should endure poverty.” What a so foolish point of view it is nowadays! ...Now President Johnson is launching a program called “Fighting against Poverty!” by using the federal budget. We should learn from black people and struggle for our equal economic interests...<sup>36</sup>

Gilbert Woo’s call was echoed by Chinese American liberals and the younger generation of activists, and they established the San Francisco Greater Chinatown Community Service Association to strive for the economic interests of the Chinese American community.

Beginning in the late sixties there was a resurgence of ethnic pride and identity among minorities in America as part of their effort to achieve equal status in American society. Chinese Americans felt a renewed interest in their heritage and their community. Many younger Chinese Americans actively established new organizations to change Chinese American communities like African Americans did in theirs. Gilbert assessed

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<sup>36</sup> “Junzi guqiong,” [“Should a gentleman really endure poverty?”], *Chinese Pacific Weekly*, March 26, 1964, in *Hu Jinnan Wenji*, 583-584.



their role approvingly:

The American-born Chinese attending middle school and college have reversed the trend of twenty-five years ago and begun to be aware that they are of the yellow race and Chinese. One generation ago the American-born were so afraid that they could not assimilate so that every time they opened their mouths it was to assert they were American... Now it is different. They flaunt themselves as Chinese...

...Twenty-five years ago, when the American-born wished to carry out a 100 percent Americanization program, they “sold out” Chinatown and showed no interest in it, leaving it to the older generation to be solved. But now this generation of American-born Chinese has developed an interest in Chinese American history and Chinese American society.<sup>37</sup>

In fact, in the African American Civil Rights Movement period, black activists did not only struggle for the improvement of their civil and economic rights, but they also embraced their own culture and identities. While younger Chinese American activists learnt certain tactics from their black counterparts, they also engaged in a search for culture and history of Chinese American community. According to this editorial, Woo approved of younger Chinese American activists discarding the theories which advocated Chinese Americans to assimilate into mainstream society as a “model minority”, and instead pay more attention to Chinese American history and problems of Chinese American communities.

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<sup>37</sup> Gilbert Woo, “Hua qing wenti,” [“The Affairs on Chinese American Youth”] in *Chinese Pacific Weekly*, “Suibi” Column [“Informal Essays”], April 3, 1969. Quoted the translations from Lai, “A Voice of Reason,” 110.

As a liberal journalist, Gilbert Woo interpreted the world from the point of view of an American citizen of Chinese descent. Different from other Chinese American media workers who usually focused on China's politics and issues, either pro-KMT or pro-CCP, Woo paid close attention to the interests of Chinese Americans and their communities. On one hand, he actively advocated that Chinese American should participate in American politics and integrated into American society. On the other hand, he thought they should also keep their Chinese heritage and try to unite other Asian groups to struggle for civil rights together as "Orientals."

As Him Mark Lai wrote in Woo's biography, "Espouser of a pragmatic liberal political philosophy, Gilbert sought always to be the voice of reason, neither confrontational nor strident. Never a fiery militant or an opinionated dogmatist, his basic ideology was evolutionary, not revolutionary."<sup>38</sup> Actually, Gilbert Woo persisted in his liberal political philosophy, to support the African American non-violent movement is a good example of this.

In the late 1960s, through his niece Betty Lim, Woo got to know the young generation activist leaders Gordon Law and L. Ling-chi Wang, and Woo gave advices to them and hoped to combined his own political experience and connections with the

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<sup>38</sup> Lai, "A Voice of Reason," 115.

energy of the youth movement.

## **II. A Chinese American Woman in the Civil Rights Movement: Grace Lee Boggs and Her Legendary Activist Life**

After Grace Lee's documentary film *American Revolutionary: The Evolution of Grace Lee Boggs*<sup>39</sup> was shown on the big screen in 2013, it was awarded the Peabody Awards. Suddenly, Grace Lee Boggs, as the first Chinese American woman who had joined black people in their struggles in the Civil Rights Movement, became famous and popular again in the media. Interestingly, the *Los Angeles Times* commented in its review, "Grace Lee Boggs was a Chinese American black-power radical armed with a doctorate in philosophy."<sup>40</sup> Undoubtedly, Grace Lee Boggs left her marks in several capacities: as a "Chinese American," a "black power movement" advocate, a "Ph. D in philosophy" holder, and supposedly even as a "Marxist".

So why did a daughter of Chinese immigrants who obtained a Ph. D in philosophy, go to Detroit, marry an African American automobile worker and movement organizer, and dedicate her whole life to the black civil rights movement? We need to look for the answer in analyzing her legendary activist life. In the scholarships on Grace Lee Boggs

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<sup>39</sup> *American Revolutionary: The Evolution of Grace Lee Boggs* (Documentary film), Grace Lee, directed. (Center for Asian American Media, Chicken & Egg Pictures, 2013).

<sup>40</sup> "The Evolution of Grace Lee Boggs' is Superb Look at Activist," *Los Angeles Times*, June 19, 2014.

and her activism, it is surprising that most of them focus on her activism in the African American community and her theoretical contribution towards black radical movements, but few examine the influence of her activism on Chinese American activism and the Asian American Movement.<sup>41</sup>

**i. From a Chinese American Woman Philosophy Scholar to A “Black Woman” Activist**

Grace Lee Boggs was born in Providence, Rhode Island, in a Chinese immigrant family on June 27, 1915. Her parents gave her the Chinese name “Yuk Ping” (translating into English was Grace or Jade Peace). During the 1920s, her family moved to New York City where her father ran two large Chinese restaurants in the Broadway district of Manhattan. Due to her family’s restaurants fame as “Chin Lee’s,” Grace adopted “Lee”

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<sup>41</sup> There are several works and interviews to explore Grace Lee Boggs’s activism in Detroit’s black communities and her theoretical and practical contributions towards the radical Black Power Movement, such as Stephen Michael Ward, “‘Ours Too Was a Struggle for a Better World’: Activists Intellectuals and the Radical Promise of the Black Power Movement, 1962-1972.” Ph. D. Dissertation (The University of Texas at Austin, August 2002); Ward, In *Love and Struggle: The Revolutionary Lives of James and Grace Lee Boggs* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016); Scott Kurashige, “From Black Power to a Revolution of Values: Grace Lee Boggs and the Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.,” in *Black Power beyond Borders: The Global Dimensions of the Black Power Movement*, Nico Slate ed. (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 169-190; L. Todd Duncan and Kathryne V. Lindberg, “The Continuity of Living for Change: An Interview with Grace Lee Boggs at Wayne State University, June of 1999 and July, September of 2000,” *Social Text* 67, vol. 19, No.2 (Summer 2001).

However, the scholarship on Grace Lee Boggs’s experiences in the academic field of Asian American studies is scarce. Jannifer Jung Hee Choi’s article, “At the Margins of the Asian American Political Experience: The Life of Grace Lee Boggs,” advocates that Boggs’s political work and theory of revolution “have left Asian American at the margins of her life and analysis.” See Jennifer Jung Hee Choi, “At the Margins of the Asian American Political Experience: The Life of Grace Lee Boggs,” *Amerasia Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (1999), 18-40. Another work, Bill V. Mullen’s *Afro-Orientalism*, tries to narrate Grace Lee Boggs’s activism in the context of so-called “Afro-Orientalism” and states that Boggs’s work “defines many of the major coordinates of our evolving if provisional map of the Afro-Asian century.” See Bill V. Mullen, “‘Philosophy Must Be Proletarian’: The Dialectical Humanism of Grace Lee and James Boggs,” in *Afro-Orientalism* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 113-162.

as her surname along with her other family members. In 1931 she went to Barnard College to study philosophy. Because of her diligence, after graduation she got a fellowship for a Ph. D program at Bryn Mawr College to continually study philosophy.<sup>42</sup>

At Bryn Mawr College Grace fervently read Kant and Hegel's works, and then she decided to write her dissertation focusing on George Herbert Mead and she earned her Ph. D in 1940. However, at that time there was no university or college which would like to hire a Chinese American woman teaching the philosophy of Kant, Hegel or George Herbert Mead. Finally, Grace found a low-paying assistant job at the University of Chicago Philosophy library. She soon joined the Workers Party and there Grace met C.L.R. James who introduced Marxism to Grace and worked together with her for a long time. In that period, Grace Lee Boggs systematically read Karl Marx's works and co-authored with C.L.R. James and other Marxists several works in the radical publication *Correspondence*. Grace became well-known in that intellectual circle and she also came to know some historic figures in the Pan-African liberation movement, such as Kwame Nkrumah and George Padmore. She also met James Boggs, who was an African American political activist working at Detroit automobile manufactory.

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<sup>42</sup> Grace Lee Boggs, *Living for Change: An Autobiography of Grace Lee Boggs*. Forward by Robin D. G. Kelley. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 1-19; Scott Kurashige, "Grace Lee Boggs," in *Asian Americans [3 volumes]: An Encyclopedia of Social, Cultural, Economic, and Political History*, Xiaojian Zhao and J.W. Park, eds. (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press, 2013), 149-151.

In 1953 Grace and James Boggs married and they moved to Detroit where the Boggs maintained an influence on African American civil rights activism through their theoretical writings, study groups and organizational campaigns such as the Michigan Freedom Now Party, coordinated by Grace, which put forward an all-black slate of candidates for various offices in 1964. Due to Grace and her husband's exceptional organization for black activism in Detroit, Grace "[was] cited in a *Detroit News* story as one of six people whose actions most likely provoked the Detroit rebellion of 1967." However, Grace was falsely accused in Detroit of starting the riots; the Boggs were in fact travelling in California when the riots of 1967 broke out. Grace also became the only non-African American author whose works were collected in *The Black Woman* (1970), which was a seminal anthology edited by Toni Cade Bambara.<sup>43</sup>

**ii. Acting as an "Afro-Chinese": Grace Lee Boggs in the Black Power Movement**

According to Grace's recollection, after the March on Washington in 1963, although many civil rights leaders shared Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "invoking of the dream of the Promised Land" in the South, the Boggs felt despondent about "the hopelessness and

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<sup>43</sup> Grace Lee Boggs, *Living for Change*, 30-74, 138; Kurashige, "Grace Lee Boggs," 150; L. Todd Duncan and Kathryn V. Lindberg, "The Continuity of Living for Change: An Interview with Grace Lee Boggs at Wayne State University, June of 1999 and July, September of 2000," *Social Text* 67, vol. 19, No.2 (Summer 2001), in *James and Grace Lee Boggs Paper*, Accession No.: UP001342, Box No.: 4, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Walter P. Reuther Library at Wayne State University.

frustrations of black youth in the inner cities of the North.” They thought their opinions were more “analytical and agitational, more like Malcom’s.” In order to solve the black civil rights problems from the bottom-up, the couple helped to establish the Northern Grass Root Leadership Conference and became vocal advocates of Black Political Power.<sup>44</sup>

By this time, the Boggs frequently connected with the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), and their house became a base for RAM members who stayed there to prepare the issue of *Black America* and talked about issues regarding the black political struggle with the Boggs. In the issue of *Black American*, there were six pages of printed quotations of founders of black revolutionary nationalism, including Marcus Garvey, Elijah Muhammad, W.E.B. Du Bois, Robert Williams, Malcolm X, Harold Cruse, Rev. Cleage, Max Stanford and James Boggs. In 1964 arranged by Max Stanford, the Boggs went to New York to meet Malcom X who had split from Mr. Muhammad and the Nation of Islam. They tried to ask Malcom X to work with them so that they could build an organization struggling for Black Power. However, before the organization was established, Malcom X was assassinated in New York. Grace said she and James Boggs felt great shock upon hearing this news. In early 1967 the Boggs co-founded the Inner

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<sup>44</sup> Grace Lee Boggs, *Living for Change*, 122-134; Grace Lee, *American Revolutionary: The Evolution of Grace Lee Boggs* (Documentary film).

City Organizing Committee (ICOC) in Detroit with other black nationalists, which aimed to “develop rank-and-file comrades for leadership through a combination of political education and practical activities.” However, the organization was still focusing more on meetings and study than performing radical activities. In July 1967 while Grace and James Boggs travelled in California, in Detroit the large-scale riots occurred. Although the Boggs did not engage these riots, the rebellion let the Boggs reconsider the tactics and thoughts of the black struggle<sup>45</sup>.

As Grace mentioned in her autobiography, stemming from the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the enraged American black people revolted from one city to another, tens of thousands of black youths joined the Black Panther Party and wanted to defend the idea of “violence to violence.” Street violence, drugs and prison engulfed the lives and futures of young black people. Grace felt the bottom had fallen out of the society.<sup>46</sup>

In the face of such a miserable reality in the black society, Grace and James Boggs wanted to provide a theoretical framework for solving the problem. Firstly, they thought it was necessary to distinguish between “rebellion” and “revolution.” They thought the

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<sup>45</sup> Grace Lee Boggs, *Living for Change*, 134-140; Duncan and Lindberg, “The Continuity of Living for Change: An Interview with Grace Lee Boggs,” *Social Text* 67, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Summer 2001), 43- 74.

<sup>46</sup> Grace Lee Boggs, *Living for Change*, 143-146.



Black Panther Party just organized a rebellion which would finally cause disaster and demoralization but did not provide a constructive vision for revolution. They also thought “people who are full of hate and anger against their oppressors or who only see Us versus Them can make a rebellion but not a revolution. The oppressed internalized the values of the oppressor.” Therefore, the couple with other radical revolutionists created a new concept of so-called “dialectical humanism” that required the revolutionaries to not only recognize the damage of capitalism but also “[to] have a responsibility to create strategies to transform themselves as well as the victims of oppression into human beings who are more advanced in the qualities that distinguish human beings: creativity, consciousness, self-consciousness, and a sense of political and social responsibility.”<sup>47</sup>

The Boggs’s so-called “dialectical humanism” absorbed Mao’s theories, such as Mao’s advocating human transformation by criticism and self-criticism. In fact, Grace Lee Boggs really admired Mao’s thoughts and usually cited Mao’s words in her works, as she praised Mao’s thoughts in the following:

...Mao’s approach was driven by a revolutionary vision of those at the bottom of society assuming the rights and responsibilities for social decision making, which had therefore been the exclusive responsibility of the rich and powerful. So he was always challenging the members of the party and the Chinese peasants and workers to transform themselves by struggling both against the internal limitations stemming from their position in the social structure and

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 146, 151-152.

against those holding power in the structure that limits them. Mao did not visualize Communism as a utopian society, an objective thing that can be achieved only after a society has reached material abundance through economic development. Communism, for him, was a process combining self-transformation and structural transformation— “mankind consciously remolding itself and the world,” creating a new stage in the evolution of the human race.<sup>48</sup>

Surprisingly, Grace did not have any critical words towards the policies of Mao and the Chinese Communist Party. On the contrary, she approved of the fact that Mao had taken action in order to realize the so-called “human transformation,” including the cruel class struggles among commoners and cadres, and the Cultural Revolution. Conceivably, for the Boggs, they expected to launch something resembling a Cultural Revolution in the African American communities.

Then the Boggs wrote the *Manifesto of Black Revolutionary Party* and they continued their black revolutionary struggles. Due to Grace’s famed activism in the Detroit black communities, an FBI report characterized Grace as a subversive and noted that she was “Afro-Chinese” (the note means she was probably “of Chinese and African descent.”). Grace said she felt comfortable with that description because it showed that she had embedded herself in black community activities.<sup>49</sup>

### iii. The Formation of “Bandung Humanism” Through Transnational

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 194-195.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 118; Kurashige, “Grace Lee Boggs,” 150.

## Correspondence

According to scholar Bill V. Mullen's definition, "Transnational Correspondence" refers to the "synchronous acts of political and cultural translation constitute a singular story of internationalism during the 1940-1960s. Black America's call to Asia, and Asia's reciprocal response, reveals the textual and logistical mechanics."<sup>50</sup> In fact, since Robert F. Williams was exiled, Grace and James Boggs had begun to connect with him through via *Correspondence*. For example, in May 1962, the *Correspondence*, which was edited by the Boggs, published Williams' defense speeches and while Williams was exiled to China, he wrote the Boggs about the situation of Chinese support for the African American Civil Rights Movement and the Chinese Cultural Revolution, and the Boggs introduced the conditions of radical struggles in the black communities. All of these activities were contained within transnational correspondence. Thus, the conception of correspondence was not only a communication tool but it also became a necessary linchpin for bringing Afro-Asian struggles together.

To Black Power activists such as the Boggs and the RAM leader Max Stanford, Robert F. Williams exile abroad had brought black people's struggles to the international arena, especially his connection with Mao and the Chinese government got excited them.

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<sup>50</sup> Bill V. Mullen, "Transnational Correspondence: Robert F. Williams, Detroit, and the Bandung Era," *Works and Days* 39/40, Vol. 20, Nos. 1&2 (2002), 191.

While Mao's statement to support the African American struggles in 1963 and Williams' reports on the American army in the Vietnam War were published in the *Correspondence*, Stanford went to Detroit to meet the Boggs and discuss Mao's statement and Williams' articles. They decided to hold an Afro-American Student Movement Conference at Fisk University in May 1964, entitled "The Black Revolution's Relationship to the Bandung World" which finally adopted thirteen points of resolutions, mostly aimed at internationalizing the black radical struggle.<sup>51</sup> According to Max Stanford, using the "Bandung World" meant "[the African American Movement] united with African, Asian, and Latin American Revolutions" because the 1955 Bandung Conference symbolized solidarity among the "Third World" including decolonized African, Asian and Latin American nations.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Correspondence Publishing Company, *Correspondence* (November 1963), Box 2, Volume 6, in James and Grace Lee Boggs Archives Collection, Reuther Historic Library, Wayne State University; Revolutionary Action Movement, "The Relationship of Revolutionary Afro-American Movement to the Bandung Revolution," *Black America* (Summer-Fall 1965), 11. Digital file available on website, [http://freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/DOC513\\_scans/RAM/513.RAM.Black.America.Summer.1965.pdf](http://freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/DOC513_scans/RAM/513.RAM.Black.America.Summer.1965.pdf).

<sup>52</sup> Max Stanford, "Greeting to Our Militant Vietnamese Brothers," *Black Power*, fall 1964; The Bandung Conference refers to the first large-scale Afro-Asian Conference which was held on April 18-24, 1955 in Bandung, Indonesia. There were 29 countries, most of which were newly independent, that participated in the conference. The participants included China and India but excluded the Soviet Union, the United States and most of its allies. Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai gave an important speech, and the conference also provided a good arena for China to smash the isolation from the U.S. and its allies and to establish foreign relations with Asian and African countries. The Bandung Conference laid the foundation for the nonaligned movement during the Cold War and established embryonic form of the "Third World." The conference adopted a 10-point resolution that was summarized as "anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism and self-determination," which were later called as "Spirit of Bandung." After that conference, several organizations (such as the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, Afro-Asian Journalist Association and Afro-Asian Writers Bureau) were established and aimed

After the Fisk University's conference, the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) published an essay titled "The Relationship of the Revolutionary Afro-American Movement to the Bandung Revolution" in its theoretical journal *Black America*. In the essay, RAM put forward a new concept, "Bandung Humanism" which was defined as "a revolutionary revision of Western or traditional Marxism to relate revolutionary ideology adequately to the unprecedented political, socio-economic, technological, psycho-cultural developments occurring in the post -World War II era." It propounded the Revolutionary Afro-American Movement was a part of the Bandung Revolution which aimed at "eradicating the 'Yanqui'(U.S.&NATO) inhuman imperialism and establishing a new world based on the humane socialist values of 'Bandung Humanism'." <sup>53</sup>

Furthermore, while Williams' reports on the outbreak of the Chinese Cultural Revolution reached Detroit, James Boggs, who briefly served as ideological chairman of RAM, appreciated it as a good example of "Bandung Humanism." He hoped that it could encourage cultural activities of black community and help black people to carry out the "complete and human reorganization of human life."<sup>54</sup> In fact, the nature of the so-called

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at increasing political, economic and cultural cooperation between Asian and African nations. See Charles Neuhauser, *Third World Politics: China and The Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, 1957-1967* (Cambridge, MA: East Asian Research Center of Harvard University, 1970), 3-10.

<sup>53</sup> Revolutionary Action Movement, "The Relationship of Revolutionary Afro-American Movement to the Bandung Revolution," 11.

<sup>54</sup> Inner City Organizing Committee (ICOC) Papers, in James and Grace Boggs Papers, Part 1, Box 5, Folder 7, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Reuther Historic Library, Wayne State

“Bandung Humanism” was a theory about self and social transformation borrowing or deriving from Maoism in the following three points.

Firstly, on the strategical level, “Bandung Humanism” was the reproduction of Mao’s “Third Word” strategy, that is, anti-American Imperialism, anti-Soviet Revisionism and keeping solidarity with Asian, African, and Latin-American countries of the “Third World” to continue revolution. By internationalizing their revolutionary Afro-American movement, the radical black activists kept solidarity with other revolutionary powers world-wide and thereby could attain mutual support. For example, what James Boggs said about the war in Vietnam in a speech clarifies this point as follows:

“[The War in Vietnam was] the most immediate as well as profound issue affecting the whole black community and particularly black youths...[The black revolutionary organization must] make it clear in theory and practice that the Vietcong and the Black Power Movement in the United States are part of the same world-wide revolution against the same enemy...Like the black youths of Watts, the black revolutionary organization will make it clear that black youths have no business fighting in the Ku Klux Klan army that is slaughtering black people in Vietnam.”<sup>55</sup>

Secondly, on the theoretical and practical level, “Bandung Humanism” reflected the reality that Mao’s dialectical philosophical thinking became an important reference for the Black Power Movement thinkers to create their revolutionary theories, and an

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<sup>55</sup> James Boggs, *Racism and the Class Struggle: Further Pages from a Black Worker’s Notebook* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1970), 49.

important practical guidance to lead radical black activists' revolutionary struggles. For example, in the 1960s Mao's works became important reading materials for Detroit radical study circles. The Boggs also frequently cited Mao's writings, particularly Mao's essay *Maodung Lun* [On Contradiction], in their written works or speeches. After outbreak of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Mao's "Zai Yan'an wenyi zuotanhui shang de jianghua" ["Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art"] became radical black activists' reading assignment and were widely studied and debated in their study groups.<sup>56</sup> Mao's notion of "human nature" (which was described as "a bourgeois fallacy to be dispatched by a total transformation of society: 'Genuine love of mankind will be born only when class distinctions have been eliminated throughout the world.'"<sup>57</sup>) also deeply inspired the Boggs theory of "Dialectical Humanism", which requires that "revolutionists have a responsibility to create strategies to transform [themselves] as well as the victims of oppression into human beings who are more advanced in the qualities that distinguish human being: creativity, consciousness, self-consciousness, and a sense of political and social responsibility."<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Mullen, "Transnational Correspondence," 203-205; Mullen, *Afro-Orientalism* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 94-100.

<sup>57</sup> Mao Tse-tung, *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Art and Literature* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1960), 8-9; Mullen, "Transnational Correspondence," 202; Mullen, *Afro-Orientalism*, 92.

<sup>58</sup> James Boggs, *Racism and the Class Struggle*; Grace Lee Boggs, *Living for Change*, 152; James and Grace Lee Boggs, *Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century: New introduction by Grace Lee Boggs* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 2008), 13-23; Mullen, *Afro-Orientalism*, 116.

Finally, as an inspiration for mobilization on practical level, Mao's many teachings such as "From the Masses, To the Masses" and "Serve the People" guided revolutionary activists to return to and serve the African American community. For example, in the 1966 Black Arts Conference which was organized by the Inner City Organizing Committee (ICOC), Grace Lee Boggs held a community activism panel and put forward an agenda included "an appeal to create new jobs, community control of black schools, the end of a military draft until black service equaled its population proportion, and a training program for youth leaders."<sup>59</sup>

As scholar Stephen Michael Ward stated, James and Grace Lee Boggs were not only "well-known Detroit-based activists" but they were also "theoreticians and architects of the Black Power Movement."<sup>60</sup> Their contributions towards African American revolutionary movements were extraordinary, meanwhile, their revolutionary ideology also greatly impacted the succeeding Asian American Movement. In an interview, Grace confessed that she actually did not participate in Asian American political activities until 1970 when she established the Asian Political Alliance (APA, however with only six

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<sup>59</sup> *Inner City Voice*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (October 20, 1967), in Detroit Revolutionary Movements Records, Box 1, Reuther Historic Library, Wayne State University; Mullen, "Transnational Correspondence," 205.

<sup>60</sup> Stephen Michael Ward, "'Ours Too Was a Struggle for a Better World': Activists Intellectuals and the Radical Promise of the Black Power Movement, 1962-1972." Ph. D. Dissertation (The University of Texas at Austin, August 2002).



members including, Asian Americans and Asians). However, her activist legacies in the African American movement greatly inspired the radical Asian American activists in the Asian American Movement. There is a clear example that in the early 1970s, when the younger generation Asian American activists formed the Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA) and joined the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF), the ideology of “Bandung Humanism” formed the solidarity base to unite each ethnic group.

### **III. To Create Chinese American Consciousness: Establishment of the Chinese Historical Society of America, Chinese Culture Foundation and *East/West* Newspaper**

By examining the experiences of two famous Chinese American activists Gilbert Woo and Grace Lee Boggs in the African American Civil Rights Movement period, it is shown that Chinese Americans and the Chinese American community had been committed to African American civil rights activism directly or indirectly. How did African American movements influence and empower the Chinese American community, and further change the community consciousness? These questions will be discussed in the following section by specifically focusing on the stories of two newly-founded institutions and one new community press.

After the U.S. Congress repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943, a lot of Chinese in the United States got professional and technological jobs, and they gradually became

middle class and most of them were naturalized as U.S. citizens. As their interests became firmly rooted in the U.S., and they overcame their alienation and began to re-think their identities. This trend was strengthened by the U.S. federal offices coordination with the pro-KMT Chinatown establishment to suppress any dissidents who were oriented towards the PRC. Meanwhile, many progressive activists were also pushed to change their points of view towards China's politics and their interests in the U.S., leading them to re-identify themselves.

Moreover, the influence of the African American Civil Rights Movement slowly spread into the Chinese American community. The voices calling for the acquisition of civil rights became louder and louder. However, the community power structure was still controlled by the pro-KMT establishment. The KMT organs or pro-KMT media almost completely controlled community opinions and their reports were full of partisan bias.

In order to consider the identity problems, a few Chinese community scholars founded the Chinese Historical Society of America (CHSA) and tried to find answers by exploring their own historical experiences. Some liberal Chinese Americans established the Chinese Culture Foundation to promote their own culture which was usually marginalized by pro-KMT propaganda. Some liberals founded a bilingual weekly called *East/West* voicing concern about interests of Chinese Americans and their communities.

i. The Chinese Historical Society of America (CHSA, 美國華人歷史學會)

The Chinese Historical Society of America was founded by Chinese community historian Thomas W. Chinn in January 1963, which aimed to document and disseminate information regarding Chinese American history. Chinn was a journalist and later turned his interests to the history of Chinese in America. Before the CHSA was established, history on the Chinese in America was scattered in mainstream intellectual books and many were distorted.<sup>61</sup> Chinn and other founding members of the CHSA tried to collect the historical materials but they could largely not read them because most of materials were written in Chinese. Two years later, Him Mark Lai joined the CHSA and became a very active member. Although he was also a native born Chinese American, he had good Chinese ability. So, after he joined the organization, and history research in the CHSA progressed very well.<sup>62</sup>

The founding of the CHSA and its historical research attracted the interest of people both from the Chinese American community and outside. In response to the growing

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<sup>61</sup> L. Ling-chi Wang, "Asian American Studies," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (1981), 341-348; Wang, "Him Mark Lai: A Tribute to the Dean of Chinese American History," in *Celebrating Him Mark Lai: The Dean of Chinese American Historians*, Maurice Chuck, L. Ling-chi Wang and Weiye Ou eds. (San Francisco, CA: The Chinese Historical Society of America, 2009), 5.

<sup>62</sup> Judy Yung and Him Mark Lai, "Him Mark Lai: Reclaiming Chinese American History," *The Public Historian*, Vol. 25, No.1 (2003), 58; Lai, "Musings of a Chinese American Historian," *Amerasia Journal*, Vol. 26, No.1 (2000), 9; Lai, *Him Mark Lai: Autobiography of A Chinese American Historian* (UCLA Asian American Studies Center and Chinese Historical Society of America, 2011), 101.

interest in the history of Chinese Americans, in April 1969 the Board of the CHSA decided to sponsor a seminar named “A History of Chinese in California” at the Chinese American Citizens Alliance hall in the Chinatown of San Francisco. It became very popular. There were about 250 people to attend the seminar. After the seminar, the handouts were compiled into an 81page syllabus and published by the CHSA. Even today the syllabus, *A History of the Chinese in California* (San Francisco: the Chinese Historical Society of America, 1969), is still an important reference for the study of Chinese American history, especially for the research into Chinese labor in California during the nineteenth century.<sup>63</sup>

Actually, the seminar was a landmark for study the Chinese American history. It was held just at the moment of the Students’ Strike at San Francisco State University and UC, Berkeley where the radical students required the universities to establish Asian American studies so that they could research their own history.

After the CHSA seminar, Chester Cheng, a professor in the History Department of San Francisco State University, called Him Mark Lai and Philip P. Choy (who was an architect and historian of Chinese Americans, and also one of founding members of the

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<sup>63</sup> Anna Naruta, “A ‘Landmark’: History of Chinese Californians by Californians, 1969,” *Chinese America: History and Perspectives* (San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America, 2009), 56- 59; L. Ling-chi Wang, “California Chinese Seminar a Landmark,” *East/West*, April 23, 1969, Philip P. Choy Collection, CHSA.

CHSA) and invited them to teach a pilot course on Chinese American history in the History Department. Lai and Choy accepted the invitation to teach the course which would become the first college level course in the U.S. on the history of Chinese in America. They prepared the course outline based on the syllabus of the CHSA seminar. After the pilot course was successfully completed, they were asked to continue teaching the course at the newly-founded Asian American Studies Program which was established as the result of the Third World Liberation Front Strikes of 1968 in San Francisco State University.<sup>64</sup>

In the class there were many students who actively participated in the Strikes for establishing Ethnic Studies program in the University, including George Woo and Gordon Chin who were leaders of Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action (ICSA) which was one of the leading groups in the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF)<sup>65</sup>. For them, Lai

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<sup>64</sup> Philip P. Choy, "Upon Reflection," in *At 40: Asian American Studies @ San Francisco State*, Lorraine Dong et al., eds. (San Francisco, CA: Asian American Studies Department, San Francisco State University, 2009), 79; Him Mark Lai, "Planning and Teaching the First Course in Chinese American History," in *At 40: Asian American Studies @ San Francisco State*, Lorraine Dong et al., eds. (San Francisco, CA: Asian American Studies, San Francisco State University, 2009), 81-82; Yung and Lai, "Him Mark Lai," 59-60.

<sup>65</sup> The Third World Liberation Front (TWLF) was a multiracial coalition consisting of six student organizations in San Francisco State University during the Strikes period, including the Black Student Union (BSU), the Latin Am(MASC), the Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA), the Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action (ICSA), and the Pilipino American Collegiate Endeavor (PACE). The TWLF was formed in the spring of 1968 and became a leading power in the Strikes. ICSA was formed in October 1967 by a number of native born Chinese American college students who were in San Francisco's Chinatown to teach English to Chinese immigrant youths and counseled those young people contemplating applying to college. The detailed activism of both ICSA and TWLF will be discussed in Chapter 6 of this dissertation. See Daryl Joji Maeda, *Rethinking The Asian American Movement* (New York, NY: Routledge), 29-31; Malcolm Collier and Daniel Phil Gonzales, "Origins: People, Time, Place, Dream," in *At 40: Asian American*

and Choy's pilot course was fitted right into what they wanted. As Philip P. Choy states in an interview by the author: "To those Chinese American student activists, they found that history as written and taught was propaganda to promote white America's exploits to the disadvantage of minorities. The Chinese who lived in San Francisco's Chinatown for multi-generations were still treated as foreigners and disappeared in American history. Thus, the pilot course was welcomed in class. It nurtured students' sense of community and ethnicity."<sup>66</sup>

ii. **The Chinese Culture Foundation (CCF 中國文化中心)**

After the pro-KMT establishment cooperated with the U.S. federal justice to uproot the leftist dissidents from the Chinese American communities in the mid-1950s, the Kuomintang government (in Taiwan) began to send teachers to instruct music, drama and dance to students in Chinatown's Chinese language school. The pro-KMT Chinatown organizations helped the KMT to propagate Chinese culture substantially in consonance with Taiwan's ideological guidelines. Moreover, the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission of the KMT government supplied the text books (which used the traditional Chinese characters in contrast to the simplified one used in the PRC) to the Chinese schools. Needless to say, the texts were embedded in Taiwan's propaganda.<sup>67</sup>

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*Studies @ San Francisco State*, Lorrain Dong et al. eds. (San Francisco, CA: Asian American Studies, San Francisco State University, 2009), 10-13.

<sup>66</sup> Philip P. Choy, interview by author, San Francisco, December 18, 2014.

<sup>67</sup> Lai, "China and the Chinese American community: The Political Dimension," *Chinese America:*

However, due to the influence of the Civil Rights Movement on the Chinese American middle classes who did not only have an interest in issues of the Chinese American community but also tried to participate in mainstream politics, they felt resentful about the repressive environment created by the KMT control of Chinatown and wanted to challenge its power structure, at least in the cultural and recreational fields.<sup>68</sup>

In 1965, J.K. Choy, who was manager of the highly successful Chinatown branch of the San Francisco Federal Savings and Loan Association and also president of San Francisco Greater Chinatown Community Service Association (SFGCCSA), founded the Chinese Culture Foundation of San Francisco (CCF).<sup>69</sup> Although the CCF tried to keep its neutral position in the struggle between the PRC and the KMT government, it was still attacked by the pro-KMT establishment because the CCF attempted to evade the KMT's control in the cultural field and to import activities of the PRC in San Francisco's Chinatown. Finally, J.K. Choy was threatened by gangs employed by the Anti-Communist League, and the importation of cultural activities of the PRC was shelved.<sup>70</sup>

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History and Perspective (San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America, 2009), 12; Peichi Liu, *Meiguo Huaqiao shi xubian* [A Sequel to *A History of Chinese in the United States of America*] (Taipei: Liming wenhua shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1981), 357-358.

<sup>68</sup> Lai, "China and the Chinese American Community," 12.

<sup>69</sup> Him Mark Lai, *A History of the Chinese Culture Foundation and the Chinese Culture Center of San Francisco* (San Francisco, CA: Chinese Culture Foundation, 1995), 5-8. Available online [https://www.cccsf.us/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/CCF-History\\_1965-1995-Him-Mark-Lai.pdf](https://www.cccsf.us/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/CCF-History_1965-1995-Him-Mark-Lai.pdf) (accessed April 23, 2018); Also see the homepage of Chinese Culture Foundation and Chinese American Center of San Francisco, <https://www.cccsf.us/about/> (accessed April 23, 2018).

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

Since then the CCF decided to focus on the cultural activities of the Chinese American community, such as photo exhibitions of Chinese American photographers, large-scale exhibits on Chinese American history. By holding these cultural activities, the CCF wanted to cultivate the consciousness of Chinese Americans instead of being overseas Chinese oriented to Taiwan's government or to the PRC.

iii. *East/West* Newspaper (東西報)

*East/West* was a bilingual weekly newspaper founded by Gordon Lew (who was a member and later president of the CADC) on January 1, 1967.<sup>71</sup> The newspaper was founded at a time of tumultuous change occurring both in the United States and in China. In the United States, accompanying the so-called “non-violent” African American Civil Rights Movement gradual shift to the radical Black Power Movement, many uprisings occurred in the cities. In China, the Chinese Cultural Revolution had started and the slogan of “Long Live! Chairman Mao” could be heard anywhere. Undoubtedly, the influence of those domestic and international tumultuous happenings had spread into the San Francisco's Chinatown and also empowered the changes in Chinese American community. The *East/West* actively advocated and recorded those changes.

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<sup>71</sup> William Wong, “*East/West: The Chinese American Journal*,” *Chinese America: History and Perspectives* (Special Issue: Seizing the Movement: Twentieth-Century Chinese American Activism) (San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America, 2009), 47-55; Gengji Fang, “Dong Xi Bao,” [*East/West*] in *Huaqiao Huaren Baike Quanshu: Meiti & Chuban Juan* [The Encyclopedia of Chinese Overseas: Volume of Media & Publication], Zhou Nanjing ed. (Beijing: Zhongguo Huaqiao Chubanshe, 1999), 41-42.



Surprisingly, in *East/West*'s inaugural issue, its editorial began to criticize the lack of leadership in Chinatown bitterly and stated that *East/West*'s mission were "rocking the status quo, banging the drums, making noises, because Chinatown needs to be awakened."<sup>72</sup> It became the first newspapers to directly criticize the pro-KMT establishment in the 1960s when the KMT power still strongly controlled the Chinese American community. The newspaper's founders and editors tried to provide news and views about occurrences both in U.S. and in China with a liberal stance, pushing for changes to improve the quality of Chinese American life and speaking directly to their unique ethnic and cultural identities. The newspaper also provided a column to narrate histories of Chinese Americans and stories of Asian American communities which had been in the shadows of segregation and discrimination since the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>73</sup>

Just after having founded *East/West*, its managing editor Maurice Chuck, who was a leading member of Min Qing in the 1950s, invited Him Mark Lai to help proofreading the English version and also to write a series of articles on Chinese American history. Because Lai was an amateur and did not receive any professional training in being a history scholar before that, in order to improve the quality of article published on the

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<sup>72</sup> "An Editorial," *East/West*, January 1, 1967; Wong, "East/West: The Chinese American Journal," 47.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

newspaper, he went to the public, university and historical society libraries to collect materials and study them diligently. As Lai recalled, “[My] articles found a readership among the increasing number of Chinese Americans anxious to learn more about their historical heritage.”<sup>74</sup> When the Students’ Strike ended after the Ethnic Studies College was founded in San Francisco State University, Lai was invited to teach “the country’s first full-fledged college course in Chinese American history,” together with Philip P. Choy, at that university. Lai refined his articles which were published in *East/West* as the syllabus of the class.<sup>75</sup>

Another author who usually contributed to *East/West* was L. Ling-chi Wang, who was a scholar and also a famous community activist struggling for Chinese American civil rights since the Mid-1960s. As a liberal activist, Wang’s political position conformed to the stance of *East/West*. Thus, the paper became “an ideal vehicle for Wang’s prolific writing, intellectual curiosity, and passionate activism,” his voices usually appeared in the “front-page news articles on community issues, opinion articles, and some editorials.”<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Lai, “Musings of a Chinese American Historian,” 10; Lai, *Him Mark Lai: Autobiography of A Chinese American Historian*, 100; Yung and Lai, “Him Mark Lai,” 58; Zhenxing Zhu, “From Sojourner to Chinese American: Changing Identities of Chinese American Activists during the Civil Rights Era,” *An Occasional Supplement to Doshisha American Studies*, No. 21 (April, 2014), 118.

<sup>75</sup> Lai, *Him Mark Lai: Autobiography of A Chinese American Historian*, 100; Yung and Lai, “Him Mark Lai,” 59; Peter Monaghan, “The Scholar who Legitimized the Study of Chinese America,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Vol. 46, No. 19 (January 14, 2000).

<sup>76</sup> Wong, “East/West: The Chinese American Journal,” 52-53.

*East/West* posed a liberal position towards the African American Civil Rights Movement. It strongly advocated Chinese Americans to pursue equality of opportunity and further participation in American political, social and cultural life and to bravely fight against discrimination. The paper constantly informed its readers of the importance of political participation for the interests of the whole community and also helped to forge the idea of a Chinese American identity different from an identity oriented to Taiwan or to the PRC.

#### **IV. Conclusion of this Chapter**

As a representative of Chinese American liberal activists, Gilbert Woo co-founded CADC which aimed to advocate Chinese Americans keeping their distance from partisan struggles for China's politics in Chinatown and to actively participate in American politics which could benefit the welfare interests of Chinese American community. At the same time, Gilbert Woo's newspaper, *Chinese Pacific Weekly* called upon its readers to coexist with African Americans and support black people's non-violent civil rights struggles because their interests were bound to the fates of African American Movements. Moreover, in order to push Asian ethnic groups' unity for a bloc vote, Woo created an embryo of "Asian American" identity which inspired the solidarity among Asian groups in the younger generations' activism.

Compared to Gilbert Woo's liberal position and his activism in the Chinese

American community, Grace Lee Boggs, as a Chinese American female philosophy scholar, directly joined the African American Civil Rights Movement and its succeeding Black Power Movement. She finally became an influential figure in the movements and helped her husband James Boggs to create some struggle theories which did not only greatly influenced the Black Power Movement but also became inspirations for the following Asian American Movement.

Under influence of the African American Civil Rights Movement and rising liberal power in the Chinese American community, new institutions and press emerging in Chinatown, the typical examples of this were the Chinese Historical Society of America, the Chinese Culture Foundation and *East/West* newspapers. By exploring Chinese American history, exhibiting Chinese American culture, and reporting on Chinese American affairs, they gradually helped the Chinese in America (No matter if they were foreign born or native born) to form the idea of a Chinese American identity different from an identity oriented to Taiwan or to Beijing. Meanwhile, accompanying the younger generation activists' involvement in activities of these institutions and press, they also became vehicles and facilities for Chinese American civil rights activism, and even the Asian American Movement. As for this point, there will be a discussion in Chapter 6 of this dissertation.

## **Chapter 6. Chinese American Movements and the Formation of the Asian American Movement.**

In this chapter, I will mainly examine emergence of the “new left” and their activism. Also, I will explore how these young Chinese American activists managed to maintain solidarity with other minority groups in their struggle for civil rights. It will be divided into three sections as following:

### **I. Conflicts between Young Chinese American Activists and Leaders of the Chinese American Community Establishment**

#### **i. Miserable conditions in Chinatown and incompetence of the Chinese Community establishment.**

In 1965, the U.S. finally repealed laws limiting the quota for Chinese immigration and tens of thousands of Chinese families were allowed to reunite. L. Ling-chi Wang described the situation he had seen in 1966 as follows:

Overnight, San Francisco’s Chinatown was swamped, bursting at the seam in terms of housing and employment; public schools flooded with non-English-speaking children; and young people idle, unable to find gainful employment inside and outside Chinatown...I was particularly struck by stories of immigrant youths receiving no help in learning English and losing hope of getting the circumstances they needed to make it in America. Many were on the verge of dropping out of school and becoming delinquents.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kui-lan Liu, *Bian huan de bian jie: ya yi zuo jia he pi ping jia fang tang lu*. (The Shifting Boundaries: Interviews with Asian American Writers and Critics) (Tian jin: Nankai University press, 2012), 240-241.

This miserable reality affected Wang deeply and inspired him to create a plan to help those students in American public schools who did not understand English.

In fact, at that time Chinatown was unquestionably a ghetto. As Wang pointed out in an interview, on the one hand, “Cultural and language barriers prevented many people from seeking jobs outside of Chinatown. As a result, high unemployment rates caused people to compete for work in small businesses such as restaurants, sweat shops, and laundries. This point is one facet of ‘the structure of dual domination’, namely that the owners of small businesses exploited the poor helpless Chinese workers. The community establishment managed to hide the miserable situation in Chinatown and suppress those who tried to expose the problems and seek government help.”<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the white majority society promoted the myth of the “Model Minority” to create an image that Chinese people have always been “hard-working, patient, quiet and non-militant people with lasting endurance”. In short, they could solve their problems without any assistance from government.<sup>3</sup>

**ii. Conflicts between liberal power and the Community Establishment.**

In fact, since the late 1960s the Johnson Government put forward an “Anti-Poverty

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<sup>2</sup> L. Ling-chi Wang, (professor at U.C. Berkeley), interview by author, San Francisco, CA, June 28, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> See more in L. Ling-chi Wang, "Chinatown and the Chinese," in *To Serve the Devil (Volume 2: Colonials and Sojourners)* Paul Jacobs and Saul Landau eds. (N.Y.:Vintage Books, 1971) 140-142.

Movement,” which encouraged the poor to participate in shaping their future and injected both financial resources and professional services into designated poverty areas.<sup>4</sup> The Chinatown should definitely have been among the “designated poverty areas.”

However, Chinatown’s power was divided between two groups: the pro-KMT establishment who denied the existence of social and economic problems; and young Chinese and Asian American college students and professionals who decided to accept government resources into the community. Therefore, the former considered the latter as an unprecedented threat to the status quo within the Chinese community and thought the latter would challenge their power to gain control of Chinatown.<sup>5</sup>

When L. Ling-chi Wang helped organize a historical demonstration, it immediately produced extreme anger on the parts of CCBA and the KMT:

They were extremely angry and denied the problems in Chinatown and called younger activists ‘undesirable’ and ‘outside agitators’ who promoted the wrong image for Chinatown and furthermore they even plotted to kill me because I was an organizer and considered a threat to Chinatown.<sup>6</sup>

Under these circumstances, Wang recognized that the old establishment (such as huiguans and fongs) had lost their relevance in solving the new problems that Chinatown faced, and that the leaders who were representatives of the KMT regime strongly hindered the

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<sup>4</sup> Liu, *bian huan de bian jie*, 242.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 242-243

<sup>6</sup> L. Ling-chi Wang, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, June 28, 2012.

taking of government assistance for improving community services. So, what Chinatown needed was a strong civil rights voice and media to broadcast about change in Chinese community.

### **iii. Chinese Liberal Activists Fighting for Civil Rights**

In order to accomplish these goals L. Ling-chi Wang organized and founded Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA) and the Chinese Media Committee (華人傳媒協會). The objective of the CAA was to bring both American and foreign-born youth groups together to encourage them to take control of their own lives and demand government support of programs they needed, such as bilingual education, job training programs, delinquency prevention and meaningful recreational activities. An example of their lawsuit was the Case of *Lau vs. Nichols*. In this case, they won the right to request public bilingual education in public schools.

## **II. “Serve the People”: Activism of the Radical Chinese American Organizations**

Like the African American Movement was divided between moderates and radicals, Chinese American activism was also divided into liberals and the radicals. Compared to L. Ling-chi Wang and his liberal peers who advocated for a change discrimination laws, the radicals who learnt tactics from the Black Panther Party and Maoism tried to solve the problems by more militant ways.



i. **Activism of the Red Guard Party**

After the U.S. government finally repealed laws limiting the quota of Chinese eligible for immigration in 1965, immigrants swamping into San Francisco's Chinatown caused an exceeding shortage of houses and employment. Because Chinatown offered few job opportunities and showed few signs of possible social mobility, many native born Chinese American youths descended into gangsterism and targeted new immigrants or even tourists in acts of violence.<sup>7</sup> In order to prevent more Chinese American youths to joining gangs, at a pool hall in San Francisco's Chinatown a few Chinese American youngsters founded a local self-help group named Leway (a contraction of "Legitimate way"), which aimed to unite and politicize street youth and gangs to serve for community youth programs particularly in the Chinatown area. The radical members of the Leway group thought the U.S. government's racist policies contributed to their social injustice. They began to imitate to the Black Panther Party and to openly discuss revolutionary ideas.<sup>8</sup> The Leway group became a power base for the formation of the Red Guard Party.

Alex Hing, who was born on January 8, 1946 in San Francisco's Chinatown, became an active member and organizer in the Leway group. He recalls that he and other

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<sup>7</sup> Chiou-ling Yeh, "Contesting Identities: Youth Rebellion in San Francisco's Chinese New Year Festivals, 1953-1969," 329-350; Lyman, "Red Guard on Grant Avenue," 21-34.

<sup>8</sup> William Wei, *The Asian American Movement* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University, 1993), 14; Fred Ho, Carolyn Antonio, Diane Fujino and Steve Yip, eds., *Legacy to Liberation: Politics and Culture of Revolutionary Asian Pacific America* (San Francisco, CA: AK Press and Big Red Media, 2000), 5; Mullen, "By the Book," 248.

organizers of the Leway group held sessions reading Mao's *Little Red Book* and screened films on Third World Liberation struggles at the dusty pool hall. And they were also invited to study works on Maoism (such as "On the State", "On Contradiction" and "On Practice") together with the Panthers. Finally, encouraged by the Panther leaders Bobby Seale and David Hilliard, Hing and other Leway members founded a revolutionary organization called the "Red Guard Party"(紅衛兵党) in February 1969. Although it borrowed the name from its Chinese counterpart, the Red Guard Party was similar to the Black Panther Party. For example, the "Red Guard Program and Rules," which were released in *Red Guard Community News* on April 9, 1969, were modeled closely on the ten-point Program of the Black Panther Party. However, the "Red Guard Program" specifically targeted Chinatown and other Asian American issues and also demanded U.S. government recognition of the PRC.<sup>9</sup>

Through the Black Panther Party, knowledge of Maoism and the Chinese Cultural Revolution spread around the Chinese American community in the early 1970s. According to an interview with Alex Hing, Hing led members of the Red Guard Party to wear Mao jackets and berets, and also wore red armbands while they carried out public

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.alex-hing.com/>. Accessed on September 28, 2017; Mullen, "By the book," 248-249; *The Red Guard Community News* was an organ of Red Guard Party. See more details in *Red Guard Community News*, Vol.1, No.2 (April 9, 1969), The Bancroft Library of UC Berkeley, Call No.: pf F870c5c351969, Shelf: 124 F11; Martin Wong, "Alex Hing: IWK," *Giant Robot*, No. 10(Spring, 1998), 79-81.

marches to commemorate China's May Fourth Movement. Meanwhile in order to echo Mao's call "Wei renmin fuwu" ("Serve the People"), members of the Red Guard emulated the panthers to organize a Free Breakfast for Children Program which was later changed to a free afternoon lunch program for senior citizens in Chinatown. And when the federal government wanted to close down the Tuberculosis testing center in San Francisco's Chinatown (although Chinatown had the highest rate in the U.S. at that time), they demonstrated to keep the testing center open.<sup>10</sup>

**ii. The Chinatown Co-ops and the Asian Community Center**

The Red Guard Party served as a pioneering revolutionary organization that spread Maoism in order to combat U.S. government racial oppression against Asian Americans and to call for serving the masses in their community. Aside from the Red Guard Party, other forms of activism led to the creation of the Chinatown Co-ops (which were called "Tang ren jie he zuo she" in Chinese, which were modeled on China's Cooperative System in the 1950s and 1960s and were founded by workers in Chinatown's sweatshops). Prominent among them was the Co-operative Garment Factory. Those Chinatown Co-ops which were inspired by the collective spirit of China's Cooperative System promoted class struggle against the exploitation and oppression from both the white and Chinatown

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<sup>10</sup> Wong, "Alex Hing," 79-80; Mullen, "By the book," 250.

ruling class, and became places where “workers were helping their fellow workers out in production as well as providing a personal social life.”<sup>11</sup>

The influence of Maoism and the Chinese Cultural Revolution was not confined to Chinatown and other Asian communities. As Chinese American activist Steve Yip recalled, in the newly founded Asian American Studies course (which was established in UC Berkeley as the result of the Third World Student Strike in 1969) Mao’s *Little Red Book* was introduced in the class. Under the influence of Maoism, especially inspired by the Chinese Cultural Revolution’s call to the urban educated youth to join the “Down to the Countryside Movement”<sup>12</sup>, several Chinese American activists, including Steve Yip and Harvey Dong left UC Berkeley and established the Asian Community Center (亞洲聯合中心) at San Francisco’s Chinatown in December 1969. The Asian Community

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<sup>11</sup> “The Cooperative: A Viable Alternative for Garment Factory Workers,” *AAPA Newspaper*, Vol.2, No.1,(November 1969), 4; “Chinatown Co-operative Garment Factory,” *Asian Community Newsletter*, No.1 (July 11, 1970); “A Better Garment Factory: The Chinatown Co-op,” *Wei Min Chinese Community News*, Vol.1, No.1 (October 1971),3; “What is Wei Min She,” *Wei Min Chinese Community News*, Vol.1, No.7-8 (April-May, 1972).

<sup>12</sup> The Down to the Countryside Movement refers to “Zhishi qingnian shangshan xiexiang yundong” (“The Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside Movement” which was started under Mao’s call in the early 1960s. However, after the Cultural Revolution broke out, it became a policy of the PRC and a political task of Chinese urban educated youth. Mao’s stated aim for the policy was to ensure that urban students could learn from the workers and peasants while they worked and served in the rural areas so that they could better integrate themselves into working class. Many urban educated students also believed the movement was a great opportunity to transform themselves into the strong socialist youth in the Cultural Revolution context. In total, approximately 17 million youth were sent to rural areas as a result of the movement. See more in Lianhe Yao, “Zhishi qingnian shangshan xiexiang yundong jianshi,” (“A Brief History on the UP to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside Movement”) *Wenshi Cankao* (National Humanity History), Vol. 18, reprinted in *People’s Daily Online*, Literature and History Column. <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/198221/198819/204159/12909768.html> , accessed on September 28, 2017.

Center did not only provide a hang-out place for elderly Chinatown residents but it had also become a stronghold for Chinese American activists who started Everybody's Bookstore (大眾書店) to disseminate news and information about the Chinese and other Third World liberation struggles, and they also carried out the Chinatown Co-op Free Food Program to distribute free government surplus food to needy community residents on a monthly basis.<sup>13</sup>

### iii. Activism of Wei Min She

One year later after opening the Asian Community Center, in San Francisco's Chinatown Steve Yip and Harvey Dong and other activists founded a Maoist, anti-imperialist organization named "Wei Min She" (為民社) which had in its platform the following: 1) fighting for democratic rights 2) promoting class struggle 3) promoting the struggle against the oppression of women 4) promoting U.S.-PRC friendship 5) strengthening anti-imperialist student work.<sup>14</sup> One of the popular activities of the Wei

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<sup>13</sup> Mullen, "By the book," 251-252; Steve Yip, "Serve the People-Yesterday and Today: The Legacy of Wei Min She," in Ho et al., eds., *Legacy to Liberation*, 17; "Serve the People," *Asian Community Center Newsletter*, No.2 (July 24, 1970); "Change Can Only Come From The People: The Chinatown Co-op Free Food Program," *Asian Community Newsletter*, No.1 (July 11, 1970); "Bookstore," *AAPA Newspaper*, Vol. 2, Issue 2 (December 1969-February 1970); Harvey Dong, "A Community Bookstore For Everybody," in *Stand Up: An Archive Collection of the Bay Area Asian American Movement, 1968-1974*, Asian Community Center Archive Group ed.(Berkeley, CA: Eastwind Books of Berkeley, 2009), 97-103.

<sup>14</sup> Steve Yip, "Serve the People-Yesterday and Today: The Legacy of Wei Min She," in Ho et al., eds., *Legacy to Liberation*, 15-30; "Wei Min She: Organization for the People," *Wei Min Newspaper*, Vol.1, No.1 (October 1971); "What is Wei Min She?" *Wei Min Chinese Community News*, Vol.1, No.7-8 (April-May, 1972); "Wei Min She Summary Paper: Organization for the People," in *Stand Up*, 121-126; Mullen, "By the book," 251-252

Min She was to show films for Chinatown residents at the Asian Community Center every two weeks on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The Film Program attracted a large audience, especially the elderly Chinese residents who had been long separated from the country of their youth. As Harvey Dong stated in an interview,

“...The ones who most enthusiastically received us were those from China. These films showed our people a true picture of China, since the only news and opinions about China for the previous two decades had been distorted by the news media. When we showed *The East Is Red*<sup>15</sup>, we had to show it fifteen times because there was a line of people outside waiting to get in.”<sup>16</sup>

Actually, the Film Program provided a chance for Chinatown residents to imagine the PRC and its revolution. Since establishment of the PRC in 1949, the pro-Kuomintang establishment cooperated with U.S. government to control the Chinese American communities, and any dissidents would be branded communists and oppressed. However, inspired by the Black Power Movement and especially by the activism of the Black Panther Party in the Bay area, young native born Chinese American activists were determined to crush the dominance of the reactionary forces in the community. They began to learn struggle tactics from the Panthers, moreover they embraced Maoism and

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<sup>15</sup> *The East Is Red* is a 1965 film shot in the PRC which dramatized the history of the Chinese revolution and the Chinese Communist Party under the leadership of Mao Zedong. The film and other PRC propaganda periodicals were distributed abroad in order to assist revolutionary forces internationally. In the early 1970s during the Asian American Movement the film was extensively screened around Asian communities by the Asian American new left activists. See Karen L. Ishizuka, *Serve The People: Making Asian America in the Long Sixties* (Verso, 2016), 245.

<sup>16</sup> “Films,” *Wei Min Newspaper*, Vol.1, No.1 (October 1971); Ishizuka, *Serve the People*, 117-118; Harvey Dong, interview by author at UC Berkeley, June 29, 2012.

tried to seek intellectuals, ideological, and strategic guidance from the Chinese revolution.

Wei Min She also advocated the class struggles and “human transformation” just like Grace Lee Boggs did.

### **III. Keeping Solidarity and Fighting Together: The Formation of the Asian American Movement**

As historian Daryl Joji Maeda stated, “the Asian American Movement was a loosely organized social movement of national scope. However, the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, and New York were particularly important sites of Asian American activism.”<sup>17</sup>

In this dissertation, the narrative scope is confined to the San Francisco Bay Area, and particularly focuses on the activism occurring on the campuses of both San Francisco State University and U.C. Berkeley, and San Francisco’s Chinatown.

#### **i. The Asian American Political Alliance and The Third World Liberation Front**

The Asian American Political Alliance was an explicitly pan-Asian political organization formed on May 1968 at U.C. Berkeley, after which chapters were founded at several universities in the San Francisco Bay Area, and also to Los Angeles, New York

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<sup>17</sup> Daryl Joji Maeda, *Rethinking the Asian American Movement* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 9.

and other cities.<sup>18</sup> Although AAPA stated that its goal was to “unify all the Asian American community,” the ethnic ratio of membership was different each campus. For example, in the AAPA of U.C. Berkeley, the numbers of membership of AAPA was evenly divided between Chinese American students and Japanese American students. The leaders were also equal numbers from those two groups. However, the situation in the AAPA of San Francisco State University was absolutely different. Because there was a Chinese American student group called “the Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action (ICSA)” and a Filipino student organization called “Pilipino American Collegiate Endeavor (PACE),” the AAPA in San Francisco State University was almost comprised only of Japanese American Students.<sup>19</sup>

According to an article titled “Yellow Power” published in *Berkeley Barb*,<sup>20</sup> the

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<sup>18</sup> AAPA, “Fact Sheet: Asian American Political Alliance,” *AAPA Leaflets*, September 17, 1968. Repository in Organizations: Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA)-University of California, Berkeley-Organization description, Structure, May 1968—January 1969, Box No.: 1, Folder No.: ctn1:28, Archive Call No.: AAS/ARC 2015/1. Asian American Studies Archives, Ethnic Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley (Hereafter to be referred as AAS Archives); FBI, “Asian American Political Alliance,” FBI Documents, January 29, 1970. (Declassified Authority: 42910, By: Jennifer Blakalee, Date: 09-18-2015), 3-4; 24. Available online <https://archive.org/details/AsianAmericanPoliticalAlliance>

<sup>19</sup> Maeda, *Rethinking the Asian American Movement*, 32; Malcolm Collier and Daniel Phil Gonzales, “Origins: People, Time, Place, Dreams,” in *AT 40: Asian American Studies @ San Francisco State*, Lorraine Dong et al, eds. (San Francisco, CA: Asian American Studies Department, San Francisco State University, 2009), 11.

<sup>20</sup> Berkeley Barb was a weekly newspaper published each Friday at U.C. Berkeley by a so-called “underground press,” during the years from 1965 to 1980. It was well-known as one of the first and most influential counter-culture newspaper which covered subjects such as the anti-Vietnam War Movement and the Black Power Movement, as well as other issues advocated by youth culture in the 1960s. See Peck Abe, *Uncovering the Sixties: The Life and Times of the Underground Press* (New York, NY: Pantheon, 1985).



AAPA was founded by Yuji Ichioka who was a Japanese American student majoring in Asian Studies as a fifth year student in U.C. Berkeley, Floyd Huen who was a Chinese American student majoring in sociology, Emma Gee who was Yuji Ichioka's spouse and also a student in U.C. Berkeley, and other students were principally composed of Chinese and Japanese ancestry, but there were fewer individuals of Korean and Filipino descent.<sup>21</sup>

It was estimated that the initial size of the AAPA was between 30 to 50 persons including students, teachers and social workers.<sup>22</sup> There was a meeting to elect Yuji Ichioka as head of the AAPA, and Floyd Huen as the second in command of the AAPA. Yuji Ichioka gave a speech to state that the AAPA was being formed because "all existing organizations in the Asian American community are too committed to the status quo... We must redefine our relationship to the Black, Mexican-American and Indian liberation movements."<sup>23</sup> In 1969, there was another meeting to elect Richard Aokie, Bryan Fong and Floyd Huen to co-chair the AAPA. At this meeting, Harvey Dong became a Central Committee member.<sup>24</sup>

### **Yellow Identity, Asian American Consciousness**

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<sup>21</sup> "Yellow Power," *Berkeley Barb*, Issue of May 31 — June 6, 1968; FBI, "Asian-American Political Alliance," FBI documents, File No.: SF 100-61299, January 23, 1969 (Declassification Authority Derived From: FBI Automatic Declassification Guide, Date: 05-16-2014/F64M92k24), page 2-4 available online <https://vault.fbi.gov/asian-american-political-alliance>

<sup>22</sup> FBI, *Asian-American Political Alliance*, File No.: SF 100-61299, January 23, 1969, page 4.

<sup>23</sup> "Yellow Power," *Berkeley Barb*, Issue of May — June 6, 1968.

<sup>24</sup> FBI, *Asian-American Political Alliance*, January 23, 1969, page 3; FBI Documents, January 29, 1970.

As mentioned in Chapter 5 of this dissertation, Gilbert Woo borrowed “Orientals” (the wording that was used to stereotype Asian groups by the white society) to call upon his counterparts of other Asian groups to show solidarity and unity as a voting-block in his *Chinese Pacific Weekly* in the end of 1950s and the early 1960s. AAPA was the first to use the term of “Asian American” instead of the term “Oriental.” The change of term was meaningful, and it symbolized that the younger generation of Asian Americans had genuinely overpassed animosities and estrangement among the different Asian ethnic groups and pursued solidarity to fight for civil rights together. As Harvey Dong said in the interview by the author,

“The people who participated in AAPA did not care much about the estrangement among Asian ethnic groups in the past. We all established intimate relationships with each other. For example, Yuji Ichioka married Emma Gee who was a Chinese American and helpful to establish contacts between Japanese American students and Chinese American students. The AAPA provided a forum for us to have our identity, aside from the dominant, white-controlled social structure in America.”<sup>25</sup>

On January 11, 1969, the AAPA initiated the first “Yellow Identity” Symposium sponsored by the Chinese Students Club and by the Nisei Student Club at U.C. Berkeley. There were four speakers: Stanford Lyman, Paul Tagaki, George Woo and Isao Fujimoto. After their talks, organizers showed a movie entitled “The Nisei, The Pride and the Shame,” which mainly documented the experience of Japanese-Americans as soldiers in

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<sup>25</sup> Harvey Dong, interview by author, June 29, 2012, Berkeley, California.

American Army and in detention camp during the Second World War period.<sup>26</sup>

L. Ling-chi Wang, as a participant, wrote an article entitled “Student Throng Jams ‘Yellow Identity’ Meet” in *East/West*.<sup>27</sup> Wang gave a detailed description about the situation of the symposium. According to Wang’s article, the scholar Stanford Lyman’s talk “A History of the Chinese and Japanese in America” lectured on the facts of “anti-Chinese and anti-Japanese sentiments” and the “unjust legislation” which Asian Americans experienced. Lyman’s talk was followed by “a fiery denunciation of white racism and yellow passivity by militant George Woo from San Francisco Chinatown.”<sup>28</sup> According to the article, Isao Fujimoto talked about “Asians in a Melting Pot.” By citing extensive evidence of sociological studies, Fujimoto’s talk “shattered the myth of assimilation and proved how the racist, colonialist majority [had] exploited the minorities and how the imaginary Oriental successes had been used to justify white racism and [had] systematized oppression of other minorities.”<sup>29</sup>

Although the symposium did not adopt clear resolutions on statements of “Yellow Identity,” it is obvious that the conference stimulated Asian American students to realize the reality of their communities and to think about who they were and what they should

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<sup>26</sup> FBI, *Asian American Political Alliance*, January 23, 1969, page 24.

<sup>27</sup> L. Ling-chi Wang, “Student Throng Jams ‘Yellow Identity’ Meet,” *East/West*, January 15, 1969.

<sup>28</sup> Wang, “Student Throng Jams ‘Yellow Identity’ Meet”; FBI Documents, January 23, 1969, page 24.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

do. It was important for Asian Americans to discuss “Yellow Identity” publically. As Floyd Huen, who was one of organizers of that symposium, recalled, “This Symposium was a groundbreaker, it put Asian American identity on the map...[We] surely agreed that our identity as an Asian American community needed to be explored with the goal of self-definition and supporting programs that were more relevant to our own communities.”<sup>30</sup>

Floyd Huen’s ideas were clearly reflected in the newspaper of the AAPA. For example, an article entitled “An Understanding of AAPA (Asian-American Political Alliance)” was published in *AAPA Newspaper*, which could be considered as a statement of AAPA principles, stated as follows:

AAPA is only a transition for developing our own social identity, a multiplication of efforts. In fact, AAPA itself is not the important link but the ideas generated into action from it—that we Asian Americans are no longer going to kowtow to white America in order to gain an ounce of respect; that we must begin to build our own society alongside our black, brown and red brothers as well as with those whites willing to effect fundamental social, economic, political changes; that we have the right for determining our own lives and asserting our yellow identity as a positive force in a new life based on human relationships and cooperation.<sup>31</sup>

According to such statements, the AAPA repudiated the notion that led Asian

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<sup>30</sup> Floyd Huen, “The Advent and Origins of the Asian American Movement in the San Francisco Bay Area: A Personal Perspective,” in *Asian Americans: the Movement and the Movement*, Steve Louie and Glenn K. Omatsu eds. (Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Asian American Studies Center Press, 2006), 280.

<sup>31</sup> “An Understanding of AAPA (Asian-American Political Alliance),” *AAPA Newspaper*, Issue 6, October, 1969. Repository in Organizations: Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA)—University of California, Berkeley—Organization description, Structure, May 1968—January 1969, Box No.: 1, Folder No.: ctn 1:28, Archive Call No.: AAS/ARC 2015/1, AAS Archives; FBI, *Asia American Political Alliance*, January 29, 1970, File No.: SF 100-61299, page 3.

Americans to assimilate and to be fully-Americanized into the white society as a “model minority.” The AAPA activists tried to reconsider their identity by re-examining their “yellow heritage.” Thus, the May Fourth Movement (“Wusi yundong” 五四運動 in Chinese, which was a students’ movement that occurred on May 4, 1919 in Beijing, China) became an example for the Asian American students reconsidering their identity.<sup>32</sup> The AAPA and other Bay Area Asian students groups (such as ICSA and the Red Guard Party) organized a joint coalition association called “the Bay Area Asian Students Coalition” (BAASC)<sup>33</sup> to promote the May Fourth rally and prepare other commemorative events at Portsmouth Square on May 4, 1969. Even though the rally was advertised as an activity of Asian students at Bay Area Universities and colleges, in fact the whole event was mainly supervised by the Red Guard Party members.<sup>34</sup>

On May 4, 1969, AAPA leader Floyd Huen and other members including Vicci Wong,

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<sup>32</sup> The May Fourth Movement was an influential episode in Chinese history when a movement was started by university students in Beijing, China. The movement aimed to oppose provisions of the Versailles Treaty which would have given to Japan the German Concessions in China. It grew from a student protest on May 4, 1919 and then speedily developed into a nation-wide strike which forced the Chinese government to order its delegation to refuse to sign the treaty. The Chinese Communists’ function in the movement was weak at that time. However, since the PRC was established, the Chinese Communist government claimed that they had great role in the development of the Movement. Almost every year there has been a large ceremony to commemorate it. See “May 4, 1919-1969,” *The Pamphlet of the May Fourth Movement Commemoration* (San Francisco, CA: The Bay Area Asian Students Coalition, April 1969), 1-4; FBI, *Asian American Political Alliance*, January 29, 1970, File No.: SF 100-61299, page 49.

<sup>33</sup> According to FBI files, the Bay Area Asian Students Coalition (BAASC) was established by AAPA and other Bay Area Asian American students groups in early April, 1969. It had been set up solely to promote the May Fourth rally on May 4, 1969, and does not exist as a regular organization. See FBI, *Asian-American Political Alliance*, January 29, 1970, File No.: SF 100-61299, page 49.

<sup>34</sup> FBI, *Asian-American Political Alliance*, January 29, 1970, page 52.

Patty Hirota, Wai Kit Quon and his younger brother Shih Shung Quon who was even dressed in a Mao's Red Army style uniform and hat and held a national flag of the PRC as members of the Red Guard Party did. Floyd Huen was introduced as a guest speaker and stood near the Red Guard Party leader Alex Hing. Huen also gave a brief speech after Hing's talk. In the speech, Huen called for "Asian-American youth to follow the pattern of the students who initiated the May Fourth Movement long ago in China."<sup>35</sup> The May Fourth commemorative rally was helpful to evoke a self-examination of the structure of Asian American society, meanwhile it was also important for Asian American youth to re-identify themselves in American society as reported in the *Daily California*, May 2, 1969:

"May 4<sup>th</sup> is also symbolic to Asians in their assertions of cultural identity and heritage. Fifty years ago, Asian students moved to liberate themselves from the control of western political domination; today Asian American students seek psychological liberation from the mass media image of the apathetic, insensitive, and unchanging Oriental."<sup>36</sup>

In fact, the logo of AAPA also reflected its cultural identity which was oriented to the "yellow heritage" of Asian Americans. It was designed in a style bearing a large Chinese character, "Tung" (東 in Chinese, which means "East") surrounded by the name, "Asian American Political Alliance." According to the members of the AAPA, the

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>36</sup> "Asian Cultural Revolution," *Daily California*, May 2, 1969.

Chinese character “Tung” was the symbol used by the Chinese Communist leader Mao Tse-tung (whose name was written in Chinese character 毛澤東).<sup>37</sup> While the members participated in protests and rallies or attended AAPA conferences, they always wore two buttons: one of the logo of the AAPA; and another bearing the words, “Yellow Peril.”<sup>38</sup> It was surprising that the AAPA members used the derogatory term “Yellow Peril” to identify themselves. However, there were two reasons that could explain this: First, they used the term “Yellow Peril” to draw attention to the fact that Asian Americans endured racial discrimination in the white-dominated American society; Second, they refused to be “Uncle Toms” of the non-white peoples of the United States and chose to show solidarity with other non-white peoples to fight against the oppressor.

### **Serve the People in the Community**

The activities of the AAPA were not confined in campus activism but they were also committed to Asian American communities and serving the people in these communities. As Malcolm Collier and Daniel Phil Gonzales describe, “AAPA members tended to identify as community people who were going to college, and not as college students who were going to back to the community.”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> FBI, *Asian-American Political Alliance*, January 23, 1969, File No.: SF 100-61299, page 9-10.

<sup>38</sup> As for the term “Yellow Peril,” see the detailed discussion in the note 35 of Chapter 4.

<sup>39</sup> Malcolm Collier and Daniel Phil Gonzales, “Origins: People, Time, Place, Dreams,” in *At 40: Asian American Studies @ San Francisco State*, Lorraine Dong et al, eds. (San Francisco, CA: Asian American Studies Department, San Francisco State University, 2009), 12.

L. Ling-chi Wang's case was a typical example. Wang was quite an active member in the AAPA of UC, Berkeley. Before the AAPA was formed in the University, he had been a graduate student in U.C. Berkeley and a volunteer participant in a Chinatown project which aimed to recruit college students from several universities in the San Francisco Bay Area as volunteers working for as tutors, engaging in community action, instructing delinquents and setting up cultural programs. Later he became director of the Summer Youth Program of the Chinatown-North Beach Office of the Economic Opportunity Council. After Wang communicated with AAPA leader Floyd Huen, they decided to found the Chinatown Tutorial Program. In the program, the members of the AAPA in U.C. Berkeley and ICSA in San Francisco State University cooperated to devote many hours to the tutoring in English for the Chinese American children who faced difficulties at school because of their English language barriers.<sup>40</sup>

Besides the Chinatown Tutorial Program, the AAPA activists also extended their attention to the working condition of the garment workers in Chinatown. They established an Ad Hoc Committee for the Welfare of Chinese Garment Workers to conduct a survey concerning the problems of Chinatown garment workers. L. Ling-chi Wang was Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, other AAPA members including Shih Shung Quon

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<sup>40</sup> FBI, *Asian-American Political Alliance*, January 29, 1970, File No.: SF 100-61299, page 38-39; "An Interview with L. Ling-chi Wang," *Daily California*, January 21, 1969.



and Steve Wong were members of that Ad Hoc Committee who assisted Wang's works.<sup>41</sup>

The Ad Hoc Committee proposed a report entitled "The Cooperative: A Viable Alternative for Garment Factory Workers" published on *AAPA Newspaper*, Vol. 2, No. 1, November 1969. The report stated as follows:

The situation of the garment factories in San Francisco Chinatown has been a political issue for years. In an atmosphere of conflict amongst power and interest groups such as the Six Companies, ILGWU, Teamsters, City Council, Contractors, and Human Rights commission, the welfare of the garment workers has been ignored and neglected. The struggles going on in Chinatown now indicate an attempt to unionize in the main interest of the ILGWU and Teamsters; to re-zone under the guise of integration; to strengthen the stronghold economic position of the contractors; and to maintain the subordination of the workers to the dictates of the Six Companies. These attempts have shown little or no concern for the woman worker's needs or the feasibility of letting her have control of her own life and lifestyle. The re-zoning issue has tried to obscure the real problems of exploitation which exist in Chinatown.<sup>42</sup>

Finally, the report proposed the woman workers in the Chinatown garment factories "[to] initiate and build a cooperative" as a "progressive, self-perpetuating and revolutionary alternative."<sup>43</sup>

However, the AAPA activists did not just focus on the problems of Chinatown. They also paid a lot of attention to the problems of other Asian communities. For example,

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<sup>41</sup> FBI, *Asian-American Political Alliance*, January 29, 1970, File No.: SF 100-61299, p42, p45-48; "SAC Teaches English, Aids Chinese Students," *Daily California*, November 6, 1969.

<sup>42</sup> "The Cooperative: A Viable Alternative for Garment Factory Workers," *AAPA Newspapers*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (November 1969), 4. Reprinted in *Stand Up: An Archive Collection of the Bay Area Asian American Movement, 1968-1974*, Asian Community Center Archive Group ed. (Berkeley, CA: Eastwind Books of Berkeley, 2009), 38-40.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

AAPA members joined with the San Francisco Filipino community to “protest the demolition of the International Hotel.” Some members of the AAPA participated in the team which conducted a survey on the problems of development of San Francisco’s Nihon Machi.<sup>44</sup> The participation in such movements testifies to their attitude that the university should be in solidarity with the communities of color, and also pushing them to advocate for the establishment of Ethnic Studies in the colleges to study the problems of their communities.

### **The Third World Liberation Front Student Strikes**

The Third World Liberation Front Student Strikes mainly occurred at San Francisco State University and U.C., Berkeley where students required universities to establish Ethnic Studies Colleges so that the Third World students could study the problems of their communities. The leading organization in the student strikes was the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF). However, the organizations at San Francisco State University and U.C., Berkeley were a bit different.

In San Francisco State University, the Third World Liberation Front was founded in the early period of 1968 by six student organizations: The Black Student Union (BSU), the Latin American Student Organization (LASO), the Mexican American Student

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<sup>44</sup> FBI, *Asian-American Political Alliance*, January 29, 1970, File No.: SF100-61299, p. 43, p. 48.

Confederation (MASC), the Pilipino American Collegiate Endeavor (PACE), ICSA and AAPA. The Strike was from November 6, 1968 to March 21, 1969, and marked the record of the longest student strike at an academic institution in U.S. Finally, the University agreed to establish an Ethnic Studies School at that University.<sup>45</sup>

Compared to San Francisco State University, in U.C., Berkeley, the TWLF just consisted of 4 groups of student organizations: the Afro-American Student Union (AASU), AAPA, MASC and Native American Student Union (NASU).<sup>46</sup> The Strike started on January 22, 1969 and lasted for three months until March 14, 1969. A week before the Strike, the AAPA organized a steering committee meeting to discuss joining the TWLF for the Student Strike. All leaders of AAPA including Floyd Huen , Richard Aokie, Alan Fong, Vicci Wong, Jeffrey Leong and Patti Iyama agreed to participate in the TWLF and the Student Strike. According to FBI Files, on February 1, 1969, AAPA held a steering committee meeting again in order to elect new leading members and assign duties to each committee member: Ron Miyamura was Coordinator; Richard Aokie was Strike Leader; Lalent Licon was Financial Chairman; Patti Hirota was Bail Fund Chairman; Alan Fong was responsible for Community Liaison and Bryant Fong was

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<sup>45</sup> Maeda, *Rethinking the Asian American Movement*, 27-44.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-46.

Monitor Captain.<sup>47</sup>

L. Ling-chi Wang, Alex Hing and Harvey Dong all joined the TWLF in U.C., Berkeley, creating a coalition of all minority students in Berkeley and organizing the strike. They contributed greatly to the establishment of Asian American Studies in higher education in the United States.

In fact, in a context where assimilation theory still held sway, there was no Asian American studies in the U.S. As Wang pointed out:

Up until the mid-1960s, the dominant ideology was white supremacy and the main intellectual current was one-way assimilation: forget about being Chinese, abandon your language and culture, and become white. Because you were in America, you had to be thoroughly Americanized. In fact, you were taught to be ashamed of being Chinese. Assimilation was the ideology behind the studies in social science and public policy formulations.<sup>48</sup>

However, the African American Civil Rights Movement inspired these young people a great deal and led the way for L. Ling-chi Wang and his generation of young Asian American college students. This younger generation abandoned the assimilation ideology and began to learn and research the history of their community and to directly link their roots and identities to these communities.<sup>49</sup> In interviews, he explained why the Department of Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies could be established in 1969:

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<sup>47</sup> FBI, *Asian-American Political Alliance*, January 29, 1970, File No.: SF 100-61299, pp. 9-13.

<sup>48</sup> Liu, *bian huan de bian jie*, 252.

<sup>49</sup> L. Ling-chi Wang, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, June 29, 2012; Liu, *bian huan de bian jie*, 252.

The basic reason was the utter failure of American Studies to include Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies in the field and in the academic institutions. ... When student strikes erupted at both San Francisco State University and U.C. Berkeley, these young college students and professionals exposed the naked intellectual racism and dishonesty and made younger activists occupy both the moral and intellectual high ground in the struggle to establish programs in ethnic studies.<sup>50</sup>

## ii. “The Third World Roots: Bandung”

In the *AAPA* newspaper (vol.1, No. 4, 1969), an article entitled “Third World Roots: Bandung,” which quoted Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai’s speech at the Bandung Conference of April 1955.<sup>51</sup> In summarizing Zhou’s talks, it mainly referred to 5 keywords: anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, independence, self-determination, and unity between Asian and African people. All of these keywords became important part of the so-called “Bandung Spirit” which later led to the emergence of “non-alignment” and formation of an alliance of sort of “Third World” countries. As for the definition of the “Third World,” the editor gave an explanation: the “Third World” referred to “the underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America” which were considered by the PRC as part of a worldwide strategy against U.S. and Soviet Union worldwide

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<sup>50</sup> L. Ling-chi Wang, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, June 29, 2012; Liu, *bian huan de bian jie*, 257.

<sup>51</sup> “Third World Roots: Bandung,” *AAPA Newspapers*, Vol.1, No.4, 1969. Reprinted in *Stand Up: An Archives Collection of the Bay Area Asian American Movement 1968-1974*, Asian Community Center Archive Group ed. (Berkeley, CA: Eastwind Books of Berkeley, 2009), 28-29.

hegemony.”<sup>52</sup> This explanation echoed Grace Lee Boggs and James Boggs’ argument for the so-called “Bandung Humanism” which aimed to promote African American movements committed to world-wide revolutionary movement. However, in the context of the 1969 Third World Liberation Front Student Strike, the boundary of “Third World” mainly referred to the people — “Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, and Asians and Native Americans.”<sup>53</sup> The Strike strengthened the Asian American Movement, and also established solidarity with other movements connected to Third World groups such as the Black Panthers, Young Lords, Brown Berets. On the one hand, such solidarity enabled the development of the Asian American Movement, and the Asian American Movement could also pursue tactics incorporating cooperation with other communities of color. On the other hand, the Strike’s function towards such solidarity echoed the same spirit as “Bandung” towards the Third World countries.

### **iii. The Formation of the identity of Asian Americans: Anti-Vietnam War Movement**

Although Gilbert Woo and the CADC members had tried to use the term “Orientals” to maintain solidarity with other Asian ethnic groups in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the recognition of an Asian American identity was still in the early stages. However, while the Asian American students participated in the anti-Vietnam War movement, they began

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Michael Liu, Kim Geron and Tracy Lai, *The Snake Dance of Asian American Activism: Community, Vision, and Power* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008),62.

to understand that the Viet Cong who were killed by the U.S. army had the same color as them. This increased understanding of their identities as Asian Americans and pushed them to consider what they should do.<sup>54</sup>

When attending the conventional anti-war protests, the Asian American anti-war activists felt dissatisfied with their orientation toward saving American instead of Vietnamese lives. Thus, Asian American anti-war activists organized their own anti-war coalition, such as the Bay Area Asian Coalition Against War, Los Angeles Asian Coalition, Sacramento Asian Coalition Against the War, East Coast Ad Hoc Committee of Asian Against the War in Vietnam, and Asian-American Veterans Against the War.<sup>55</sup> In an article entitled “Asians to March for the Vietnamese People,” the author expressed “solidarity with the Vietnamese people and the Viet Cong,” and condemned the fact that the U.S. “was committing genocide” on thousands of their “Asian sisters and brothers.”<sup>56</sup>

#### **IV. Conclusion of this Chapter**

In the conventional research on the history of the Asian American Movement, some scholars claimed that the Asian American Movement originated from campus activism that was initially dominated by Asian American students, who were mainly native-born

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<sup>54</sup> “AAPA Position on Vietnam,” *AAPA Newspaper*, Vol. 1, No. 6, October 1969.

<sup>55</sup> Wei, *The Asian American Movement*, 40.

<sup>56</sup> “Asians to March for the Vietnamese People,” *AAPA Newspaper*, November, 1969.

and came from the middle-class family who lived in the neighborhood of white suburbs in the San Francisco Bay Area. Then those student activists returned to Asian American communities that their parents had escaped and served people there. Such a pattern of student activism later spread to other college campuses, and finally helped form the so-called Asian American movement.<sup>57</sup> However, the angle of this project is different from the approach of this conventional scenario. In this chapter, by examining the discourse of how the younger generation Chinese American activism came to focus on solving Chinese American community problems, and how they established a feeling of solidarity with other Asian groups to fight together for civil rights, I have tried to clarify that the movements were from the community, centered in community and that they served the community, and that the activists were seen as “community people who were going to college, and not as college students who were going back to the community” as Malcolm Collier and Daniel Phil Gonzales have described.<sup>58</sup> At the same time, this chapter maintained that Asian American identity was formed in the movement and strengthened in the course of anti-Vietnam War activism.

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<sup>57</sup> Wei, *The Asian American Movement*; Wei, “A Commentary on Young Asian American Activists from the 1960s to the Present,” 399-312.

<sup>58</sup> Collier and Gonzales, “Origins: People, Time, Place, Dreams,” 7-18.



## Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have tried to give an overview of the Chinese American activist movement in the period of the Cold War-Civil Rights Movement. At the same time, I have re-examined the history of Chinese Americans in this particular historical period from the perspective of Chinese American activism. In the conventional works of Chinese American history in the Cold War years when the African American Civil Rights Movement was at its peak, Chinese American activism and its relationship with the African American movements is largely overlooked. Some scholars even assert that Chinese American activist movements did not exist until the Asian American Movement occurred in the early 1970s. This dissertation has shown that these arguments are not correct. I must note here that this project was greatly inspired by Him Mark Lai's work *Chinese American Transnational Politics*, not only because it gave me a sense of the history of Chinese American activism but also because it provided me with the transnational approach to narrate Chinese American political history.

However, Lai describes Chinese American activism only until the end of 1950s and stresses influence of the Cold War. Therefore, he does not examine the interactions between Chinese American activism and African American movements. By employing the approach of transnational history and carefully analyzing various primary resources such as Chinese

American community newspapers written both in Chinese and in English, official documents, newsletters of Chinese American activist organizations, and oral history interviews with Chinese American activists, I have clarified the dynamic process through which the Chinese American activist movements changed from fighting for China's politics to fighting for justice and the interests of their own community as a part of American society, and finally to become an integral part of the Asian American Movement.

In this conclusion, I will specifically show how my project contributes to the research in the fields of Chinese American Studies, Asian American Studies and American Studies from the following 5 points:

Firstly, in chapter 1 and chapter 2 of this dissertation, I have carefully examined what kinds of activism occurred and why they finally became invisible. My research testifies to the fact that Chinese American activism always existed in their community but that they were usually overlooked by the majority of scholars who deal with Chinese American history in the Cold War years while relying on the "model minority" approach.

Secondly, it is no exaggeration to say that no work explores how Chinese Americans reacted to the African American Civil Rights Movement and the succeeding Black Power Movement. In this dissertation, in order to examine the Chinese Americans' responses to the above-mentioned African American movements, I chose the Chinese American

community press as a source and a vehicle because the community press reflects different views of community members regarding historical events occurring in American society.

Thirdly, the scholars who study the history of the Asian American Movement often claimed that under the influence of African American movements the younger generation of Asian American activists emerged and finally formed the Asian American Movement. However, my research challenges this argument and develops another history: African American activists established transnational ties with Chinese communists via Chinese American old leftists, transmitted the Chinese communist revolutionary theories to African American communities and finally spread those theories to Chinese American communities and empowered Chinese American new leftists. Thus, this dissertation has also contributed to a new perception of the African American Civil Rights Movement from the perspective of Chinese American activism.

Fourthly, in this project Tang Mingzhao is identified as a key person in the process of coordinating the “people’s diplomacy” of China, who built a bridge for the establishment of transnational ties between the CCP and African American activists and helped to spread Maoism and the CCP’s ideology abroad.

Finally, this dissertation also explores how the Chinese American activist movement helped transform and reform the identities of Chinese in America from being overseas

Chinese to being Chinese Americans, and also contributed to the formation of Asian American identity through the emergence of the Asian American Movement.

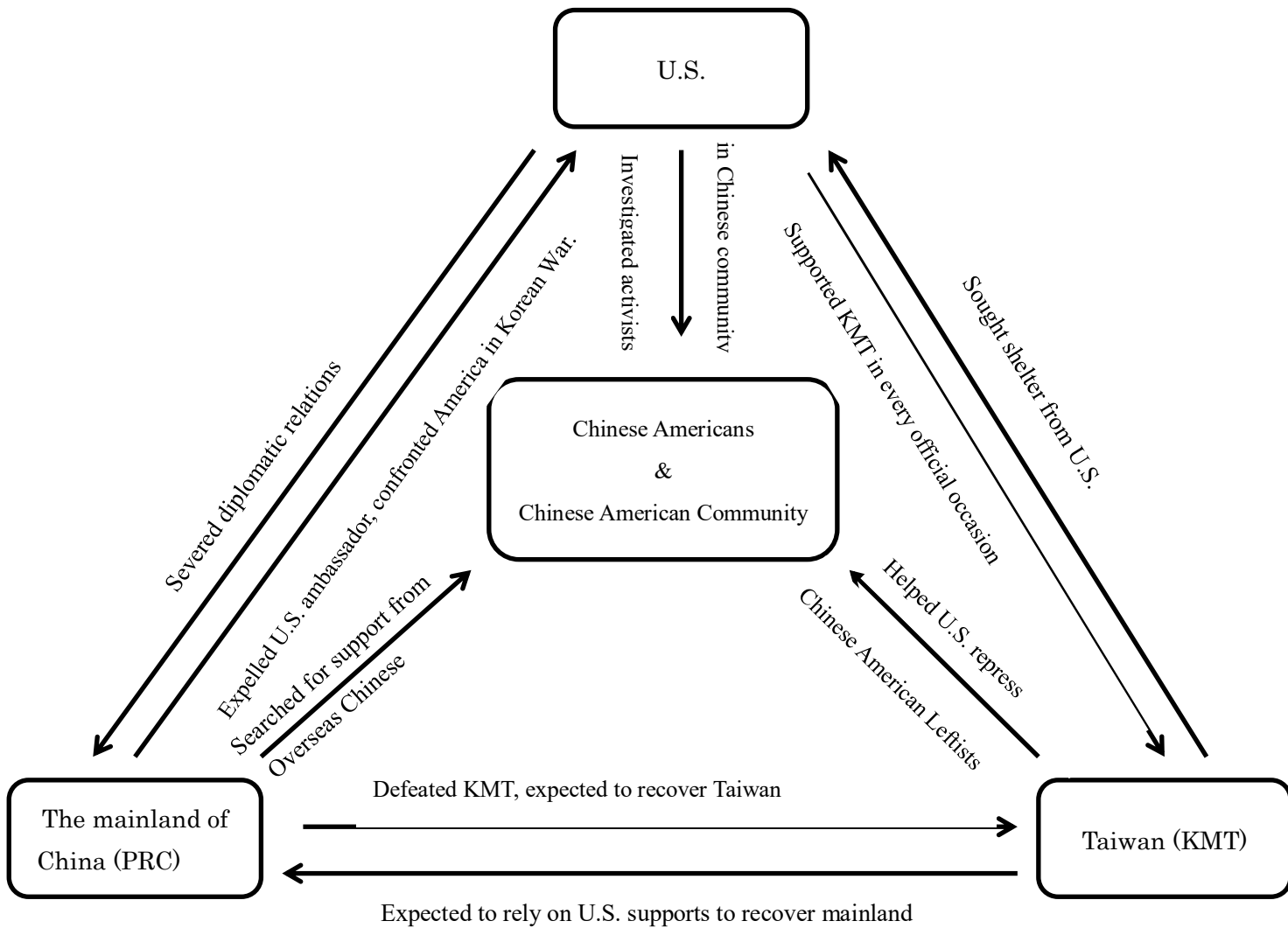
However, I do not dare to assert that my research has completely clarified all things about Chinese American activism in the Cold War-Civil Rights Movement era. There are many subjects and angles that merit further scholarly exploration. For example, this dissertation focuses more on political influence of Chinese Communism towards African American movements and does not discuss how Chinese Communist culture helped to transform and reform the representation of radical African American cultural identity, or how it influenced the cultural formation of younger generation of Chinese Americans. Moreover, the period under investigation in this dissertation ends in the early 1970s when the Asian American Movement had just emerged. How did the Asian American Movement develop and what role did Chinese Americans play in its development? These questions remain to be answered in my future research.

Historians say that history does not repeat itself. However, going back to Peter Liang's case discussed at the beginning of this dissertation, we see many similarities in the indifference of Chinese Americans today towards problems of the "Black Live Matters" movement to the objections of Chinese American establishment leaders towards a city fair housing ordinance for solving segregated housing problems in the 1960s. The

same nature of the two problems is rooted in the “model minority” consciousness. Even now Chinese Americans are still considered a “model minority,” who have been keeping their distance from African American movements. However, this dissertation attempts to narrate Chinese American history from a different perspective. I conclude my dissertation with an expectation that a new historical approach which I have explored can have an influence not only on the general historical recognition of Chinese Americans, but also on their own identities.

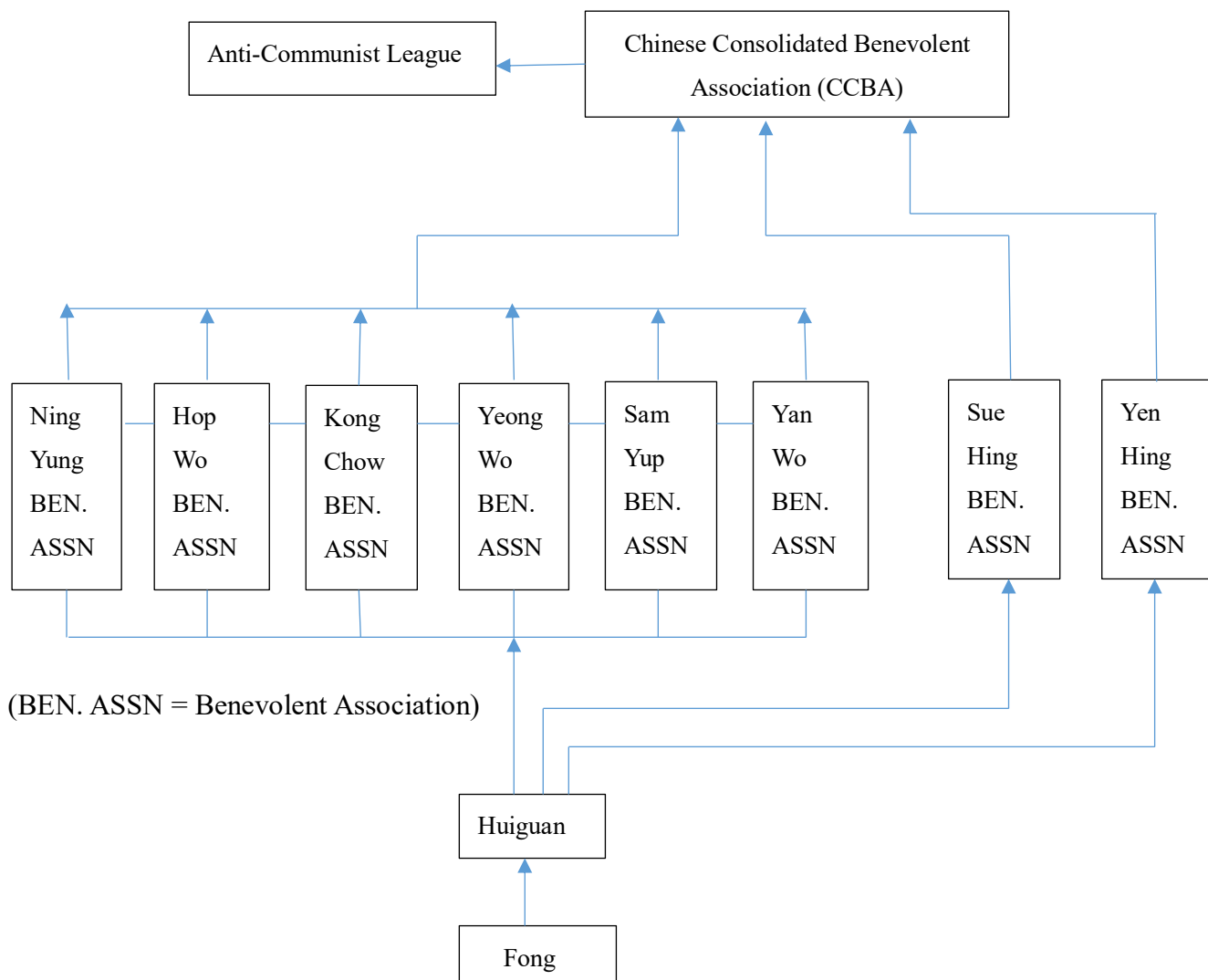
APPENDIX 1

Chinese American and Chinese community at the Center of Triangular Relations among the U.S., PRC and KMT in the Period of the Cold War



## APPENDIX 2

### Organizational Relationships in the CCBA-SF/Huiguan System in San Francisco Chinatown



Notes:

This relation chart is drawn by the author on the basis of descriptions of the CCBA-SF/Huiguan system in Lai, Him Mark. "Historical Development of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association/Huiguan System." *Chinese America: History and Perspectives* (San Francisco, CA: Historical Society of America, 1987):13-51.

CCBA-SF was established on November 19, 1882. Because it was founded by six companies (six Huiguans, which including Ning Yung, Hop Wo, Kong Chow, Yeong Wo, Sam Yup, and Yan Wo), it was also known as the Chinese Six Companies in the white society. Later, the Sue Hing Association and Yen Hoy Company successively joined in the CCBA-San Francisco.

## Chronology

- 1943 Congress repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act and instead established an immigration quota for Chinese of 105 visas per year, and granted the rights of naturalization for those already residing in U.S.
- 1945 The Second World War ended; many Chinese Americans went back to China to contribute to the reconstruction of their ancestral land, however the super-inflation, which was caused by the KMT government's corrupted financial policies, often destroyed their hopes and made them return to U.S.
- 1947 Congress passed the Amendment to the 1945 War Brides Act, which allows Chinese American veterans to bring brides into the U.S. without the limitation of quota.
- 1949 The founding of the PRC, while the KMT government retreated to Taiwan, expecting to rely on U.S. support to recover the mainland.
- 1950 The Korean War broke out. When the Army of PRC confronted the U.S. forces in the battlefield, Chinese Americans were scared of suffering the same fate being as Japanese Americans in WWII; the U.S. Treasury Department used the "Foreign Assets Control Regulation" to ban capital flow from Chinese Americans to their relatives in the PRC.
- 1952 The McCarran –Walter Act granted the rights of naturalization of Asian Americans, however it still imposed an immigration quota on them.
- 1955 The Drumright report from Hong Kong shook the Chinese American communities and made the FBI and INS start to investigate communist subversive activities in Chinatowns throughout the country.
- 1956 The U.S. government initiated a "confession program" to encourage the Chinese Americans who had illegally immigrated by fraud papers to voluntarily confess their true status.
- 1958 The first Chinese American liberal organization-Chinese American Democratic Club (CADC) was established in San Francisco's Chinatown.
- 1959 The old-left Chinese American organization-Min Qing disbanded.
- 1963 Members of CADC and the Chinatown clergy members participated in the African American Civil Rights Movement in the South; Mao Zedong delivered his first statement to support African American Civil Rights Movement.



- 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 was enacted. It abolished the limitations in national quotas so that tens of thousands of Chinese families were finally allowed to reunite
- 1967 The activists of a younger generation created a new organization, Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action (ICSA) to work for social change in Chinese American community and also began to establish solidarity with activist organizations of other minority groups so that they could struggle for their civil rights together.
- 1968 Students' strike occurred at San Francisco State College. The students demanded the establishment of an Ethnic Studies department in the college. Finally, the first Ethnic Studies program in the U.S. was established.
- 1969 Students at the University of California, Berkeley, also went on strike and managed to establish Ethnic Studies program.
- 1971 Huey P. Newton, leaders of the Black Panther Party, led a delegation to visit China and met Zhou Enlai on October, 1971 in Beijing.
- 1972 U.S. President Richard Nixon successfully visited China. This news greatly influenced Chinese American communities.

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