

## ABSTRACT

Title of Document: "ONE RAW MATERIAL IN THE RACIAL LABORATORY:" CHINESE, FILIPINO, AND JAPANESE STUDENTS AND WEST COAST CIVIL RIGHTS, 1915-1968.

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Between 1915 and 1968, Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students studying at colleges and universities along the West Coast in the United States created, organized, and led influential civil rights groups. Although these students were only "temporary" visitors to the U.S., they became deeply involved in protesting the racism and discrimination that characterized life for Asian immigrants, Asian Americans, and other minorities in California and Washington. With the assistance of larger organizations such as the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations and the World Student Christian Federation, these foreign students formed their own campus groups during the 1920s and 1930s that allowed them to build relationships with each other as well as students from other racial and ethnic backgrounds. The discrimination and segregation that visiting students from Asia faced in cities such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle also prompted them to

consider their roles in promoting justice for racial minorities while in the U.S. By leading and participating in petition campaigns, national youth conventions, and labor organizations, students from China, Japan, and the Philippines worked together to build an activist network with African American, Asian American, white, and other foreign students devoted to ending racial discrimination and promoting civil rights and liberties for all in the U.S. Considering the continuity in ideas, ethnic and racial composition, and leadership between pre and post-World War II equality activist groups, I argue that Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students were key players in the creation of a West Coast civil rights movement that began during the interwar period. By analyzing the records of Asian Christian campus groups, national and international youth group meeting minutes, student newspapers, yearbooks, and local West Coast community newspapers, my dissertation will alter the traditional narrative of civil rights history by arguing that the push for immigrant and human rights was a foundation for racial justice during the twentieth century.

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by

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## Introduction

On a sunny afternoon in the spring of 1938, Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students joined with other classmates at the University of Washington in Seattle to discuss America's problems with racial discrimination. Sponsored by the campus Young Men's Christian Association as well as the Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese student Christian organizations, the university's first interracial conference drew attendees from a variety of racial and ethnic groups, including white, black, Latino, as well as the foreign Asian and Asian American students who organized the conference. During their meeting, students debated the place of nationalism in a Christian world, the "toxic presence" of American military, economic, and political domination in Asian nations such as the Philippines, and the impacts of both of these un-Christian forces on humanity's ability to promote racial equality and Christian fellowship in the U.S. and around the world.<sup>1</sup> More importantly, the students in attendance at this large-scale meeting strategized to resist prejudice and racial discrimination on campus, in Seattle, and along the West Coast. Concerns over the oppression of colonized peoples and this oppression's tendency to further exacerbate racial and ethnic tensions brought politically and socially active students together on UW's campus, signaling a growing wave of student activism and participation in a national and international movement for civil and human rights. As one Japanese student who attended the conference explained, the students present were

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<sup>1</sup> "Important Historical Dates for the University of Washington YMCA and YWCA," in the University of Washington Special Collections Department, Record Group 1930-001, box 1, folder 1; "YW Cabinet Will Hold Discussion," (April, 1938), University of Washington Special Collections, Record Group 1930-001, folder 1.

“leaders of a worldly movement...designed to overthrow racism and other evils and build a world free from prejudice beginning in America.”<sup>2</sup>

The leadership the Christian Asian students assumed in organizing this 1938 meeting suggests that it is time to re-evaluate the narrative of the battle for racial justice along the West Coast and, more generally, the history of civil rights in America. What role did these foreign-born students play in organizing for civil rights while studying in the United States and how does an understanding of this role change how we approach the history of race relations during the twentieth century? These questions form the foundation of my dissertation, which explores the reactions of Asian students to racism and prejudice in the U.S. as well the strategies they developed for dismantling discrimination.<sup>3</sup> By focusing on the activism of foreign-born, Christian Asian students and their influences on American students between the 1920s and the late 1960s, I argue that the struggle for racial equality along the West Coast was shaped by religious, transnational, and international forces.

As foreign Christians, Asian students viewed the racism and discrimination they experienced while studying in America as a hindrance to the development of a “worldwide fellowship” based on universal equality and Christian values. Racial equality in the U.S. was both a domestic and international concern for these students. Christian

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<sup>2</sup> “Important Historical Dates for the University of Washington YMCA and YWCA,” 2-3.

<sup>3</sup> While the history of a West Coast civil rights movement during the twentieth century that was comprised of a variety of racial and ethnic groups has recently become more well-known, this narrative largely begins during or after World War II and gains momentum from radical elements, labor organizations, and the drive for legislative change during the postwar era. See Shana Bernstein, *Bridges of Reform: Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Mark Brilliant, *The Color of American has Changed: How Racial Diversity Shaped Civil Rights in California, 1941-1978* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Scott Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); and Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the West, 1528-1990* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1999) and *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle’s Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994).

Asian students developed organizations and groups that attracted other Christian students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, creating coast-wide interracial and interethnic networks dedicated to creating opportunities for addressing experiences with racism and discrimination. From the early days of the students' campus Christian associations during the 1920s through the former students' participation in post-war civil rights groups, placing the activities of these students in the context of civil rights history illuminates a nuanced narrative of the struggle for racial equality during the early-to-mid twentieth century. Methodologically, this dissertation blends the historiographies of Asian American, civil rights, immigration, and ethnic history to offer a new view of the racial history of the U.S. during the early-to-mid twentieth century. By building on the works of scholars of interracial civil rights movements such as Scott Kurashige, Shana Bernstein, and Mark Brilliant (historians who largely focus on West Coast civil rights during and after WWII), I argue that immigrants (in this case, Asian students) interpreted the racial climate and the occurrences of discrimination in America as violations of Christian ethics and responded with social and cultural as well as political tactics to dismantle racism in the U.S.

Along the West Coast, Asians outnumbered students from other nations during the early-to-mid twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> Within the category of Asian students, those from China, Japan, and the Philippines formed the largest groups on many college campuses in the West: by the 1920s, more than 3,000 mostly male Asian students were studying along the West Coast, with Chinese students being the most numerous.<sup>5</sup> These nations

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<sup>4</sup> "Special Edition: Foreign Students in America and their Progress," from *The Filipino Student Bulletin*, June, 1924.

<sup>5</sup> Students from other Asian nations such as Korea and India were also present in the U.S. and along the West Coast; however, I focus on Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students because they formed the largest

shared unique relationships with the United States that enabled and encouraged Asian students to travel to America, while the middle-to-upper class backgrounds of many of the students presented opportunities for study at some of the most prestigious colleges and universities in the U.S. Although the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 (and later renewals of the restrictive legislation) prevented Chinese laborers from entering the United States, Chinese students were able to study at American colleges and universities. While the Chinese government had previously prohibited Chinese students from seeking an American education after some attempts at educational exchange during the mid-to-late nineteenth century, the Boxer Indemnity Fund created a new opportunity for Chinese students to study in the U.S. Following the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, the defeated Qing government was required to pay 450,000,000 taels of silver (approximately 333 million dollars) to European nations and the United States for their financial losses during the Chinese uprising to push foreigners out of Beijing. Later, Liang Cheng, the Qing representative to America, learned that the portion of the indemnities to be paid to the U.S. exceeded the actual amount of financial loss. Cheng then proceeded to persuade the U.S. to use these leftover funds for scholarships for Chinese students to come to American colleges and universities resulting in then President Theodore Roosevelt's decision to establish a Boxer Indemnity Fund (with the help of American missionary Arthur Henderson Smith) for Chinese students in 1907. The Indemnity Program officially began in 1909 by selecting candidates from China through examinations,

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student groups and organizations. This is not to dismiss the activities of Korean and Indian students in the U.S. Many of these students were also politically and socially active, but focused more on transnational politics of independence and nationalism than necessarily racism and discrimination in the U.S. Interesting opportunities exist for scholars to further explore materials and sources related to these groups of students. "Notes and News on International Educational Affairs," 3<sup>rd</sup> Series, Bulletin 2, Institute of International Education (New York: 1922), 14.

providing preparatory training and education for candidates before coming to America at the Tsinghua College, and presenting successful candidates with scholarships to American colleges and universities. While there were still self-supporting Chinese students who travelled to the U.S. during the early twentieth century, the Boxer Indemnity Fund created opportunities for more students to continue their education and receive guidance from American missionary groups in choosing and applying to colleges and universities.<sup>6</sup>

A relatively small group of Filipino students also benefitted from American educational “benevolence” during the early twentieth century. In 1903, the U.S. established the Pensionado Program, which provided 100 Filipino students with full, government-sponsored scholarships to any college or university in the United States. In accordance with the program, students were chosen on a merit basis through examinations and references from teachers in the Philippines and expected to return home after receiving their education, ready to take their places in American colonial governance. The U.S. government placed great faith in the “Americanization” of these select Filipino students and viewed their education as a guarantee of continued Filipino cooperation with American control in the Philippines. The reality, however, was that many *pensionados* received their scholarships based not on merit, but on the positions their fathers held in the colonial government and how well-known and respected their families were in the Philippines. By 1912, more than 200 *pensionados* had graduated

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<sup>6</sup> See Weili Ye, *Seeking Modernity in China's Name: Chinese Students in the United States, 1900-1927* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); and Larry Clinton Thompson, *William Scott Ament and the Boxer Rebellion: Heroism, Hubris, and the Ideal Missionary* (Jefferson, NC: McFarlan Publishing, 2009), 34-38, 40.

from American universities and returned home to the Philippines.<sup>7</sup> During the 1920s, more self-supporting Filipino students arrived in the U.S. eager to begin college and take advantage of their exceptional status as American nationals, a status which allowed Filipinos to enter the U.S. despite the restrictions on other Asian groups under the 1924 Immigration Act.<sup>8</sup>

For Japan, sending students to the U.S. was one way to ensure that Americans were exposed to the best and brightest Japanese immigrants. Following rising anti-Japanese sentiment among white Californians who identified Japanese laborers as unfair competition, in 1906 the California State Board of Education mandated that Japanese students attend segregated schools. Fearing that continued discrimination against Japanese immigrants would ultimately lead to an exclusion act similar to that which prevented Chinese laborers from entering the U.S., the Japanese government agreed to self-impose emigration restrictions on citizens wishing to go to the U.S. in return for a guarantee from President Theodore Roosevelt that would free all Japanese citizens in America from discrimination and immigration exclusion acts. This Gentleman's Agreement of 1907 led to a general decrease in Japanese labor migration to America while a steady stream of Japanese students continued to enter colleges and universities in the U.S., particularly along the West Coast. Overall, foreign policy in the Pacific during

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<sup>7</sup> The overwhelming majority of *pensionados* and self-supporting students were male, but select females from elite families also took part in educational opportunities abroad. See Emily Lawsin, "Pensionados, Pisonos, and Pinoys: An Analysis of the Filipino Student Bulletin, 1922-1939," *Filipino American National Historical Society Journal*, Vol. 4 (1996): 33-50 for a more in-depth discussion of this program.

<sup>8</sup> A later wave of *pensionados* during the early 1920s were less wealthy than the earlier class and also spoke out against the problems of the program, but by this time, the program and the students associated with it received bad press from a large number of self-supporting Filipino students. The Pensionado Program became more egalitarian by the 1920s when Filipino students pushed for open access to the exams, allowing more students from less elite and wealthy families to attend school in the U.S. By 1932, the Pensionado program had come to an end as a result of lack of funds and resources.

the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries created opportunities for Asian students to arrive in the United States in increasingly larger numbers.<sup>9</sup>

While students from China, Japan, and the Philippines have been the subjects of studies relating to immigration history, the focus tends to be on their activities as unofficial ambassadors to the U.S. and/or their connections to politics and social movements in their homelands. Students from China and Japan often came to America with the responsibility of representing their countries abroad as well as learning the ways of American life and society in order to benefit their nations socially and economically once they returned. For example, Chinese officials expected students sent abroad to gain knowledge and experience and then return to “modernize” China, while Japanese students served their nation as exploratory agents, venturing into the American “frontier” and blazing a trail for Japanese ventures on the American West Coast.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, Filipino students often described themselves as unofficial diplomats, helping to prove to Americans that the Philippines was ready for and deserving of its independence. Their families and also members of the colonial government in the Philippines encouraged the Filipino students’ diplomatic representation of their future nation while in America.<sup>11</sup> Arriving with the goals of representing and serving their homelands, Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students often engaged in conversations and activities with other foreign and American students on their campuses in order to form a “cultural bridge” between

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<sup>9</sup> See Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) for more information of Japanese students and their roles in developing cosmopolitan relationships between Japanese and Americans. There is also a rather extensive body of literature relating to the influence of American and European missionary efforts in Asia during the nineteenth century, which helps to explain the pattern of Asian student migration to the United States during the twentieth century.

<sup>10</sup> Ye, *Seeking Modernity*, 56-59; Azuma, *Between Two Empires*, 3-8; 225-226.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006).



America and Asia. Existing works on Asian students in the U.S. during the early-to-mid twentieth century focus exclusively on their ties to Asia and rarely shed light on the students' relationships with American social and political movements and forces.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Apart from Jennifer Goldman's dissertation on the impact of foreign students on the ideologies of American students during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and Liping Bu's *Making the World Like Us: Education, Cultural Expansion, and the American Century*, there are no historical works that focus exclusively on interactions between foreign students. Understanding the role of student immigrants in American social movements is critical to understanding how and why certain events, such as civil rights movements, become international in scope. Historian Paul Kramer has recently written a methodological essay, "International Students and US Global Power in the Twentieth Century," that calls for scholars of immigration and U.S. diplomacy to analyze foreign students as critical players in transnational and international relationships; however, Kramer tends to overlook the power of these students in shaping *domestic* social and political movements. My dissertation will significantly add to the sparse literature on this topic and help to create a foundation for further study of foreign scholars in America by exploring the connections between Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students and civil rights movements during the twentieth century. See Whitney Walton, "Internationalism and the Junior Year Abroad: American Students in France in the 1920s and 1930s" in *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (2005): 255-278, Edward Rhoads, "In the Shadow of Yung Wing: Zeng Laishum and the Chinese Education Mission to the United States," *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 74, No. 1 (2005): 19-38; and Frank Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981) for a more general discussion of the role of education in American foreign relations and diplomacy. See also Jennifer Goldman's excellent dissertation, "Color and Conscience: Student Internationalism in the United States and the Challenges of Race and Nationality, 1896-1965" (PhD Dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 2009), Liping Bu's *Making the World Like Us: Education, Cultural Expansion, and the American Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger Press, 2003), and Paul Kramer's "International Century Students and US Global Power in the Long Twentieth Century," *Diplomatic History* 33, 5: 775-806 for a related discussion of foreign students in America and their influence on larger events in United States history. Also, while well-researched dissertations relating to the activities of Filipino and Chinese students exist, they are very specific and usually focus on one community of students. For example, see Kimberly Alidio, "Between Civilizing Mission and Ethnic Assimilation: Racial Discourse, U.S. Colonial Education, and Filipino Ethnicity, 1901-1946" (PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2001), James Conte, "Overseas Study in the Meiji Period: Japanese Students in America, 1867-1902" (PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 1977), and Lawrence Lawcomck, "Filipino Students in the United States and the Filipino Independence Movement, 1900-1935" (PhD Dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1975). There are also a few very good articles and books that provide in-depth discussions of specific groups of students, such as Timothy Tseng's "Religious Liberalism, International Politics, and Diasporic Realities: The Chinese Students' Christian Association of North America, 1909-1951" *Journal of American East-Asian Relations* Vol. 5, No. 3 (1996): 305-330, Noel Teodoro's "Pensionados and Workers: the Filipinos in the United States, 1903-1956" in *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1999): 157-178, Gary Okihiro's *Storied Lives: Japanese Students and WWII* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1999), Huping Ling's "A History of Chinese Female Students in the United States, 1880s-1990s" in *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (1997): 81-109, Yelong Han's "An Untold Story: American Policy towards Chinese Students in the United States, 1949-1955" in *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1993): 77-99, Roland Guyotte and Barbara Posadas' "Unintentional Immigrants: Chicago's Filipino Foreign Students Become Settlers, 1900-1941" in *Journal of American Ethnic History* Vol. 9, No. 2 (1990): 26-48, and Yung Chang Chaing's "Chinese Students Educated in the United States and the Emergence of Chinese Orientalism in the Early Twentieth Century" in the *Taiwan Journal of East Asian Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (2004): 37-76. Chiang also wrote an excellent, exploratory article on the subject of conducting research on Chinese students in

This dissertation explores the experiences of Asian students who identified as Christians and, through their religious campus associations, became active in striving for equality while in America. The activities of these students make Christianity both an essential methodological and thematic concept in my work. As a methodological framework, Christianity serves as a lens to examine the ways in which Asian students interacted with each other as well as other minority groups both on and off campus. The Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations (YM/YWCA) and Committee on Friendly Relations among Foreign Students (an organization affiliated with the YMCA) were large, financially strong organizations that provided administrative and economic support to Asian students to form their own student groups. Prior to WWII, YMCA-sponsored groups, such as the Chinese Students' Christian Association (CSCA), the Japanese Students' Christian Association (JSCA), and Filipino Students' Christian Movement (FSCM), constituted some of the largest and most active ethnic organizations on campuses along the West Coast, attracting wide numbers of students to meetings, discussion groups, conferences, and other social and cultural events. While other secular Asian student groups and fraternities existed on Pacific Coast campuses as well in other parts of the U.S., Christian students drew on the resources of "parent" organizations such as the Y in order to build large, interracial and pan-ethnic networks during the interwar years and into the 1940s. I analyze the bulletins of the CSCA, FSCM, and JSCA, the groups' meeting and conference minutes, and their special publications on key issues in order to understand the far-reaching influences of these foreign Asian students on the

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America, "Chinese Students in America in the Early Twentieth Century: Preliminary Reflections on a Research Topic," *Chinese Studies in History*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (2003): 38-62.

racial landscape of the interwar years.<sup>13</sup> In this sense, the Christian student groups serve as a means to uncover the complex and in-depth relationships that foreign Asian students had with one another, the influence they had on Asian American students through discussions of race and citizenship, and the impact on campus and community interracial relationships through their activism.

But Protestant Christianity is also an essential thematic component of my work, as well. Beyond the student organizations themselves, my dissertation focuses on Asian students who identified as Christian and understood and interpreted American racism and discrimination through this religious identity. The foreign students' relationships with Protestant Christianity were the products of a history of American and European missionary efforts in Asia during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century and corresponding with America's desire to expand (particularly in terms of overseas markets), American missionaries from Protestant churches including Lutherans, Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians travelled to Asia to convert its populations to an "American" type of Protestant Christianity.<sup>14</sup> The YMCA

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<sup>13</sup> Although Doug Rossinow, historian of the civil rights movement during the 1960s, has written on the relationship between the YMCA, "liberal Christianity," and student activism in his work *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), his work is a close case study on the activities of students at the University of Texas-Austin during the post-war period. See Rossinow, *Politics of Authenticity*, 54-85.

<sup>14</sup> Although the first American missionary arrived in China in 1830, it was only after the signing of the Treaty at Tientsin in 1858 that China became open to Christian missionaries and, shortly later, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and other Protestant groups began to send larger numbers of missionaries across the Pacific. One year later, American missionaries arrived in Japan following the Harris Treaty in 1859, with missionary activity in the Philippines beginning after the defeat of the Spanish in 1898 and American colonial occupation of the islands. In 1898, leaders of the Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian churches met in New York to decide the best way in bringing the evangelical message to the Filipinos (many identified as Christian, but were largely Catholic because of the influences of Spanish colonization) and developed the comity agreement which divided up the islands among the various Protestant missionary groups based in the U.S. to avoid possible conflicts and competitions in the future. See James H. Montgomery and Donald A. McGavaran, *The Discipling of a Nation* (Manila: Global Church Growth Bulletin, 1980); Jin Xing, *Baptized in the Fire of Revolution* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1996); and Hamish Ion, *American Missionaries, Christian Oyatoi, and Japan, 1859-1873* (Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press, 2002).

and YWCA were also active organizations in Asia, exposing Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students to the fellowship missions of the associations before they came to study in the U.S. Bringing their previous experiences with the YMCA and American Christianity with them to America, these students were often shocked at the treatment that they and other minorities received in the United States, a supposedly “Christian” nation.

During the early-to-mid-twentieth century, anti-Asian sentiments created a hostile atmosphere for the students when they arrived on the West Coast. Many white Americans combined anger over the potential labor competition from Chinese and Japanese immigrants, shock at the perceived voracious sexual appetites of Filipino men for white women, and a general suspicion of the traditions, customs, and overall “Oriental-otherness” of Asians to create a growing wave of nativism. This brand of West Coast, anti-Asian nativism manifested itself in a variety of ways, including social prejudice, segregation, laws preventing Asians from owning land and intermarrying with whites, and violence. While many Asian students were spared from the more violent outbursts by staying close to their college campuses, they still experienced less-than-welcoming receptions from their American classmates and administrators. When students did venture off campus, which occurred frequently for students who worked or lived outside of the confines of their colleges or universities, they came face-to-face with virulent anti-Asian hatred. From racial slurs to discrimination and segregation in housing, employment, and services, Asian students (despite their backgrounds or education) were not immune to the prejudice that their fellow countrymen faced in the United States.

As the students soon discovered, the hatred and suspicion directed towards Asian immigrants and Asian Americans along the West Coast signified more than nativist distrust. Beyond economic or political justifications, organizations such as the Asiatic Exclusion League portrayed Asians in their publications and propaganda as inherently “other,” incapable of becoming “American” because their racial backgrounds bestowed them with detestable traits including greed, corruption, treachery, and moral depravity. Rumors of drug addiction, prostitution, uncleanness, and disease among Chinatowns and other enclaves also colored Asians as unwanted and unworthy immigrants with little hope of learning to appreciate or strive for American values. Whether it was the Chinese, the Japanese, or the Filipinos, the ethnic identity, educational, or economic background meant little to a vast majority of West Coast whites who shared a similar goal of segregating and eventually removing Asians from their communities. Belief in an “Asian invasion” of America created various forms of social and legal discrimination that did not distinguish between one group and the other: “Oriental,” “Mongoloid,” “Malay,” and other pseudo-scientific categorizations of Asians resulted in a generalized system of racism along the West Coast. While initial nativist reactions against Chinese and Japanese immigrants during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries could be defined as mostly anti-foreigner and economic or labor-based movements, by the time more Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students arrived in the U.S., anti-Asian sentiments had evolved from nativist outcries against a group of migrants to racial discrimination aimed at American-born Asians as well as immigrants.<sup>15</sup> The students themselves

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<sup>15</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of the connections between racism and nativism, see David H. Bennett, *The Party of Fear: the American Far Right from Nativism to the Militia Movement* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), John Highman, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American*

identified the discrimination they faced as forms of racial prejudice and quickly learned that racism played a significant part in creating new racial identities for migrants.

The reality that so many Americans discriminated against Asians and Asian Americans, particularly along the West Coast, was antithetical to the Christian belief that all are created equal in God's image. Christianity served as both a coping mechanism and a motivator for many Asian students who experienced discrimination in West Coast communities not as foreigners, but as *Asians*, an identity which created the conditions for their encounters with prejudice and racism in America long before they set sail from their homelands. Although they were technically visitors to the U.S. with no clear path to citizenship or American rights, these students argued in their bulletins, meetings, and at larger Christian conferences that no nation or group of rulers had the power to limit the basic human rights of one group of people based on religious or ethnic difference; there were inalienable rights that were granted to citizens of a Christian universe that rested on respect, friendship, and peaceful relations that could not be denied. In turn, the members and leaders of the Christian student associations connected the struggle for racial equality in the U.S. to a global struggle against oppression caused by unchristian "isms" such as imperialism, nationalism, and racism. The students' solution to these problems, at least while in America, was to end prejudice (the heart of racism and discrimination in the U.S.) by increasing interracial and interethnic exchange and building solidarity amongst Americans to bring racial justice to the world in the name of Christianity. Once Asian students came to the U.S. and they recognized the deep hypocrisies in American religious ideas versus their actual practice in regards to racial acceptance, Christianity became a

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*Politics* (New York: Vintage, reprint edition, 2008), and Aristide Zollberg, *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

powerful way for the students to hold a mirror to American Christians and challenge them to see their flawed interpretation of the will and words of the Lord, returning the missionary efforts of groups such as the YMCA.

The Christian response of the students to prejudice, racism, and discrimination demonstrates the importance of religion in the history of immigrant activism and movements for rights and racial justice. As religious scholar Randi Walker has explained, Christian racial activists during the struggle for civil rights after WWII worked to change the “racial conscience” of American communities and radically alter the racial landscape on the West Coast, working to end racism and shape Americans into unprejudiced beings.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, as scholars have argued, religion, in many cases, can assist migrants who have limited access to political or social tools with creating opportunities for solidarity and unification; however, the historical ties between immigrant religions identities and their struggles for basic rights are not openly explored.<sup>17</sup> My study adds to this concept of Christian civil rights activism by exploring the activities of foreign-born students prior to the post-war period. The students’ use of Christianity to build coalitions and fight for racial justice proves that immigrant rights and civil rights are intricately connected and not separate movements.

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<sup>16</sup> Randi J. Walker, *Religion and the Public Conscience* (London: John Hunt Publishing, 2012). Walker’s recent book is a study of the role of religion in the rise of a Seattle-based civil rights movement.

<sup>17</sup> See Kenneth J. Guest, *God in Chinatown: Religion and Survival in New York’s Involving Immigrant Community* (New York: NYU Press, 2003), Moses O. Biney, *From Africa to America: Religion and Adaptation among Ghanaian Immigrants in New York* (New York: NYU Press, 2011), Robert J. Priest and Alvaro L. Nieves, *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity, and Christian Faith* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), Richard Alba, Albert J. Raboteau, and Josh DeWind, *Immigration and Religion in America: Comparative and Historical Perspectives* (New York: NYU Press, 2008), Joshua Paddison, *Heathens in America: Religions, Race, and Reconstruction in California* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: Huntingdon Library Press and University of California Press, 2012), and Jeanette Rodriguez, *Our Lady of Guadalupe: Faith and Empowerment among Mexican-American Women* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1994).

I argue that the Christian students who studied along the West Coast at the University of California campuses, the University of Washington, and other colleges assisted in creating a foundation for a civil rights movement that, in many ways, was the product of Christian ideas and activists. As other historians of the post-war period of the civil rights movement have suggested, the battle for racial justice in the North, South, and mid-West was heavily influenced by Christianity and its ideas of fellowship and equality. Christianity served as a motivating and binding force for civil rights activists in other parts of the nation. Dr. Martin Luther King's leadership and involvement in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference as well as the numerous case studies of the role of black churches in the rise of a civil rights movement are well-known examples of the power of Christianity in shaping and influencing movements for racial justice in the U.S.<sup>18</sup> This dissertation calls on historians to broaden their understanding of Christianity as a wide-reaching factor in the drive for rights and liberties. The Christian student activism along the West Coast before, during, and after WWII was connected to civil rights activism elsewhere in the U.S. through shared principles in religion and spirituality. Christianity served as both a national and a transnational force that made

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<sup>18</sup> The role of Christianity in shaping African American fights for civil rights is the topic of numerous works. For a more in-depth discussion of this theme, see Mary Sawyer, *Black Ecumenism: Implementing the Demands of Justice* (New York: Trinity Press International, 1994); Wallace Best, *Passionately Human, No Less Divine: Religion and Culture in Black Chicago, 1915-1952* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994); and Johnny E. Williams, *African American Religion and the Civil Rights Movement in Arkansas* (University of Mississippi Press, 2008). Gary Selby's *Martin Luther King and the Rhetoric of Freedom: The Exodus Narrative in America's Struggle for Civil Rights* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008) provides a thorough exploration of the role of Christianity in King's speeches and leadership.



what Jacquelyn Dowd Hall has referred to as the “long civil rights movement” in the United States essentially interracial, multicultural, and interethnic.<sup>19</sup>

Most of the works that focus on the history of the interracial West Coast civil rights movement do not consider the role of religion in the creation of this force for racial justice. Kurashige, Bernstein, and Brilliant focus largely on legal groups and labor unions as the forces of social change in post-WWII in California. As a result, the importance of Christianity in creating a large, coast-wide and interracial movement is overlooked, leaving an entire area of influence largely unexplored. My inclusion of Christian Asian students in the narrative of West Coast civil rights challenges both the current chronological and thematic interpretation of twentieth century racial history in the West. A close study of the ways in which Christian students utilized their religious principles and beliefs to build large networks for the purpose of securing equality and rights for minorities adds another layer to this story and exposes the complexity and variety of ideas that helped to form this movement. As historian Mark Brilliant suggests in his work on the role of multiculturalism and interracial activity in California’s quest for racial equality, it is time for historians to approach the struggle for civil rights in America

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<sup>19</sup> See Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), and Glenda Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009) for a more in-depth discussion of an international or global Civil Rights Movement. For discussions of the “long” Civil Rights Movement, see Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996) and Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past” in *The Journal of American History* 91.4 2005. Also, despite Eric Arnesen’s wariness of approaching the civil rights movement as “long” in his speech-turned-article “Reconsidering The Long Civil Rights Movement” for fear of losing sight of the importance of the post-war events and figures, I argue that a focus on African American involvement in civil rights overshadows the activities of other groups well before WWII and even the 1930s.

as a “wide” as well as a “long” movement which encompassed a variety of beliefs, ideas, and peoples, including Asian students.<sup>20</sup>

Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students’ concerns about racial discrimination in America and their devotion to ending discriminatory practices show that historians must re-evaluate the ways in which we think about and conceptualize “civil rights” in America. We primarily define civil rights as the basic access to liberties, including suffrage, equal employment and educational opportunities and others, that a nation grants to all citizens. While this definition certainly applied to the African American civil rights activists before, during, and after WWII, it does not fully explain why a group of foreign Asian students would insist on risking their education, homes, and, at times, their lives to defend equal access to rights for all Americans. Or, rather, the *traditional* interpretation and conceptualization of civil rights in American history does not leave much room for the activities of immigrants. When Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students signed petitions against anti-alien and anti-miscegenation laws, spoke out against legislation that prevented Asian immigrants from naturalizing, challenged the inherent racism in the 1924 Immigration Act, and organized campus groups against segregation both on and off campus in West Coast communities, they were relying on their own definition of civil rights as basic protections guaranteed to *all* who lived and worked in America. Necessities such as housing and jobs were rights that all individuals held, regardless of their citizenship or foreigner status. Using their Christian understandings of human rights and world-wide fellowship, these students argued that ending racial discrimination was part of ensuring that all had access to the means necessary to be protected and have equal opportunities for success. As a result, Asian students challenged and protested both legal

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<sup>20</sup> Brilliant, *The Color of America*, 276-277.

and social restrictions on Asians and other minorities along the West Coast. Laws that discriminated against immigrants and minorities as well as social discrimination were rallying points for Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students in the U.S. and these violations of basic rights propelled these scholars on a path of racial justice that spanned the early-to-mid twentieth century.

Understanding the battle for civil rights in the United States as an interracial struggle also adds to existing historical literature on race, ethnicity, and liberties. Historians often explain Asian American, Native American, and Chicano/a struggles for civil rights as part of the larger, politically-charged atmosphere of the 1950s and 1960s; however, my study of Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students argues that multiple races and ethnicities formed a foundation for the civil rights movement much earlier than historians currently suggest. By actively participating in social movements in their local communities, Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students shared in the experiences of other racial struggles against discrimination and prejudice. In particular, the cooperation between Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students in this early civil rights movement between 1915 and 1945 is an example of pan-Asian cooperation that pre-dates the 1960s, the period which many scholars suggest was the beginning of pan ethnic cooperation among Asian immigrants and Asian Americans in the United States.<sup>21</sup> Not only was this

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<sup>21</sup>See Angelo Ancheta, *Race, Rights, and the Asian American Experience* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006), Guadalupe San Miguel, *Brown, Not White: School Integration and the Chicano Movement in Houston* (Houston: TAMU Press, 2005), Bill Mullen, *Afro Orientalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), Yen Le Espiritu, *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), and William Wei, *The Asian American Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993) for discussions of multiracial social movements and ethnic civil rights. Two recent books, Leslie Bow's *Partly Colored: Asian Americans and Racial Anomaly in the Segregated South* (New York: New York University Press, 2010) and Helen Heran Jun's *Race for Citizenship: Black Orientalism and Asian Uplift from Pre-Emancipation to Neoliberal America* (New York: New York University Press, 2011) also examine both the interactions between Asian, African American, and other minorities in settings such as the West Coast and the South and call on

panethnic solidarity a starting point for the push for Asian rights; it also helped in creating a foundation for an interracial West Coast battle for civil rights.

I am not, however, arguing that foreign-born Asian students were the first to mobilize for political and social action, but rather encouraging historians to recognize them as part of a longer “genealogy” of the movement for civil rights in the West. As early as the mid-to-late nineteenth century, when Chinese immigrants came to America as laborers in mines and along the Central Pacific Railroad before the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, Chinese Americans used the courts to protest against property infringements, unconstitutional quarantines, and violations of civil rights.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps the most well-known of these court cases, *United States v. Wong Kim Ark* (1898), set a precedent for determining citizenship status for minorities when San-Francisco-born Wong Kim Ark successfully challenged a San Francisco immigration official’s decision to refuse him entry to the U.S. after a trip to China, despite his being an American-born citizen.<sup>23</sup> Wong used the Citizenship Clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to argue that he was, indeed, an American by birth and, as such, suffered civil rights violations when trying to re-enter the U.S.<sup>24</sup> In other cases, such as *Fong Yue Ting vs. United States* (1892), Chinese immigrants challenged the constitutionality of the Geary Act (which extended the Exclusion Act) and formed The Chinese Civil Rights League, which protested

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historians and other scholars to broaden their conceptualizations of “racial Others” in the U.S. to include multiple races and ethnicities. More importantly, Jun urges scholars to understand the ways in which African Americans and Asian Americans shared racial experiences in the U.S.

<sup>22</sup> See Erika Lee, *At America’s Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Madeline Y. Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration Between the United States and South China, 1882-1943* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Jean Pfaelzer, *Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); and Judy Yung, Gordon Chang, and Mark Him Lai, *Chinese American Voices: From the Gold Rush to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006) for a larger analysis of early Chinese and Chinese America civil rights suits and cases.

<sup>23</sup> Lee, *At America’s Gates*, 103-106.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

exclusion across the U.S.<sup>25</sup> Historian Lisa Mar has also argued for scholars to consider the ways in which Chinese Canadian “cultural brokers” negotiated political and social status by serving as go-betweens for Chinese and white communities, a pattern which Mar argues often characterized Chinese immigrant life along the U.S. West Coast, as well.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, early Japanese immigrants to California and other areas along the West Coast organized protective community associations to collectively work around restrictive anti-alien land laws which prevented them from owning land, while, as Peggy Pascoe and Rick Baldoz have described, many Filipino males used the courts to fight against discriminatory anti-miscegenation laws.<sup>27</sup> My focus on the role of Asian students in promoting civil rights and racial equality for from the interwar years through the post-war period connects the earliest forms of Asian and Asian American activism in the U.S. to the later waves of student protest during the late 1960s, thereby explaining how Asian leadership and involvement in West Coast civil rights grew and evolved through the decades.

This dissertation draws on sources from a variety of university archives on the West Coast and in other areas of the U.S. Student publications (including *The Filipino Student Bulletin*, *Chinese Christian Student*, and *The Japanese Student Bulletin*) form the basis of my archival research, but other sources including conference proceedings, special publications, and meeting minutes are also important components of my work.

The Kautz Family YMCA Archives at the University of Minnesota and the collections of

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<sup>25</sup> Pfaelzer, *Driven Out*, 302-303.

<sup>26</sup> Lisa Mar, *Brokering Belonging: Chinese in Canada's Exclusion Era, 1885-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>27</sup> See Josephine Fowler, *Japanese and Chinese Immigrant Activists: Organizing in American and International Communist Movements, 1919-1933* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007); Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); and Rick Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion: Empire and Migration in Filipino America, 1898-1946* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

the Filipino Students Christian Movement and the Chinese Students' Christian Association at the Yale University Divinity School Library supplement the student publications by providing context to the founding of the student groups as well as the often tenuous relationships between the "parent" organizations and the students themselves. In addition to materials produced by these religious organizations, records pertaining to labor organization and community civil rights groups found at the Filipino American National Historical Society Archives and the University of Washington's Special Collections (both in Seattle) have allowed me to explore the community-based activities of the students when they ventured off campus and encountered racism and discrimination. Overall, the majority of sources are not new or unexplored; however, this dissertation combines these sources in new ways in order to understand how different groups of students interacted with one another, other students, and West Coast communities, contributing to the push for civil rights and racial equality there. The connections between the students and West Coast activism are rich and reveal an understudied component of West Coast and American racial history.

In order to trace how and why Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students evolved into racial rights advocates during the interwar years and through the postwar period, this dissertation is organized chronologically. The first chapter examines how Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students became interested in issues of racism and discrimination along the West Coast during the 1920s and challenged their "parent" organizations (the Young Men's Christian Association and the YMCA-based Committee on Friendly Relations among Foreign Students) to recognize the problems of anti-Asian sentiments along the West Coast. Although the YMCA was actively involved in establishing student

units in the South for African Americans during the early-to-mid-twentieth century, the Y was less active when it came to the racism the Asian students encountered. Y administrators insisted that the prejudice directed towards students was not racism so much as a generalized suspicion of foreigners, a problem that the students could easily overcome by becoming more engaged with American students and “building a cultural bridge,” advocating a social or cultural solution to the issue. While historians such as Nina Mjagkij have argued that African American leaders of “colored” branches successfully challenged the North American Y to desegregate its facilities by the mid-twentieth century, the Y’s lack of concern for the problems of the Asian students with racism and the classification of discrimination as product of anti-foreigner suspicions calls attention to a complex aspect of the Y’s operations.<sup>28</sup> More importantly, the

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<sup>28</sup> Nina Mjagkij, *Light in the Darkness: African Americans and the YMCA, 1852-1946* (Louisville, KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 2003), Thomas Winter, *Making Men, Making Class: The YMCA and Workingmen, 1877-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), and David Setran, *The Student Y: Student Religion in the Era of Secularization* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). The relationship between the American YMCA and the foreign students who came to the U.S. during the early twentieth century was one based on a history of transpacific influences. In 1851, a group of young men from Boston who had discovered the YMCA while visiting London earlier in the year returned to America and organized the first American-based branch of the YMCA. As Mjagkij and Thomas Winter have explained, along with “unit[ing] all young, male Christians for the extension and expansion of the Kingdom of God,” the YMCA also serve as bastion for Christian manhood by positioning itself largely in urban areas where the working-class man could benefit from sport, fellowship, and education with a Christian flavor. The popularity of the YMCA in America was so great that within ten years of the founding of the original American association in Boston, there were 205 city-based associations in the United States (all governed by the International Committee of the YMCA—the group that oversaw nation, regional, and city operations around the world). Along with influencing urban, working-class male life, the YMCA also helped to create a religious, evangelical climate in America that prompted many members to encourage more missionary efforts overseas.

After embracing a new focus on missionary activities, the YMCA looked to Asia to build upon existing missionary efforts, but also take advantage of a small, yet influential number of recent Christian converts among the Chinese and the Japanese. During the late nineteenth century, many of the urban centers of China were on the cusp of an anti-Confucianism movement which historians have described as a result of China’s desire to “modernize.”<sup>28</sup> In Japan, the Meiji Restoration (1896-1912) was characterized by a desire to absorb Western technology and ideas and while Christianity was not an overwhelmingly popular faith system during this time period, many recent converts were ex members of the samurai class who had supported the losing Tokugawa Shogunate and saw similarities between the *bushido* and Christian concepts of self-sacrifice.<sup>28</sup> The YMCA took advantage of a growing interest in Christianity among some of the Japanese and Chinese people and reached out to students at various universities in particular, establishing the first YMCA in China in 1879 and one year later in Tokyo. Later, during the Spanish-

students' desire to challenge the Y leaders to approach their problems as experiences with racial prejudice and discrimination highlight the organization's problematic definition of "racism" as black and white. Chapter One therefore not only explores the ways in which students' own experiences with racism both on and off-campus helped them to transform their student associations from social and culturally-oriented clubs into nascent activist groups, but also explores the Y in relation to Asian immigration and Asian American history.

Chapter Two then builds on the changing racial consciousness of the students by examining how foreign-born Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students used the problems with discrimination against the second generation of Asian Americans to build connections with American-born Asian students and address racial discrimination against American and immigrant Asian groups along the West Coast. By addressing the problems of the second generation of Asian Americans, the CSCA, FSCM, and JSCA were able to create an open dialogue on racism and discrimination against all minority groups along the West Coast.

The third chapter focuses on the activities of Filipino students in the Alaskan canneries and labor unions during the 1920s and 1930s. Because class tensions between FSCM members from more elite families and those who were self-supporting made the FSCM largely unresponsive to the needs of working-class members, student-workers turned to unionization to seek labor as well as civil rights. Also, when compared to Chinese and Japanese students, a higher proportion of Filipino students were self-supporting and worked during the summer break to pay their tuition in the fall, exposing

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American War, the YMCA became active in administering aid to American soldiers (known as the Army-Navy YMCA) in the Philippines and established its first Manila-based city association in 1904.



them to racism, discrimination, and the push for labor and civil rights off campus. This chapter analyzes the unexplored connections between Filipino students and the unionization movement during the 1930s and argues that FSCM members held powerful roles in the Cannery Workers and Farm Laborers Union and pushed the organization in the direction of civil rights. In this chapter, I also explore the complicated relationship of Filipino student-workers with Americans and America through the “national” status bestowed upon Filipinos by the U.S. government.

Chapter Four analyzes the interactions among Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students, during the development of military and political unrest in the Pacific during the 1930s. I examine the ways in which Asian students in America addressed the Second Sino-Japanese War (the military and political battle between China and Japan over Manchuria) of 1937 and the beginnings of WWII. Although the Chinese and Japanese were at war with one another, CSCA and JSCA members in America attempted to overlook these ethnic tensions and focus on the underlying causes of world-wide conflicts: aggressive nationalism and imperialism. FSCM members also participated in conversations regarding the dangers of imperialism and, with other Asian students, called attention to the connections between imperialism and racial discrimination on a global scale. CSCA, FSCM, and JSCA members “globalized” the American struggle for racial justice by connecting it to world-wide problems with political and social oppression while struggling to redefine their own relationships to their homelands and their Christian principles. Chapter five continues to explore the connections among the foreign students, international affairs, and civil rights by focusing on the reactions of Christian Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students to the internment of Japanese Americans during

WWII. Because the Committee on Friendly Relations among Foreign Students suspended financial support to the CSCA, FSCM, and JSCA's publications of bulletins during the war, the students spoke through the YMCA and World Student Christian Federation's periodicals and identified internment as a violation of civil and human rights. Although the interactions among the student organizations themselves dwindled, Chinese students and former Asian students spoke out against the injustices of internment from the angles of civil and religious rights violations.

In the final chapter, I examine the activism of former students who joined post-WWII community civil rights groups and helped shape the battle for racial justice along the West Coast. The CSCA continued to operate through the 1950s, but both the JSCA and FSCM disbanded, ending the "high-point" of the Christian student associations. However, former CSCA, FSCM, and JSCA members went on to use the interracial and religious tactics they learned while students to add a social and cultural aspect to civil rights struggles in addition to pushing for legislative change. Although many civil rights activists along the West Coast shifted to pursuing legal change to ensure equality for racial minorities, former Christian students continued to fight to end prejudice and increase interracial solidarity through "education" and Christian fellowship.

## Chapter One

### **“Western People are not all Angels:” Initial Encounters with Racism along the West Coast, 1900-1928**

In the fall of 1927, Filipino student Felipe Guarin could not have predicted that finding a place to live while attending Washington State University in Pullman would become so difficult. Having scrimped and saved for his tuition for the first year of his studies, Guarin confidently crossed the Pacific, ready for his new journey as a college student in America. As a Christian and a poor student with little money to call his own, Guarin quickly became friends with members of the Filipino Students Christian Movement (a nation-wide students' Christian association) and found a room to share with another student at the Washington State branch of the Young Man's Christian Association. Housed in a small cottage not far from campus, the university YMCA was a popular gathering spot for Filipino students, but also Chinese and Japanese students who were associated with the Y. Unfortunately, by the winter of 1928, the local townspeople of Pullman who generously supported the campus Y grew suspicious of the large number of foreign students at the cottage, fearing that “the Filipinos were monopolizing all the games and [social activities]” and that the Y was “filling all jobs with Filipinos and forcing white students to hunt [for] their own jobs” in town.<sup>29</sup> In other words, those on and off campus were concerned that the Washington State Y had become little more than a “hang-out for foreign students” and had not only abandoned its “Christian principles,” but was also “forcing American students to socialize with unsavory foreign students

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<sup>29</sup> “Council Minutes,” 6, box 2, folder 5: YMCA Council Reports, 1923-1927, YMCA Records, Washington State University Archives.

against their will.”<sup>30</sup> In retaliation, the Community Chest of Pullman met with the Washington State Board of Regents in 1929 and threatened to withdraw its funding from the campus Y and other university organizations if the foreign students were not kicked out of the cottage.<sup>31</sup> The Y agreed to try to convince the foreign students to take up residency at the campus International House (a national organization which received funds from the Rockefeller Foundation and was meant to serve as a place for foreign students to live and mingle with each other and American students), but Guarin and the other foreign students refused.

Despite a personal invitation from the staff at the International House, the students were “tremendously hurt to think of being treated in such an un-Christian like manner and would not use the International House under any circumstances.”<sup>32</sup> In fact, Guarin, the other FSCM members, and the remaining foreign students “went so far as to suggest that their treatment on campus be made an international example,” highlighting the prejudice they faced as Asian students on American campuses.<sup>33</sup> Eventually, the Y and the townspeople of Pullman won this particular battle: the Washington State Y evicted all foreign students from the cottage, but, in doing so, they were able to keep their funds from the Pullman Community Chest.<sup>34</sup> Despite having forced foreign students out of their temporary homes, Washington State Y council chairman Walter Robinson vowed to maintain a “friendly attitude more than ever towards the foreign students and try to

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<sup>30</sup> “Council Minutes,” 6.

<sup>31</sup> “Council Minutes,” 3, box 3, folder 2: YMCA Council Reports, 1929-1935, YMCA Records, Washington State University Archives.

<sup>32</sup> “Council Minutes,” 3.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

make them feel that it was not the YMCA that was responsible for their situation.”<sup>35</sup>

Unfortunately, the incident at Pullman was not an isolated occurrence, but rather indicative of a larger pattern of discrimination against Asian students along the West Coast in the 1920s.

While Christian organizations such as the YMCA generally courted foreign students who came to the U.S. for college degrees as part of their missionary and evangelization goals, Asian students often found themselves on the receiving end of racism and prejudice from these groups and others along the West Coast. As the largest groups of foreign students in California, Oregon, and Washington, Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students who came to America from the early 1900s through the 1920s formed and joined Christian organizations that were sponsored by the YM/WCA, the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), and the Committee on Friendly Relations among Foreign Students (CFR), all Christian groups that grew in popularity during the ecumenical movement in the U.S. during the early twentieth century. While the Chinese Christian Student Association (CSCA), the Japanese Students' Christian Association (JSCA), and the Filipino Students' Christian Movement (FSCM) received financial and ideological support from the larger “umbrella” organizations such as the YMCA, by the late 1920s, the student associations began to differ from the “parent groups” in terms of the appropriate response to racism and discrimination along the West Coast.

Asian students became increasingly frustrated with the unchristian behavior they encountered among Americans in the U.S., even from the very organizations such as the Y which spoke of love and acceptance. As an association which claimed to promote interracial relations in the South through black student divisions, yet continued to

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 3.

discriminate against Asians on the West Coast, the YMCA and its affiliated organizations repeatedly came under fire from the Asian student Christian groups. Rather than fully addressing the problem of racism against Asians, the YMCA and the CFR maintained that cultural misunderstanding and parochial ignorance of foreigners among Americans were the roots of any interracial or interethnic problems. As a solution, YMCA and CFR leaders suggested that Asian students simply needed to erase these misunderstandings in order to promote more congenial relationships between Asians and Americans. While the students initially embraced this “cultural bridge” approach to creating East-West friendships and promoting international goodwill, they soon realized that racism ran deeper than cultural misunderstandings and that the racial problem could not be solved with an abstract bridge made of cultural good intentions.

Instead, student members of the CSCA, FSCM, and believed that they had an important role to play in challenging Americans to reject the unchristian ideas of racism and prejudice they so often embraced. While the CFR attempted to convince foreign Asian students to bear the brunt of racial discrimination while in the U.S. and return home to speak highly of their American experience, the students themselves had different ideas for how they should use their time in America. The experiences of Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students with discrimination and racism in America shattered their preconceived view of the United States as a Christian nation of liberty and equality and forced them to come to terms with their status as racial minorities. As a result, throughout the 1920s, these students gradually evolved from cosmopolitan cultural advocates to crusaders for racial rights grounded in Christian principles and ideas.

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While increasing numbers of Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students began to travel to the U.S. during the early twentieth century, many of these students did not form their own Christian organizations until after the First World War. With the exception of the Chinese Students Christian Association (founded in 1909 by East Coast-based Chinese students), Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino students either formed small, close-knit and ethnically-based campus clubs, joined the campus branch of their local YMCAs or YWCAs, or became members of their campus Cosmopolitan Clubs. Most of the students' early attempts at forming campus associations came from a desire to have a space to socialize with fellow Chinese, Filipino, or Japanese classmates. In 1902, Chinese students at Columbia University formed the Chinese Student Alliance while Chinese students at Harvard University formed their own fraternity, the Flip Flap Fraternity in 1908. Students at West Coast colleges and universities such as Stanford and San Jose State College formed small Filipino and Japanese clubs on campus that offered members the opportunity to bond and help each other gain their footing on campus. Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students used these early groups primarily for social functions and spent meetings talking about news and events from their homelands. The Filipino Club formed by students at Oregon State University in 1924 highlighted the purpose and intent of such associations: "The purpose of this organization is two-fold: namely to unify the Filipinos in this city and to promote friendly relationships between Filipinos and Americans."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ponciano R. Turanio, "Salem Filipinos Organize Club," *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (December 1924-January 1925), 4.

The Cosmopolitan Clubs represented another option for becoming acquainted with college life and fellow classmates, but also signified an era of positive, if at times uneasy, reactions to foreign students among Americans. Cosmopolitanism itself is a complex term, but I use the term here in a specific way. Different “strands” of cosmopolitanism exist, including racial, national, class, and civilizational cosmopolitanism, but at the core of this ideology is a belief that there is a connection among all humans around the world that transcends national borders.<sup>37</sup> While there are multiple and competing definitions and ideas of cosmopolitanism, I am referring to a movement in America during the early twentieth century which focused on identifying and appreciating other cultures and peoples, while using multicultural knowledge for the benefit of the U.S. In this historical context, many Americans embraced “cosmopolitanism” as the belief that there was much to learn from foreign peoples and that cultural exchange was at the base of all friendly, international relationships. While Progressive reformers emphasized Americanization of immigrants in the U.S., Americans who identified with cosmopolitanism also saw benefits in learning from foreign peoples. Historian Kristin Hoganson has given the title of “immigrant gift movement” to this belief that all foreign peoples had many cultural “gifts” to offer to Americans, an idea which helps to explain why Cosmopolitan Clubs became popular in the years during and immediately after WWI. At a time when America supposedly embraced an “isolationist”

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<sup>37</sup> It is interesting to note, however, that the popularity of the cosmopolitan movement (the idea of sharing cultural experiences and international cooperation) coincides with exclusionary and discriminatory laws and actions against African Americans and Asian Americans. The best example of this can be found in the growth in cosmopolitan clubs formed by students and other Americans during the nineteen-teens and into the 1920s. Kristin Hoganson’s *Consumer’s Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007) and Akira Iriye’s *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000) are excellent examples of works that analyze cosmopolitanism during the early-to-mid twentieth century in the United States and beyond.



approach to foreign affairs, cosmopolitan clubs suggest that Americans supported international interactions so long as it was on their turf and under their guidance.<sup>38</sup>

As “civilized” and educated migrants, foreign students served as an important component of the rise of cosmopolitan clubs in the U.S. The Institution of International Education, a New York-based organization that promoted student exchange and helped to establish special student visas following the 1921 Emergency Quota Act, and the American federal government saw value in promoting friendly relations between foreign and American students in order to create a worldlier American public. At the height of the cosmopolitan movement in America during the years immediately after WWI and into the 1920s, universities were the key place to establish cosmopolitan connections. Institutions of higher learning provided an ideal environment for interaction and exchange: not only were there foreign students from a variety of countries on campus, but an atmosphere of learning helped to create scholastic and cross-cultural relationships. White, African American, Asian, and other foreign students formed cosmopolitan clubs across the U.S. during the nineteen-teens, guided by the principle of the Association of Cosmopolitan Clubs: “above all nations is humanity.” Cosmopolitan clubs stressed “international goodwill by bringing into fellowship selected representatives of each nationality within a given university.”<sup>39</sup> The emphasis on “selected representatives” in the goals of the Association of Cosmopolitan Clubs is telling; again there were particular groups of immigrants that cosmopolitan clubs embraced, more specifically those who were interested in more refined pursuits than the working-class groups of immigrants. As a result, foreign students became an important focus of the cosmopolitan club movement

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<sup>38</sup> Hoganson, *Consumer's Imperium*, 212-215, 220, 232-234.

<sup>39</sup> “Guidebook for Foreign Students in the United States,” Institute of International Education, Second Series, Bulletin 5 (July 1921), 77.

and Asian foreign students were often active members in such organizations at San Jose State College, Stanford University, and the University of Washington, among others. At the University of Arizona, Filipino students helped in the formation of a cosmopolitan club in 1922 with the intention of “disseminat[ing] accurate information about the foreign countries represented.”<sup>40</sup>

The campus cosmopolitan clubs offered educational activities that focused on cultural exchange and were largely social in nature. While some cosmopolitan clubs, such as the Stanford Crossroads and Cosmos Clubs, were more focused on foreign affairs and invited scholars to lead discussions on policy issues and laws, most cosmopolitan clubs focused largely on fairs, festivals, and other events that provided opportunities for cultural exchange in a fun and social setting.<sup>41</sup> Events such as “World Fairs” where foreign student groups performed native dances or introduced their less-cultured American friends to exotic cuisines and art forms were popular affairs that campus cosmopolitans embraced.<sup>42</sup> Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino clubs often participated in these world fair events on their campuses, and in 1921, there was a particular frenzy among members of the Filipino Club at the University of Washington over which dance and song would best represent the Philippines at a fair sponsored by the cosmopolitan club at the university.<sup>43</sup>

The YMCA also joined in on the cosmopolitan spirit in America during the early twentieth century. Having established branches in China, Japan, and the Philippines during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Asian students who came to

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<sup>40</sup> “University of Arizona,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (October 1923), 5.

<sup>41</sup> Discussion: The Amendment of the California Community Property Law—J.W. Bingham, March 1924, Crossroads Club Files, Folder 7750-CROS, Stanford University Archives.

<sup>42</sup> Hoganson, 35-36, 117;

<sup>43</sup> “In Perplexities,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (March 1926), 4.

America were not only familiar with the work of the organization before leaving home, but often received assistance in choosing, applying, and travelling to campuses in the U.S.<sup>44</sup> Fearing that cosmopolitanism lacked a spiritual essence and that a majority of the students who joined the Cosmopolitan Clubs were not exposed to Christian ideas and principles, the YMCA began to heavily court foreign students and encourage them to form their own Christian campus groups.<sup>45</sup> In 1911, the YMCA formed the Committee on Friendly Relations among Foreign Students (CFR) as a way to help administer guidance and aid to foreign students entering the U.S. as well as encourage these students to maintain ties with Christian movements in their homelands. The CFR, headed by YMCA leader Charles Hurrey, worked closely with the YMCA to ensure that foreign students would benefit from a Christian atmosphere while on campus. Headquartered in New York City, the CFR worked with the Rockefeller Foundation to establish and maintain

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<sup>44</sup> See Jon Thares Davidann, *A World of Crisis and Progress* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1998), 21-23, 24 and C. Howard Hopkins, *John R. Mott: 1865-1955, a Biography* (Eerdman's Publishing Co., 1980).

<sup>45</sup> The YMCA enjoyed support and interest from China and Japan's university students. While many Japanese and Chinese were still hesitant to fully embrace Christianity and the strong evangelicalism of the YMCA (risking ostracization from fellow countrymen and accusations of denying their national cultures), institutions such as Yenching University in Beijing and Doshisha University in Tokyo became YMCA "strongholds." The YMCA adopted a program of "indigenous" leadership in the Asia-based associations and enlisted the help of Chinese and Japanese students to help in running the YMCAs as well as organizing summer schools and publishing periodicals such as the *Seinenkai Geppo* (YMCA Monthly Report) and *Kaitakusha* (Pioneer) in Japan and the *Ching Nien Hui* (Youth Association) magazine in China. Students, former students, and professors at Chinese and Japanese universities such as Okuma Shigebou and T.Z. Koo actively used the YMCA to build a coalition of Christian students on campus and help promote community-based outreach projects including literacy programs and Bible studies. See Nina Mjagkij, *Men and Women Adrift: The YMCA and the YWCA in the City* (New York: NYU Press, 1997), Thomas Winter, *Making Men, Making Class: The YMCA and Workingmen, 1877-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), and David Setran, *The Student Y: Student Religion in the Era of Secularization* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). For a more general overview of the history of the YMCA, see Harry Hopkins, *History of the YMCA in North America* (New York: Association Press, 1951) and Pamela Bayless, *The YMCA at 150: A History of the YMCA of Greater New York, 1852-2002* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002). More specialized studies of regional YMCAs also exist, including Thomas Hargrave, Jr., *Private Differences---General Good: A History of the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington* (Washington, DC: YMCA of Metropolitan Washington, 1985), Laura Klure, *Let's Be Doers: A History of the YMCA of Riverside, California, 1906-1992* (Riverside, CA: YMCA Publications, 1992), and Jessica Elfenbein, *The Making of a Modern City: Philanthropy, Civic Culture, and the Baltimore YMCA* (University Press of Florida, 2001). There are hundreds of historical studies of regional YMCAs (most published by the YMCA themselves, although some, such as Elfenbein's work, were also published by traditional academic presses).

International Houses (places where foreign students could find lodging) across the U.S., provided counseling to foreign students before they left their homelands, meet foreign students at the docks when they arrived, served as a link between foreign students and their campus YMCAs, and “acquainted students with industrial and institutional life in American cities.”<sup>46</sup> Above all else, the aims of the committee were “to promote sympathetic and helpful relations between Americans and foreign students...to influence the character, spirit, and attitude of these future leaders...and to bring the educated young men and women of these different lands under the influence of Western Christian nations.”<sup>47</sup> Despite its cosmopolitan sheen, the CFR was still a Christian and missionary-oriented organization devoted to missionary pursuits and evangelization as much as international cooperation and friendship.

While the CFR served all foreign students, Hurrey focused much of the efforts of the committee on serving those from the “Orient.” Because the YMCA had a vested interest in maintaining its associations in China, Japan, and the Philippines, the CFR in many ways represented an extension of these associations in America. The YMCA hoped that Hurrey and the CFR would help to ensure that Christian Chinese, Japanese, or Filipino students would stay active in YMCA-related activities while in the U.S. or, in the case of those students who did not initially identify themselves as practicing Christians, join the organization nonetheless and return home with a greater appreciation for the YMCA and Protestant Christianity. In many publications, the CFR stressed the importance of Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students for spreading Christian

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<sup>46</sup> “Guidebook for Foreign Students,” 79.

<sup>47</sup> CFR, Report for the Year 1911, box 1, folder 17, Record Group 13-Committee on Friendly Relations among Foreign Students records, Yale University Divinity Library Special Collections.

fellowship, citing the Asian countries' histories of cooperation with missionaries and the Protestant faith as support.<sup>48</sup>

The CFR's most important function for Asian foreign students was providing financial assistance for the formation of student-run Christian associations. Following the lead of the YMCA in believing that indigenous leadership was best in the associations overseas, the CFR advocated for student leaders of ethnically-based Christian campus groups and associations. Hurrey observed that the Filipino and Japanese clubs on college campuses as well as the Chinese Student Alliance (a national group that was dedicated to maintaining connections between Chinese students in the U.S. and political and social affairs in China) were relatively successful in terms of attracting members, but wanted to create student associations that were more geared towards the Christian goals of the YMCA. While the Chinese Students Christian Association (founded in 1909 with assistance from the YMCA) already existed, the CFR gained oversight control of the organization in the early 1920s and provided approximately \$2,000 a year to the CSCA for the publication of its new bulletin, conferences, and other meetings or events the association desired to sponsor. At larger Christian student conferences such as the YMCA-sponsored Indianapolis Convention in 1924, the summer conferences at Silver Bay, Oregon, Lake Mohonk, New York and Lake Geneva, Wisconsin and the annual winter convention at Asilomar, California, Hurrey and other CFR representatives spoke to groups of students who might be interested in forming their own associations. While encouraging students, Hurrey highlighted the importance of Christian fellowship, national brotherhood, and the promotion of cross-cultural exchange with American students as reasons why student Christian associations were important. Hurrey also

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<sup>48</sup> Report for the Year 1911, 6-7, 19.

stressed the crucial role that foreign students played as “unofficial ambassadors” for their countries while in the U.S. and their duty to uphold and promote Christian standards.

Filipino students were the first group to form their own student association with the help of the CFR. Although a large majority of Filipinos continued to identify as Catholic despite American Protestant efforts, an overwhelming number of Filipino students who travelled to the U.S. identified as Protestant (when they did claim a religion). The presence of American-style schools and Protestant churches, along with the role of the YMCA and CFR in assisting Filipino students in crossing the Pacific and settling in America, could account for the large numbers of Filipino students who claimed to be members of Protestant denominations. Regardless of the continuing legacy of Catholicism in the Philippines, Christian Filipino students in the U.S. eagerly accepted the help of Protestant organizations such as the CFR in forming The Filipino Students Federation (FSF), the forerunner of the Filipino Students’ Christian Movement in America. Established in 1919, the FSF was based in New York City and founded by a group of Christian Filipino students from Columbia University. The FSF, while based in New York, served as a liaison for Filipino students, keeping track of the activities of Filipino clubs across the U.S. and publishing articles ranging from announcements to editorials from Filipino students. The CFR sponsored the FSF, providing funds for the publication of *The Filipino Student* and other activities; however, the FSF lasted less than four years. In 1922, with the urging of the CFR, the FSF’s leaders decided to formally dissolve the organization. Citing a drastic decrease in membership (there were 525 members during the 1920-1921 academic year and only 127 in 1922) as well as the news

that the CFR deemed the organization “impracticable and therefore [did] not desire to continue their financial support,” the FSF officially disbanded in June of 1922.<sup>49</sup>

Filipino students did not abandon the idea of a nation-wide, Christian association, however, after the disappointment of the FSF. In 1923, a group of Filipino students at a Christian students’ convention in Indianapolis decided to give a Filipino students’ Christian association another try and devised a plan for the Filipino Students’ Christian Movement (FSCM). Declaring that the earlier FSF was filled with “status-seeking” pensionados not devoted to Christianity or their fellow students, President-elect Enrique Sobpreña and other leaders of the FSCM worked closely with the CFR in making Christianity a central component of their organization. While the FSCM held only forty-six members in its first year, the number later grew to the hundreds throughout the 1920s as more self-supporting Filipino students arrived. By 1930, out of the 905 Filipino students studying in the U.S., approximately twenty-two percent were official members of the FSCM.<sup>50</sup> The FSCM published (with the help of the CFR) *The Filipino Student Bulletin*, sponsored conferences, and sent delegates to other national Christian student conferences.<sup>51</sup> Although the early number of “official” members was relatively low from the outset, already in 1924 the FSCM reported 2,139 subscribers of the *Filipino Student Bulletin*, with 1,890 Filipino student subscribers and the remainder members of the

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<sup>49</sup> Response to letter from Elmer Yeaton, CFR Memo, June 6, 1922, CFR Records, Yale Divinity Library. For the 1920-21 year, the CFR paid \$1222.47 of the FSF’s expenses; the FSF only contributed \$450.00 towards helping to cover its expenses. While the CFR financially sponsored the student associations, there was an expectation that the organizations would eventually become self-reliant through member dues, fundraisers, etc. The CSCA abolished dues as part of membership, but continued to operate on fundraisers and with the help of subscription fees of the Chinese Christian Student.

<sup>50</sup> In 1930, the FSCM reported 198 official members. See *The Filipino Student s’ Christian Movement Directory, 1930-1931* (New York: Committee on Friendly Relations Among Foreign Students, 1931), 3-4.

<sup>51</sup> Foreign Student Statistics, 1924-1925, World Student Christian Federation records, Kautz Family YMCA Archives.

JSCA, CSCA, and American students.<sup>52</sup> Because the FSCM served as an umbrella organization for Filipino clubs and associations at colleges across the U.S., the number of Filipino students who attended FSCM-sponsored events and contributed to and read the organization's *Student Bulletin* was usually far higher than the number of official members.<sup>53</sup>

While Filipino students were working to build their own organization, Japanese students formed the Japanese Students Christian Association (JSCA) in 1923, the first large-scale, national organization for Japanese students in America. Campus Japanese clubs created opportunities for socialization among Japanese students at any given university, but students at the same Indianapolis Christian Students' Convention in 1923 who witnessed the birth of the FSCM agreed that a more prominent, national association that was devoted to Christian ideals and principles would go a long way in uniting all Japanese students in the U.S. By accepting assistance from the CFR, the JSCA became an organization very similar to that of the FSCM: members published a monthly periodical (*The Japanese Student Bulletin*), participated in Christian student conferences, and represented Japanese students across the U.S. Unlike the FSCM, however, the JSCA functioned as an actual club with dues-paying members and attracted a larger number of official members early on. For the 1925-1926 academic year, the JSCA reported in a directory that there were approximately 330 official members nationwide.<sup>54</sup> For Japanese students at colleges and universities across the U.S., the JSCA served a unifying

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<sup>52</sup> "2139 Read the Bulletin Last Year," *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (October 1923), 2; "That We May Serve Each Other Fully," *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (December 1924-January 1925), 5; "Attention Filipino Students," *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (December 1924-January 1925), 3.

<sup>53</sup> Paying dues meant that a student could participate in elections and/or run for office, but a student who did not pay dues could still subscribe to the *Filipino Student Bulletin* and attend networking events.

<sup>54</sup> *The Japanese Students' Christian Association Directory in North American and Hawaii, 1925-1926* (New York: The Japanese Students' Christian Association in North America, 1927), 7.



organization and the first real opportunity to network largely with fellow students from Japan.

As the oldest of the student Christian associations found in 1909, the Chinese Students' Christian Association's organizational structure was the basis for the administrative ordering of the JSCA and FSCM. At the top of the organizational hierarchy was a Central Board that consisted of student elected officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer). These officers then appointed leaders for the various departments: Women's, Eastern, Mid-Western, and Western. Each regional department was then usually broken down into sub-regions: the Western Department of the CSCA, for example, consisted of the Davis, California branch, the Berkeley branch, the Los Angeles branch, the Pomona branch, the Seattle branch, the Sacramento branch, and the Stanford branch.<sup>55</sup> The CFR and the YMCA were considered affiliates of the student associations and while they did not control the ways in which students ran the organizations, both the CFR and YMCA contributed secretaries who could assist, when needed, with various activities (such as choosing delegates to attend Y-sponsored conferences). While the CSCA, JSCA, and FSCM maintained an "open membership" policy (meaning anyone could become a member of the associations), there were various levels of participation. The CSCA, JSCA, and FSCM all adopted the "active" (or "official") and "associate" member system: Christian Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students were "active" members, while non-Christian or non-Asian students were accepted as "associate" members. From time to time, the CSCA also presented some with the status of an "honorary" member reserved for "any friend of the CSCA who had

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<sup>55</sup> Branches usually coordinated with the areas with the largest student populations, although universities and regions without a regional representative were all included and recognized as part of the larger Department.

provide a great service” to the association.<sup>56</sup> The only real designation between the rights and privileges of the various types of membership was that only active members could run for office, while the associate members could not. The JSCA and FSCM had similar structures to the CSCA, but chose to maintain membership dues (although the FSCM eventually did away with dues by 1930 and relied on subscriptions to the *Filipino Student Bulletin* for extra revenue). Overall, the CFR approved of the membership requirements of the student associations as a way to ensure that the organizations appealed primarily to Christian foreign students, while remaining open and welcoming to non-Christians and students from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds, as well.

For all three student associations, a large majority of members hailed from West Coast colleges and universities. This is not surprising considering that after the initial wave of Asian students during the mid-to-late nineteenth century, more self-supporting students arrived during the 1920s and chose to attend the more cost-efficient public universities, such as the University of California, along the West Coast (despite growing anti-Asian sentiments there). Not only was the cost of transportation to America cheaper if the student chose to attend a West Coast university, but news of already-existing communities (however small they may have been) of Asian students at schools along the Pacific encouraged newcomers to avoid the journey to the East Coast. The University of California’s Berkeley and Los Angeles branches, the University of Southern California, Stanford University, and the University of Washington attracted the largest number of Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students during the early twentieth century.<sup>57</sup> By the late

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<sup>56</sup> CSCA Service Pamphlet, box 1, folder 16, Record Group 13, Yale Divinity School records.

<sup>57</sup> A large portion of Filipino students studied at the University of Washington (based on Seattle’s growing reputation as a, what Dorothy Fujita-Rony has called, a transpacific center for Filipinos during the early twentieth century), while the University of California at Berkeley held the largest number of Chinese

1920s, ten percent of all foreign students (including Asian students) studied at the University of California at Berkeley, adding to the San Francisco Bay area's reputation as a "cosmopolitan" and cultural city along the West Coast.<sup>58</sup>

By joining the Christian student associations, Asian students also became members of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF). Founded in 1895 in Sweden by leaders of U.S. and European YMCA chapters, the WSCF focused more explicitly on the role of students as servants of Christ in colleges and universities around the world, "call[ing] members of the academic community to faith in God, to discipleship within the life and mission of the Church, and to help them strive for peace and justice in and among nations." Similar to the YMCA, the WSCF also established a presence among Protestant college students in America, Europe, and Asia. The WSCF sought to form a worldwide "federation" of Christian students, publishing bulletins and newspapers to help the various student associations to stay in touch and create a global network for Christian fellowship. In order to accomplish this goal, the WSCF instituted the idea of the Student Christian Movement during the years following WWI. Ideally, all student Christian associations and groups in any given nation would be united under the national Student Christian Movement. During a time of growing interest among Protestant church leaders in creating a unified, ecumenical movement which brought all Christians together in America and around the world, the WSCF's Student Christian Movement idea served as a means to draw together Protestant and Catholic students together regardless of

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students. A large number of Japanese students attended The University of California at Los Angeles and the University of Southern California.

<sup>58</sup> Foreign students, pg. 297.

denomination or individual beliefs.<sup>59</sup> For the WSCF, allegiance to the federation meant allegiance to Jesus Christ, and Jesus most certainly did not recognize denominational differences or national borders. As a result, the WSCF recognized the JSCA, CSCA, and FSCM as part of the Student Christian Movement in America and invited members to attend international meetings in Europe and maintain communications with the student Christian movements in their homelands. Although the YMCA had a strong interest in courting student members for its own missionary efforts, the WSCF was the first organization to attempt to build an international coalition of Christian students and welcome Catholic as well as Protestant students.

The WSCF leaned more towards liberal or social theology than the evangelically-minded YMCA and proposed that students form a vanguard to not only spread Christianity, but do so in a manner that emphasized the role that Christians played in promoting a better, more international society. “The Federation...seeks to prepare students for various forms of social and religious work for the extension of the Kingdom of God,” the WSCF’s mission statement began, “to improve the moral and social conditions of student life, and to foster friendly relations between students of all nations and to work for international goodwill by endeavoring to apply the teaching of Christ to international relationships.” For the WSCF and the student associations affiliated with it,

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<sup>59</sup> The concept of ecumenicalism is very complex and usually relegated to the realm of religious history and/or theology; however, it is an important concept for this study and this particular phase in the development of the student associations alongside of the WSCF. While some groups, such as the WSCF, represented the ideas among church leaders and officials that all Christians should be united regardless of denomination, the idea of a world-wide ecumenical movement did not gain full speed until the 1930s when the World Council of Churches began to hold meetings in Europe to discuss the undertakings of such a project. In many ways, the student associations in America were at the liberal forefront of Christianity by adhering to the belief that a federation of Christians should exist and aligning themselves with the WSCF. The YMCA, however, was not a strong supporter of an ecumenical movement and at times vehemently opposed the idea, citing the movement’s inclusion of Catholics and its supposed emphasis on social Christianity and liberal theology rather than evangelicalism.

evangelicalism was not enough in the drastically changing world: Christians had to prove that their religion could actually help to reverse poverty, racism, and greed on a global scale. While the CSCA's constitution applied the basic principles of the WSCF by making "labor[ing] for the general welfare of China, both at home and abroad" as one of its objectives, the FSCM (together with the Philippine Youth Movement across the Pacific) chose a more straight-forward and radical application by promising to promote "the abolition of war, the abolition of race hatred and prejudice, Christian internationalism."<sup>60</sup> The idea of Christian internationalism would come to play a significant role in the ways that the student associations responded to international political and military crises during the 1930s; however, during the early years of the student organizations in the 1920s, the students themselves interpreted the goal of making one world-wide federation of Christians as a necessity for abolishing prejudice and misunderstanding between races.

Because the WSCF encouraged student associations to interact with one another as part of the Student Christian Movement, the JSCA, CSCA, and FSCM often came together to tackle the large-scale problems of promoting Christian fellowship. Apart from YMCA-sponsored conferences which gathered Christian students together from across the U.S., Asian Christian students often held their own meetings at these conferences or sponsored their own conventions to discuss problems which they found were directly related to their experiences as foreign students. It was during these conferences that JSCA, CSCA, and FSCM members exchanged ideas on how to best conquer the world's ills while studying in the U.S. During the Illinois Oriental Student

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<sup>60</sup> First Annual Report of the Director, Bulletin 1, Institute on International Education (New York: 1920), 187; "Ideas and Objectives," *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (November 1925).

Conference at Urbana in March of 1924, a group of FSCM delegates reported back to the organization some of the resolutions and conclusions that Christian students from Japan, China, and the Philippines developed while at the meeting. At a workshop at the conference entitled “How a Foreign Student Can Serve,” students resolved that Asian students could best fulfill the goals of their organizations and the WSCF by “maintaining a friendly attitude towards other nations, taking the initiative in making friendships,...and uniting his own national group with other national groups for the same purpose.”<sup>61</sup> A CSCA member from Pomona College reported to fellow members on her experiences at the annual conference in Asilomar, California, explaining that she believed “a conference of this kind can accomplish much more than the League of Nations in establishing world peace,” but also acknowledging that there were “a good many Chinese students who are dissatisfied with the way the American treat them...” at the conference.<sup>62</sup> To those students, she suggested they recognize “the real Christians and the nominal Christians” in America and “go between them” to build better relations and erase prejudice.<sup>63</sup>

From the reports of the above students on the various conferences and meetings of Asian Christian students in the 1920s, it becomes clear that the members of the student associations not only identified that problems with prejudice and cultural misunderstanding existed in the U.S. and the wider world, but also believed that there were steps that they, as Christian members of the world wide federation of fellowship, could take to abolish such un-Christian sentiments and ideas. While the members of the CSCA, JSCA, and FSCM were influenced by the WSCF in thinking that their duties

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<sup>61</sup> “How a Foreign Student Can Serve,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (April 1924), 3.

<sup>62</sup> Letter from a Chinese Student at Pomona College about Asilomar Conference, *The CSCA Yearbook* (1921-1923), 27.

<sup>63</sup> Letter from a Chinese Student, 27.

consisted of creating Christian brotherhood and love, they were also influenced by the more cosmopolitan-leaning CFR. Time and again, Hurrey stressed to the members of the student associations that they were “ambassadors” while in America and they alone were at the forefront of not only spreading Christianity, but creating international understanding. In order to achieve these goals, Hurrey recommended that the students take the first step in initiating friendships with other foreign students, but, more importantly, with other American students on campus. “These students are ambassadors of friendship,” Hurrey began in a 1923 article, “they enable us to know their people and national aspirations, while, in turn, they reveal and interpret American life and ideals to thousands of influential friends in their homelands.” Hurrey continued by emphasizing that “we recognize the need of friendly mediators between the foreign students and the people and institutions of America. It is our desire that the student shall get what he came for and that returning, he shall entertain feelings of affection for America...”<sup>64</sup>

While the students were in America to receive an education, as Christians, they were also in America to promote cultural understanding and, in turn, create international “friendships” based on goodwill.

Members of the JSCA, CSCA, and FSCM approached their goal of creating lasting friendships as one of constructing a “cultural bridge” between themselves and their American classmates. They saw themselves as the links between the “Orient and the Occident” and believed that educating Americans on their cultural ways would go a long way in promoting transpacific understanding. As a result, many of the activities that

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<sup>64</sup> Charles Hurrey, “America’s Answer to Ten Thousand Students,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (October 1923), 4.

the student associations engaged in during their early years relied heavily on social events with a more cosmopolitan flair.

Although they were few in number, female members of the CSCA and JSCA often hosted “international teas” together and invited their American classmates in organizations such as the YWCA to attend and learn more about Asian cultures. An article from the University of Washington’s student newspaper *The Portal* described an “Education Week” on campus that was jointly sponsored by the JSCA, FSCM, and the YWCA and highlighted the International tea for foreign and American female students, held in rooms adorned with decorations from China, Japan, and the Philippines and “girls from all of these countries in their native dress to explain things...all meant to enlighten us concerning the ways of the rest of the world...and break down the barriers of race and prejudice.”<sup>65</sup> The FSCM, JSCA, and CSCA all subscribed to and read one another’s student bulletins and newspapers and learned of the various activities each association was leading, helping to foster a dialogue on ways to construct the “cultural bridge” while in America and build a network of Christian, Asian students devoted to international misunderstanding.<sup>66</sup>

While the CSCA and JSCA participated in “cultural bridge” building events, FSCM members in particular saw great value in reaching out to Americans. As colonial subjects in the U.S. and representatives of the Philippines, Filipino students recognized their unique status and the possibilities their actions had in promoting independence for their homeland. The FSCM identified American ignorance and misrepresentation of

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<sup>65</sup> “World Fellowship,” *The Portal* (November 1925), 4-5; “YWCA Plans Education Week,” *The Portal* (May 1925), 4-6.

<sup>66</sup> Monico C. Calma, “A Bridge for the East and the West,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (November, 1933), 1.



Filipinos as one of the largest obstacles to not only achieving independence, but also building good relationships while in the metropole. In the midst of world fairs that treated Americans to exhibits featuring loin-cloth-clad, uncivilized Filipino tribesmen and journalists such as Katherine Mayo reporting on the “backwardness” of the Filipino people, FSCM members viewed educating the American public on the Christian, educated, and civilized manners of Filipinos as their top priority.<sup>67</sup> Following Hurrey’s advice that “the voice of a non-political organization of Filipinos on the present Filipino question will have a great effect in winning the American public mind to the cause of Filipino freedom,” FSCM president Enrique Sobprena issued a special statement in 1924, declaring that the association was “the very organization Mr. Hurrey had in mind: it is not a political organization, but...a movement designed to serve the best interest of the country which name it bears.”<sup>68</sup> Sobprena, like other FSCM members, recognized that to appear “too political” and to protest too loudly against American colonization was a potentially disastrous game to play while in the ruler’s lair. Not only were the Filipino students technically colonial subjects despite their ambiguous “national” status under American rule, they were also “privileged” enough to be able to travel to America when practically all Asians were barred from entering under the Immigration Act of 1924. In order to not appear as ungrateful “propagandists” intent on independence and risk frightening American friends away, the FSCM emphasized Christian international

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<sup>67</sup> Although American writer Katherine Mayo is perhaps best known for her notorious work *Mother India* (1927), a vicious attack on Hindu culture based on her visits to India during the early 1920s, Mayo also wrote a series of articles attempting to portray life in the Philippines while upholding the conviction that the Filipinos were still too uncivilized for independence. Her 1925 work, *The Isles of Fear: The Truth About the Philippines* was the target of an FSCM-led attack against the author for her misrepresentative and harmful notions of Filipino culture.

<sup>68</sup> Enrique Sobprena, “The Filipino Students’ Christian Movement in America,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (April 1924), 7.

goodwill and the organization's desire to show the good side of Filipino culture while building a bridge between the Philippines and the U.S.

The cosmopolitan idea of culture exchange played a large role in the ways in which the FSCM went about constructing a cultural bridge between themselves and Americans. In 1924, FSCM members at New York City colleges and universities joined together with the Intercollegiate Cosmopolitan Club at Columbia University to host a "Filipino National Night." The highlight of the well-attended event was a play representing the history of the Philippines broken into various parts or stages of Filipino history. Featuring FSCM members themselves, Part II of the play, "Another Era," began "in the Philippines under the Stars and Stripes—Americans and Filipinos working together in the achievement of the long-coveted liberty" and concluded with a rousing rendition of the Star Spangled Banner, while the performance concluded with actors and actresses explaining to the audience that "after nearly three decades of American guidance and friendship, the Filipinos now feeling fully able to run a government of their own, respectfully request to be freed from further American control..."<sup>69</sup> During events such as the play in New York City, FSCM members attempted to serve as ambassadors and build friendships with Americans without appearing too eager or pushy in promoting independence. Filipino students were caught in a quandary while studying in the U.S. as a result of American imperialism, and this situation would only become worse as racial discrimination against Filipinos increased along the West Coast.

The FSCM also heavily utilized Rizal Day celebrations in promoting Christian friendships. Celebrated by the Filipino people on December 30<sup>th</sup>, Rizal Day commemorated the Spanish government's execution of Jose Rizal, a Filipino patriot who

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<sup>69</sup> "New York City," *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (April 1924).

criticized Spain's corrupt ruling of the islands and came under fire for his incendiary, pro-independence writings during the lead-up to the revolution against Spanish rule. Since Jose Rizal was also an *illustrodo*, a student who travelled to Europe for his college education, many FSCM members expressed a connection with the patriot and admired him for his courage. While Rizal Day was typically a more solemn affair in the Philippines, Sobprena and other FSCM leaders identified the holiday (which conveniently fell two days before New Year's Eve) as an opportunity to invite American students to celebrate with them, thereby not only educating Americans on the legacy of Rizal, but also subtly promoting the independence cause by highlighting Rizal's writings and message. Rizal Day celebrations, such as those held by Filipino students at the Oregon Agricultural College, the University of Nebraska, Columbia University, the University of California at Berkeley, Chicago universities, and other institutions across the country were very social and usually featured a dance with refreshments and games. The *Filipino Student Bulletin* reported that Rizal Day celebrations were often well attended by various groups of students on campus and also served as a fundraising opportunity for the FSCM and Filipino student clubs.

By holding social and cultural events on campus, members of the FSCM and other Christian associations often gladly took up the roles of cultural and Christian ambassadors while in America. Moving beyond the social scene of the cosmopolitan movement, the student Christian groups served as opportunities for Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students to mix education with spiritual pursuits, spreading cultural awareness as well as Christian ideas of fellowship among other students on campus. As students such as Sobprena expressed in their bulletins and newsletters, there was a commitment

among these “cultural bridge builders” to erasing cultural misunderstandings and imparting true knowledge of foreigners and their customs to Americans. Moreover, the students adopted the YMCA’s belief that they were key players in promoting international relations between the East and the West and organized their associations and events around their missions to promote Christianity among themselves and other foreign students while in the U.S. Through publications and at various campus meetings, Asian students placed great faith in their abilities as visiting scholars to end cultural ignorance and, as a result, create a framework for international cooperation built upon the notion of a universal Kingdom of God.

But members soon discovered how difficult the task of building cultural bridges and ending international misunderstandings could be in the face of racial discrimination, particularly along the West Coast. During the years immediately after World War I, anti-Asian sentiment and particularly anti-Japanese attitudes were on the rise in California, Oregon, and Washington. With the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 effectively barring general Chinese migration to the U.S., Japanese migrants began to fill labor demands for railroad construction and agriculture during the late nineteenth century. By the early twentieth century, Japanese immigrants were quickly becoming a large Asian immigrant group on the West Coast, settling from Washington through California and building Japanese communities or “Little Tokios” in urban and rural areas. As the number of Japanese agricultural workers and farmers increased, white Americans began to credit Japanese employees with unfair labor competition (similar to the Chinese during the nineteenth century), preventing white men from much-needed jobs. Japan’s impressive defeat of Russia during the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 also raised suspicions of the

rapid growth of the Japanese empire and led many West Coast Americans to consider Japanese communities as part of a West Coast invasion of Japanese migrants who served as colonial settlers of the Japanese empire.<sup>70</sup> The fact that many Japanese formed Japanese language schools for children and promoted Japanese culture added fuel to white Americans' suspicions of "secretive" Japanese activities. Cries of white Americans in California against Japanese farming resulted in the California legislation passing Alien Land Laws in 1913 and 1920, barring immigrants from owning land (Washington state followed suit in 1921 and 1923).<sup>71</sup> From legislative to social discrimination, Japanese immigrants and even American-born Japanese faced racial prejudice on a near daily basis in West Coast communities.

White West Coast inhabitants did not limit their racial attacks to the Japanese. Although the Japanese were perhaps the largest migrant group in certain parts of California, Oregon, and Washington, Chinese and Filipinos also experienced racial discrimination in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, and other urban and rural areas. Despite the Chinese Exclusion Act, the second generation of Chinese Americans were helping the Chinese communities to grow and, despite being American citizens, also experienced discrimination in schools, on the job, and in social settings. Likewise, Filipino migrants, as part of a relatively new immigrant group during the post-WWI years, elicited racist and often violent responses from Americans for not only being a largely transient, male migrant group, but also engaging in romantic and sexual

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<sup>70</sup> Azuma, *Between Two Empires*, 30; 100-104.

<sup>71</sup> While the Alien Land Laws in California and elsewhere along the West Coast were a particularly harsh legislative and official embodiment of anti-Japanese and anti-Asian sentiment, many Japanese immigrants found ways around the laws. One popular technique was listing property in the names of children, but banding together to form "corporations" or finding sympathetic banks willing to make illegal loans were other ways. See Craig Altschul, *Pearls: The Fred Hoshiyama Story* (New York: Marshall Jones Company, 2010).

relationships with white women. Although Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese migrants encountered a variety and range of experiences with American racial discrimination and prejudice, the 1924 Immigration Act, a host of alien land laws (which prevented immigrants from owning land), and naturalization restrictions forced a shared “yellow” and perpetually foreign identity onto these groups which resulted in racism, discrimination, and often violence along the West Coast.

For Asian students, the rising tide of anti-Asian sentiment along the West Coast presented itself in a variety of ways. Despite supposedly being bastions of cosmopolitanism and liberal understanding, universities and colleges as well as the surrounding communities were not immune to the rising tide of racism during the interwar years. Many campus groups and organizations openly discriminated against minorities, including Jewish, African American, and Asian students. Takanaga Hirai, a Japanese student at the University of Washington as well as a JSCA member, wanted to round out his education in America with as many extracurricular activities as possible. Along with a few other academic clubs, Hirai was excited to join a debating team at the University of Washington, but, to his dismay, quickly learned that the men’s debating society he wished to join “refus[ed] to admit Orientals.”<sup>72</sup> Sororities and fraternities at many West Coast universities also gained a reputation for refusing to admit Asians into their ranks, prompting some students to establish their own Greek associations, such as the all-Chinese Flip Flap Fraternity at Harvard University. While many Asian students either formed their own groups or, like Hirai, joined other more welcoming organizations like cosmopolitan clubs or religious organizations, the presence of racial discrimination

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<sup>72</sup> Takanaga Hirai, “An Hawaiian Japanese Immigrant-Interview,” Seattle 1924, box 24, item 39, Survey of Race Relations, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.

on campus was palatable. While Asian American students, such as Hilde Watanabe, chose to attend UCLA over UC-Berkeley because she heard that “there is a lot of prejudice up there against the Japanese...and that you aren’t at all welcome there,”<sup>73</sup> many foreign students relied on the glossy descriptions of West Coast universities provided by the CFR or the YMCA to make their decisions on where to attend college in the U.S. and could not avoid the more racist campuses.

More experiences with anti-Asian sentiment and racial discrimination awaited those Asian students who ventured off campus and into larger West Coast communities. If colleges and universities provided Asian students with a more “muted” form of prejudice, off-campus experiences in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle showed Asian students the full strength of social discrimination from white Americans who even less attuned to cosmopolitan ideas. “There was a good deal of anti-Japanese agitation in San Francisco,” Dr. F.T. Nakaya, a former Japanese student explained in an interview in 1924, “and when I went out on the street, people would say things to me and call me ‘Skibbie’ and ‘Jap’ and ‘Charlie, sometimes it made me so mad...”<sup>74</sup> Another Japanese student corroborated Dr. Nakaya’s account, explaining that he “came to CA because [he] wanted to understand the nature of anti-Japanese feeling...” and soon enough came to fully understand anti-Japanese sentiment in San Francisco when he attempted to play a game of tennis at a public court. Armed with new racquets and balls and dressed in crisp, white tennis gear, the student and his friend were denied entrance to the court and “were not allowed to play there” because they were “Orientals.”<sup>75</sup> Another Chinese student explained that he received “all kinds of unpleasant and unchristian treatments” while

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<sup>73</sup> Interview with Miss Hida Watanabe, box 31, item 134, 1925, Survey of Race Relations.

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Dr. F. T. Nakaya, Japanese Physician, 1924, box 28, item 247, Survey of Race Relations.

<sup>75</sup> Takeuchi, “Life History as a Social Document,” 1924, box 25, item 86, Survey of Race Relations.

travelling from Los Angeles to San Francisco. “The headwaiter in the dining car,” he recounted, “refused to wait on me...and fellow passengers called me by the name of ‘Chink’.” Once he arrived in San Francisco, his search for over-night lodgings was incredibly difficult, being “informed by many landladies that they did not take in yellow people.”<sup>76</sup>

Students were often quite shocked by their face-to-face encounters with racism and discrimination in the U.S. Apart from the general surprise at finding such virulent prejudice in a supposedly majority Christian nation, class may also have been an important factor in the students’ initial reactions to being denied entrance to a Y, local restaurant, or other establishments along the West Coast. While many Filipino students were self-supporting and often came from more rural and less affluent backgrounds, students from China and Japan were typically from wealthier or more elite families. The experiences these students had in terms of segregation and discrimination may have insulted their perceptions of social privileges that they carried with them from their homelands, adding an element of class to their anger and humiliation after being on the receiving end of prejudice in America. While students did not directly connect their feelings of inferiority and shock to their socioeconomic status or background, it would be difficult to deny that some feelings of class injustice colored the reactions of wealthier and educated students to their often unwelcome receptions in the U.S.

Regardless of class background or social upbringing, however, once they arrived in America, many Asian students shared the stigma of being “yellow” and attempting to find room and boarding in West Coast communities. Although Asian students who

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<sup>76</sup> “Report on Chinese Students in America and Europe, 1931”, box 45, folder 3, Record Group 13, Yale Divinity School Special Collections.



received scholarships or came from wealthier families were eligible to stay in dorms on campus, other students could often not afford the dorm fees and were forced to look elsewhere for a place to stay. The students' searches for a place to live led them off campus and into the larger communities where their efforts to secure lodging in the face of anti-Asian sentiment were often futile, disappointing, and humiliating. Chotoku Toyama, a JSCA member studying at UCLA, explained his frustrations in finding a room during an interview: "For our students, it is not easy to rent a room from an American family or to lodge at a boarding house. Most of the boarding houses and rooms for rent are refused [to] the Japanese students."<sup>77</sup> Similar to African Americans in West Coast cities such as Seattle or San Francisco, boarding houses, apartment complexes, and even hotels often refused to rent a room to Asian migrants, including students.<sup>78</sup> The problem with finding housing was often a shock to foreign students who relied on the CFR to guide them in the right direction when it came to finding housing. Despite the CFR's efforts in making suggestions to Asian students who needed off-campus housing, a written reply to an ad might result in an interview, but end with a denial of the rented space once the landlord learned that his or her possible tenant was a member of the "yellow" race.

More problematic was the YMCA's denial of room rentals to Asian students. Although the YMCA had taken small, yet decisive steps in addressing its own internal problems with race relations when it came to African American members along the East Coast and particularly in the South, community YMCAs in West Coast cities lagged behind when it came to race relations. Campus YMCAs and YWCAs certainly did not

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<sup>77</sup> Chotoku Toyama, "Life History as a Social Document," box 25, item 169, Survey of Race Relations.

<sup>78</sup> Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the West, 1528-1990* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1999), 250-262.

shun or discriminate against Asian students, but community-wide YMCAs that offered lodging did not admit Asian guests and even refused entrance to swimming pools and other facilities, reserving those services for whites.<sup>79</sup> Imagine students' shock when, after being guided by the CFR and the YMCA to come to America, they were denied a place to stay by a supposedly Christian organization! The YMCA's refusal of rooms to Asians prompted many students to become wary of the organization. "A Japanese cannot belong to the YMCA," Dr. Nakaya explained, "I tried to get a room there and was told they did not rent rooms to Japanese and I have never been back."<sup>80</sup> Another Chinese student was disappointed when, on a warm spring day in May, he was refused a cool swim at the San Francisco YMCA, with the simple explanation that only whites could swim in the Y's facilities.<sup>81</sup> While the YMCA's rules of segregation and racism may not have immediately phased the organization on the West Coast, it puzzled, angered, and humiliated students (including those who may have come to the U.S. from more wealthy or elite families) who believed the YMCA to be a truly Christian organization.

The YMCA's response to this basic contradiction in its values and its practices on ground in the U.S. did little to remedy either the housing crisis among Asian students or the blatant racism within the organization itself. In 1924, a University of Washington YMCA member, C.L. Maxfield, reported in the YMCA's student publication, *The Intercollegian*, that the UW YMCA had "solved a problem" when it came to housing. Maxfield opened his article by openly stating that Japanese and Asian students at the University of Washington were being discriminated against when they attempted to find

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<sup>79</sup> It is important to note that although YMCAs that catered primarily to Japanese and Chinese communities did exist in West Coast cities (such as San Francisco) during the early twentieth century, in many cases, they were not the closest facilities to campus and were not always easily accessible for students.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Dr. F. T. Nakaya, Japanese Physician, 1924, box 28, item 247, Survey of Race Relations.

<sup>81</sup> Charles Lee, "Student Memoirs," *The Chinese Student* (May 1926), 5.

off-campus housing in Seattle, but that the YMCA had addressed the issue and proposed a solution. In order to help Asian students find temporary homes, the YMCA had proposed “enlisting individual Christian families” of good report with the association and known not to harbor racial prejudices to “guarantee homes” to Asian students in need of a place to stay.<sup>82</sup> By searching for “good,” Christian families in the greater Seattle area, the YMCA proposed to eliminate much of the guesswork and trial-and-error that Asian students faced when searching for homes in an anti-Asian climate.<sup>83</sup> Although Maxfield lauded the YMCA for its attempts to assist Asian students in overcoming racial discrimination in America, his article as well as the proposed plan of the association overlooked one glaring point: how would the YMCA change its policies in its *own* facilities to help end housing discrimination for Asian students and Asian immigrants in general? For the YMCA, the problem was in the larger community, among very unchristian people who failed to embrace true brotherhood and fellowship. While the YMCA was performing self-scrutiny for its practices in the South in terms of African Americans and devising entire committees devoted to ending racism in Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama, Y leaders rarely turned that analytical eye towards its operations along the West Coast.<sup>84</sup>

The experiences of the students with racism, including this perceived betrayal by the Y, had devastating effects on their views of American Christians and Christianity in general. Similar to Dr. Nakaya, who never returned to any YMCA or attended any Y-sponsored function after being denied a room, many Asian students doubted the existence of true Christians in America and decried the hypocrisy and shallowness they had

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<sup>82</sup> C.L. Maxfield, “Washington Solves a Problem,” *Intercollegian* Vol. 42, no. 2 (November 1924), 37.

<sup>83</sup> Maxfield, “Washington,” 37.

<sup>84</sup> Mjagkij, *Men and Women Adrift*, 113-126; 132.

discovered while in the U.S. Before coming to the U.S., many Asian students held America up to the highest of Christian standards, believing that, as a major Christian nation, the U.S. should contain the most ardent and passionate of Christians in the world. Their experiences with racism and discrimination in America made many students, such as JSCA member and Stanford student Hideo Oyama, doubt that there were any true Christians left in the U.S. “I respected students as truly Christian,” Oyama explained, “...but it was most difficult to understand why anti-Japanese movements exist in such a Christian country like America.”<sup>85</sup> Another student, T. Yoshida, expressed his bewilderment at the passing of the Immigration Act of 1924, explaining that “in the eyes of many Japanese, America is the most representative Christian nation,” but that it was “most difficult for them to believe that the U.S. would enact such un-American legislation, not to say anything of its un-Christian character.”<sup>86</sup>

Other students expressed their deep-felt disillusionment with Christianity as a whole based on their experiences while in America. Magdaleno A. Abaya, a Filipino student from California and a member of the FSCM, explained that America desperately needed “more practical Christianity” and that although Americans “talk[ed] of Christianity and brotherhood and love and world peace and all this sort of stuff...when it comes to the living of it, they have become parrots.”<sup>87</sup> Some students cited the “negative effect of life in the U.S.” on those who had “lost their Christian faith” and become discouraged by “sham Christianity,” while a CSCA member outlined his growing suspicion of American Christians and Christianity in general:

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<sup>85</sup> Hideo Oyama, “Life History as a Social Document,” box 25, item 60, Survey of Race Relations.

<sup>86</sup> Life History of T. Yoshida, box 32, item 346, Survey of Race Relations.

<sup>87</sup> Magdaleno A. Abaya, “A Thumb Portrait of My Life in Relation to America,” box 37, item 425, Survey of Race Relations.

I have always been a Christian and a very zealous one too, but my Christian faith is now very much unsteady on account of the experiences that I have received in this institution...The fraternities refused to take me in because I am Chinese. My scholastic standing entitled me to receive one of the five fellowships annually awarded to the five highest standing men in college, but the college authorities refused to give me my due reward because I was a 'Chinese' ...I now feel quite uncertain as to whether there is true strength in this so-called Christianity.<sup>88</sup>

Remarks such as those above should have deeply concerned the YMCA and the CFR.

Asian students, the primary focus of these Christian groups, were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with not only their experiences with Americans, but their experiences with American churches and Christianity. Such attitudes reflected poorly on the Y and the CFR and would make recruiting more foreign students to join the ranks of the Y and speak highly of American evangelical efforts difficult. Students also offered their own analyses of the problems with American Christianity, explaining that the "Christian teachers are misinterpreting the meaning of Jesus' teachings" and that "the only way the race problem will ever be solved is for people to get the real spirit of Christianity and to love and understand each other."<sup>89</sup>

Students were also disappointed in what they identified as a lack of real democracy and equality in America. Similar to preconceived notions of America as the true Christian nation in the world, students also left their home countries with visions of American democratic ideas, excited to travel to the land of Washington and Lincoln, but their visions did not endure. "You see, we learned about George Washington and Benjamin Franklin and Abraham Lincoln and we thought everybody in America was like

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<sup>88</sup> "The Chinese Students' Position of Today," box 1, folder 16, Record Group 13, Yale Divinity School Special Collections; John Schmoker, "History of the CFR," 80-81, Box 4, YMCA International Division, Kautz Family YMCA Archives.

<sup>89</sup> Life History of Saka Tsuboi, box 25, item 58, Survey of Race Relations; Interview with Dr. F.T. Nakaya.

that,” Nakaya explained, “we thought of America as a place where it was easy to make money and where you could work and go to school.”<sup>90</sup> Other students had similar notions of America being a “rich, large, and good country built on the spirit of George Washington,” “the land of democracy, rich resources, honesty, diligence, and great opportunities,” and emancipation and freedom.<sup>91</sup> An FSCM member explained to a CFR representative in 1925 that his reason for coming to America was “a puzzle” and that “like all my countrymen who first came here, my heart was full of admiration for the United States, and I seem[ed] to see the opportunities lurking everywhere for our nationals,” but “as one stays here longer, the reverse is true.”<sup>92</sup> Students, such as Hideo Oyama, noted the contradictions in how they envisioned America and what they actually found, explaining that “I understood America as a country of justice and equality, but this is far from fact that... Americans have feelings of race superiority...and modern America is a militaristic and imperialistic and prejudiced autocracy.”<sup>93</sup>

The alien land laws, Immigration Act of 1924, and naturalization laws which prohibited Asians from owning land, entering the U.S., and becoming citizens also fueled criticisms from students as they indicted America for being a land of contradictions and hypocrisy. T. Yoshida argued that the ban on Asian naturalization was “against democracy” and that America “should allow any person or race to be naturalized” out of

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<sup>90</sup> Interview with Dr. F.T. Nakaya.

<sup>91</sup> Oyama, “Life History as a Social Document,” M. Suma, “Paper Written by a Japanese Student in Reply to Questionnaire,” 1924, box 24, item 48, Survey of Race Relations; Interview with Dr. F.T. Nakaya. The legends of democracy and Franklin, Washington, and Lincoln held an ever larger sway over Filipino students brought up under a colonial American education system in the Philippines and will be discussed more in Chapter Three.

<sup>92</sup> John Schmoker, “History of the CFR,” 81, box 4, YMCA International Division, Kautz Family YMCA Archives.

<sup>93</sup> Oyama, “Life History.”

basic “human justice and Christian character.”<sup>94</sup> Other students explained in interviews and student publications that the alien land laws of California and other states did “not have a good effect upon the true American spirit” and that one possible alternative to the discriminatory land measures would be to “make [Japanese] by Congressional Act...eligible to citizenship.”<sup>95</sup> JSCA member M. Suma decried American prejudice against the Japanese in 1924:

Are the Japanese of 70 or 80,000 a menace to America that has more than a hundred million people? No! Then why and by what reason do you discriminate us? Is it right to persecute so severely and so heavily the people who are willing to work and produce more for the welfare of American people? Didn't your father bring forth upon this continent a new nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal? Why don't you treat us impartially on the behalf of Humanity, Justice, and Equality? Americans! Treat us fairly, impartially, but not discriminately. Are you satisfied in discriminating us so harshly?<sup>96</sup>

Frustrated with the contradictions they faced while in America, Asian students warned Americans that the “realization of true democracy” was the only way to the “abolition of biased race prejudice.”<sup>97</sup>

For student association members, building a cultural bridge in the midst of racial prejudice and discrimination in America was quickly becoming an impossible goal by the mid-1920s. American racism was, in many cases, an unpleasant and even humiliating experience, and the larger Christian organizations provided little information and assistance to affiliated student Christian associations. When organizations such as the CFR did acknowledge the problems of the Asian foreign students with racism and discrimination, those two words were rarely used to describe the problem. Instead,

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<sup>94</sup> “Life History of T. Yoshida.”

<sup>95</sup> M. Suma, “Paper Written;” Oyama, “Life History.”

<sup>96</sup> M. Suma, “Paper Written.”

<sup>97</sup> Takeuchi, “Life History as a Social Document;” Oyama, “Life History.”

Hurrey often substituted “international misunderstandings” for racial discrimination, arguing that the problems the students experienced were based more on a general distaste for foreigners among Americans than any deep-seated racial hatred or prejudice. If the problem was one of misunderstanding or ignorance, Hurrey insisted that the issue could be solved by a continued focus on cultural bridge building and good behavior.

Often, Hurrey explained that the unwelcoming reception that Asian students received was only a perception based on typical sore feelings after being shunned in social situations. In an article titled “Foreign Students Shock Our Complacency,” Hurrey, as the general representative for all Christian foreign students in America, took it upon himself to address the question of “do foreign students promote friendly relations?” “It all depends,” Hurrey began, “upon factors like the following” and continued by providing some common examples of situations when foreign students failed to promote “friendly foreign relations” and, as a result, experienced what they might describe as racism. For Hurrey, the economic status of the student (meaning whether or not a student worked to support himself in school) as well as what types of “social relationships” students engaged in were extremely important for determining how well a foreign student would adapt in a scenario when he or she was a minority. Regarding economic status, Hurrey explained that “if the student is dependent upon his own efforts to earn part of his expenses...his limited financial resources compel him to deny himself many of the extras which...add to his handicap of strangeness of language and social customs.”<sup>98</sup> Hurrey alluded to the existence of general discrimination against Asians in America (“he comes into competition with American students, to whom preference is generally shown...”),

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<sup>98</sup> Charles F. Hurrey, “Foreign Students Shock Our Complacency,” box 058-69, CFR-Hurrey Articles, Katuz Family YMCA Archives.



but insisted that most of the problems that any self-supporting student might have in terms of animosity or prejudice were largely his or her own fault for having to work (and venture into the world outside of campus which was more hostile to foreigners of any variety). As a result, these students missed out on the “essential” social activities which only helped them in building cultural bridges, but also exposed them to more students of a variety of backgrounds, allowing them to adapt more easily to life in America.

Hurrey was blunter in his criticisms of the “overly-sensitive” student who experienced social discrimination. Although Asian students expressed time and again the number of fraternities, sororities, and other campus organizations which rejected their membership based on race, Hurrey never acknowledged these injustices and blatant display of racism in his explanation of the role of “social relationships” in the foreign student experience:

The foreign student who is extraordinarily fond of social life becomes sensitive to any little discrimination; if an American girl refuses to dance with him, his feelings are hurt; he is grieved if he does not receive a ‘bid’ to a fraternity membership, and his opinion of people are ‘high hat’ or ‘prejudiced’ if they do not speak to him on the campus... It must be remembered that aversion to inter-racial marriage causes reserve and discrimination on the part of some people toward certain foreign students. The student from abroad who is content to enjoy his American girl friendships in a mixed group rather than by individual ‘dating’ is not encountering serious discrimination.<sup>99</sup>

By referring to any of the discriminatory acts that students experienced as “any little discrimination,” Hurrey appeared out of touch with the daily rituals of racism that many students lived on West Coast campuses and in larger communities. Hurrey relegated acts of prejudice and discrimination to “hurt feelings” on the part of the student rather than serious infractions against the basic premises of equality and Christianity. Hurrey’s

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<sup>99</sup> Hurrey, “Foreign Students.”

suggestion to foreign students to avoid interracial dating was also interesting in that it highlighted generalized fears among Americans (which he acknowledged) of interracial sexual relationships. This contrast in the thinking of Hurrey and the members of the student Christian associations he oversaw highlights the different trajectories the CFR/YMCA and the CSCA, JSCA, and FSCM were taking when it came to the racial problems of the 1920s.

Rather than encourage students to speak out against discrimination and prejudice, however, Hurrey and the CFR strongly advised Asian students to be mindful of their social and political opinions in the presence of Americans. Hurrey encouraged members of the JSCA, CSCA, and FSCM and other foreign students to remain on their best behavior while in the U.S., constantly reminding them that the cultural bridge could only be built of mutual cooperation and understanding, not rifts and divisions created by “aloof or noisy” students.<sup>100</sup> Hurrey reminded students that Westerners did not appreciate being told by foreigners that their ways and practices were less than ideal or un-Christian and encouraged students, particularly Filipino students, to not become mere “propagandists” while in the U.S. In an article titled “Looking Ahead with Migrating Students,” Hurrey explained that “students from India, Korea, and the Philippines are extremely active in agitating for the independence of their people” and that “with some, this goal has become an obsession and their activity is interfering in many instances with their acceptability as guests and speakers in homes and societies.”<sup>101</sup> “It would seem best,” Hurrey continued, “that students devote their energy to their studies and although ready to answer questions of a political nature, refrain from active propaganda in the

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<sup>100</sup> Charles Hurrey, “Looking Ahead with Migrating Students,” 9, Box 058-69, CFR Hurrey Articles

<sup>101</sup> Charles Hurrey, “Looking Ahead with Migrating Students,” 9, Box 058-69, CFR Hurrey Articles, Kautz Family YMCA Archives.

political field.”<sup>102</sup> Although aimed at those students who came from occupied lands, Hurrey’s message was a general discouragement for any foreign student wishing to speak out against any political issues, including racial discrimination. Hurrey followed the YMCA’s policy at the time of generally refraining from attempting to sway public opinion on controversial issues and encouraged members of the student associations to put politics aside to focus on building international, Christian relationships.

Hurrey’s words of encouragement, however, did not hold sway on many members of the JSCA, CSCA, or FSCM. Y.T. Wu, a prominent CSCA member, wrote a passionate reply to Hurrey in 1925, openly and eloquently criticizing Hurrey’s recommendations for foreign students. In “The Boomerang of Criticism,” published in the *Fellowship Notes of the CSCA*, Wu doubted the usefulness of Hurrey’s warnings to remain apolitical while in the U.S., explaining that his first reaction to reading Hurrey’s original article was “hereafter in talking to my American friends, I should close my mouth to anything that would be considered unpleasant and only talk about the weather or how great and wealthy America is and how much more so she will be.”<sup>103</sup> Wu also argued that through attempts to construct a “cultural bridge” while in America, foreign students became more familiar with many of the negative aspects of the American people, rather than the positive (which Hurrey often trumpeted in articles and reports). Wu continued by explaining that, over time, “Chinese living and studying in America and the West have come to realize that the Western people are not all angels and their land not yet a paradise---that strong and wealthy as they may be, they have a great many dire

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<sup>102</sup> Hurrey, “Looking Ahead,” 9.

<sup>103</sup> Y. T. Wu, “The Boomerang of Criticism- A Reply to Mr. Charles Hurrey in Respect to his Views Expressed in an Article Appearing in the Fellowship Notes of the CSCA,” *Fellowship Notes* (May 1925), 1.

needs which they are not yet able to meet.”<sup>104</sup> While Hurrey prompted foreign students to refrain from speaking out of turn in regards to social or political issues in the U.S., Wu argued that underneath the appearance of wealth and stability, America had its fair share of problems in relation to “prejudice, hate, and lack of equality.”<sup>105</sup>

FSCM member D. H. Ambrosio also doubted the CFR’s insistence that the foreign students remain on their best behavior and serve as ambassadors for the U.S. once they return home after college. “But what shall we bring back home with us?” Ambrosio asked fellow readers of *The Filipino Student Bulletin*, “shall we bring back a mere blind admiration and hollow imitation of American ways and culture, or shall we bring back that intelligent, balanced, and broad judgment that comes from contrast with other cultures?”<sup>106</sup> Although FSCM members represented the group of Asian students who, as colonial subjects, were perhaps most apt to believe that Hurrey spoke the truth when he advised them not to be too political or preach too loudly on the topic of independence, even they grew wary of the CFR’s emphasis on cosmopolitanism in the midst of serious racial problems. By the mid-1920s, members of the Christian student associations were beginning to see that perhaps the CFR and YMCA embraced internationalism to a fault, using the concept of bridge building to disguise problems in American Christianity and race relations.

But organizations such as the YMCA certainly tried to address racial problems in the U.S.—so long as they were confined to the South. The Race Relations Committee, the Student Work Committee, the Interracial Movement, and the Commission on Interracial Cooperation were all branches of the YMCA formed by officials for the sole

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<sup>104</sup> Wu, “The Boomerang,” 1-2.

<sup>105</sup> Wu, “The Boomerang,” 1-2.

<sup>106</sup> D. H. Ambrosio, “What Shall We Bring Back?” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (November 1925), 3-4.

purpose of working to create discussion and action groups in Southern universities and colleges. In February of 1924, the *Intercollegian* published “A Chance for Black Peace,” an article by student YMCA member F. Eugene Corbie. In this article, Corbie explained that through interracial cooperation in the South, white and black YMCA members could help to possibly change opinions of African Americans in the U.S. and lead the way in Christian, social change.<sup>107</sup> With the advent of various interracial groups in the organization, Corbie’s prediction appeared to be a great possibility; however, even the Y recognized its own limits in what it could and could not do in terms of race relations in America. The Commission on Interracial Cooperation explained in a *Chinese Christian Student* article that the “philosophy” of the Interracial Movement in the South was “not that of seeking to solve the race problem, but taking the next practicable step in the direction of interracial justice and goodwill.”<sup>108</sup> The article concluded by noting that “there are still vast areas of prejudice that have been scarcely touched, vast realms of injustice that so far have proved impregnable.”<sup>109</sup> This article made clear that Asian discrimination was not a topic that fit in neatly within the larger context of racism in America and was a vexing topic for a Christian organization. Despite funding special Chinese and Japanese branches of the YMCA in areas such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Seattle, the YMCA did not attempt to dismantle the underlying problems of racial discrimination in its main chapters along the West Coast.

Asian students, however, realized that they had to play a more active role in addressing problems with racism. If the YMCA and the CFR were not willing to help, where else could they turn except to each other as foreign students who shared a racial

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<sup>107</sup> F. Eugene Corbie, “A Chance for the Black Race,” *Intercollegian* Vol. 41, no. 5 (February 1924), 19.

<sup>108</sup> “Story of the Interracial Movement in the South,” *The Chinese Christian Student* (February 1930), 3.

<sup>109</sup> “Story of the Interracial Movement,” 3.

stigma as “yellow” while in the U.S.? Despite a lukewarm attempt by the University of Washington YWCA’s International Relations Committee to “give the Y girls an opportunity to observe other races at work and thereby develop their interest in them” by planning field trips to “a Japanese store, a Japanese confectionary, the Japanese school, a Japanese dinner (if not too expensive), and a visit to the Buddhist temple,” the Y’s solutions to racism leaned heavily on cosmopolitan ideas and “immigrant gifts.”<sup>110</sup> In contrast, members of the student Christian associations began to discuss what they, as part of a minority race in America, could do to help address racism. At an Oriental Student Conference at Oberlin College in 1924, CSCA, FSCM, and JSCA representatives discussed the problems of Christianity in America as well as where to go from there. At one meeting, a group of students concluded that among the most visible weaknesses of American Christianity were a “lack of courage on the part of preachers and church members in opposing public opinion of racial issues...and superficiality and indifference among American young people.”<sup>111</sup> The accusations of “lack of courage” on the behalf of American Christians and “superficiality and indifference” revealed a growing displeasure among Asian foreign students for the tepid response of the YMCA and the CFR to racism. The students at the conference did not stop at describing what the problems were in America, noting that “it was agreed that Oriental students can make Christ more real in American student life by dealing promptly and thoroughly with all cases of racial discrimination and discourtesy, by enlisting the help of true Christian people...in overcoming such practices.”<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> “Work Plan of the International Relations Committee,” box 3T, folder 3/23, International Relations, UW-YMCA University Branch records, Special Collections Department, University of Washington.

<sup>111</sup> “Christian Oriental Student Conference,” *The Intercollegian* Vol. 41, no. 2 (November 1924), 19.

<sup>112</sup> “Christian Oriental Student Conference,” 19.

By forming ties with sympathetic Christian organizations, the students at the Oberlin conference recognized that rather than mere “cultural ambassadors” or visitors, they could serve as representatives of minority groups in the U.S. and begin an open fight against racism and discrimination. When comparing the students’ desire to deal “promptly and thoroughly with *all* cases of racial discrimination” to the YMCA’s admittance of passivity when trying to “solve” the racial problem, it is clear that the members of the student-led Christian associations were ahead of their parent organizations when it came not only to fighting, but even recognizing racial discrimination. Set on rooting out the “nominal members” of their organizations, student association leaders such as President Carballo of the FSCM urged “fellow members and readers of *The Bulletin*” to “become active in their interest” and proclaimed in an article that he would “rather see one maintain an antagonistic attitude than an indifferent or passive attitude, for out of antagonism there shall come conflict and conflict means action.”<sup>113</sup> The fight against discrimination required active members who were dedicated to bringing Christian equality and racial justice to America.

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Perhaps it was Lillian Kwai, a Chinese student who attended the University of California at Berkeley and was an active member of the CSCA, who best described the changing nature of the student associations in 1925. In her report to the rest of the CSCA on her days spent at the Indianapolis Convention, Kwai explained that racism and racial

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<sup>113</sup> E. J. Carballo, “To Fellow Members and Readers of the Bulletin,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (December 1924-January 1925), 9.

discrimination had become important topics of discussion among students. “For instance,” Kwai recalled, “students from one college may emphasize lack of understanding as one of the causes of racial prejudices, while students from another college may bring up concrete causes probably unknown to other students in the first place.”<sup>114</sup> Kwai’s description of a meeting at the conference summarized the basic changes in the student groups during the 1920s, from distinctly “cosmopolitan” bridge-builders to students interested in actively making changes in the racial structure of the U.S. Although a “lack of understanding” was still a probable cause for racism for some student members, it appeared as though the “concrete causes” of American prejudice and bias were more worrisome. The fact that these topics were becoming a part of the popular Christian student conferences, where members of the CSCA, FSCM, and JSCA could gather and discuss their experiences as foreign students who happened to be members of the “yellow” race in America, signified a growing, multicultural and cross-ethnic connection between Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese Christian students.

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<sup>114</sup> Lillian Kwai, “The Indianapolis Convention: A Personal Impression,” *CSCA Fellowship Notes* (1925), 21.



## Chapter Two

### **A Problem by any other Name: Christian Student Associations, the “Second Generation Problem,” and West Coast Racism**

By 1926, leaders and members of the Japanese Students’ Christian Association (JSCA) were firmly focused on problems of racism and discrimination along the West Coast, becoming more than cosmopolitan missionaries in the U.S. “Is there any practical solution to the problem at all?” JSCA Secretary Roy Akagi asked readers of the *Japanese Student Bulletin* in a 1926 editorial titled “Inter-racial Goodwill.”<sup>115</sup> “For one thing,” Akagi continued, “let us at least be sure that we know the problem and the facts therein involved. As Japanese students studying in America, we, for better or worse, constitute ourselves as one raw material in the American racial relationship laboratory.”<sup>116</sup> Akagi’s identification of Japanese students like himself as part of the “racial laboratory” of America was a powerful statement that represented a transformation of foreign Asian students from temporary, visiting outsiders into racial minorities with shared experiences in the U.S. Members of the JSCA and the Chinese Students’ Christian Association (CSCA) were able to identify with the racism and discrimination that the Nisei and second generation of Chinese American students faced on campus and in the larger community. Although they were not technically part of the second generation of Asian Americans in the U.S., foreign-born JSCA and CSCA members considered their experiences with racism problems which their organizations should address with discussion and solutions. It is also telling that by 1927, the foreign-

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<sup>115</sup> Roy H. Akagi, “Inter-racial Goodwill,” *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (1926), 1.

<sup>116</sup> Akagi, “Inter-racial Goodwill,” *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (1926), 1.

born student leaders of the CSCA agreed that “since the number of American-born Chinese students is increasing, the CSCA should extend its services to them.”<sup>117</sup>

After 1924, harsh immigration laws deterred many Chinese and Japanese students from coming to the America.<sup>118</sup> Despite a decline in foreign-born Asian students in the U.S., however, groups such as the JSCA and CSCA benefitted from an increase in membership, primarily due to a rising interest in the associations among American-born Chinese and Japanese students who were facing their own experiences with discrimination.<sup>119</sup> As a result, the CSCA and the JSCA became more oriented to the domestic problems of prejudice and discrimination in the U.S. The leaders and members of the associations used the problems of the second generation of Asian Americans (who, even as U.S. citizens, witnessed discriminatory treatment) as a way to create and unite multicultural and interracial student Christian groups devoted to pursuing equality for all minorities along the West Coast.

Chinese and Japanese students were, however, not the only scholars interested in race relations in West Coast communities at the time. Sociologists were fascinated with what Robert Park deemed the “racial frontier” of the Pacific Coast (especially California, where a large number of Asian immigrants settled during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century).<sup>120</sup> Scholars originally identified an “Oriental Problem” in California,

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<sup>117</sup> CSCA General Report (1927), box 1, folder 5, Record Group 13, Yale Divinity School Library Special Collections Department.

<sup>118</sup> Along with immigration restrictions, the cost of transportation also played a factor in deterring Chinese students from travelling to the U.S. Instead, many Chinese students went to Japan for their college educations by the mid-1920s. “Fewer Chinese Students in America,” *The Chinese Christian Student* (1931), 4.

<sup>119</sup> General Secretary Report of the Chinese Students’ Christian Association, 1931, Yale Divinity School Library, Special Collections.

<sup>120</sup> Robert E. Park, “Our Racial Frontier on the Pacific,” *Survey Graphic* 56 (May 1926), 194. See also Stanford M. Lyman’s “Civilization, Culture, and Color: Changing Foundations of Robert E. Park’s

Washington, and Oregon that was classified by a wave of anti-Asian sentiment among native, white inhabitants during the early twentieth century. Outcries against unfair labor competition from Chinese laborers arose from the white working class during the 1860s, culminating in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and leading to a more generalized fear of a “yellow invasion” or “yellow peril” with increased Japanese and Filipino migration to the U.S., a phenomenon which fascinated sociologists, anthropologists, and other academics.<sup>121</sup> Following the implementation of the Immigration Act of 1924, however, sociologists shifted their focus from immigration as the source of the West Coast problem to the plight of the second generation of Asian Americans. While the 1924 Act had effectively halted large scale Asian immigration to the U.S. by excluding those from the Asiatic Zone, sociologists noticed that racial relationships between whites and Asians along the West Coast had further deteriorated into blatant discrimination and, in many cases, violence.<sup>122</sup> If Asian immigration was to blame for the “Oriental Problem” in California during the early twentieth century, why did racial discrimination seem to increase after the 1917 and 1924 federal immigration laws prohibited large-scale Asian migration to the U.S.?<sup>123</sup> This scenario baffled sociologists, but inspired them to study

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Sociology of Race Relations,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 3 (1991), 285- 287 for a more in-depth discussion of Park’s racial frontier from a historical-sociological perspective.

<sup>121</sup> Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 101-118.

<sup>122</sup> As unemployment and economic problems rose during the late 1920s and early 1930s, physical violence against Asian immigrants and Asian Americans also increased. Filipinos were a prominent target for racial violence in California, Oregon, and Washington (an important topic which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three).

<sup>123</sup> The Immigration Act of 1924 prohibited all inhabitants in the Asiatic Barred Zone (basically all Asian nations) from entering the U.S. Filipinos, however, were allowed to migrate to the U.S. since they were technically colonial subjects of America and, therefore, considered U.S. nationals by the American government. The Immigration Act of 1924 followed a series of other immigration laws geared towards preventing Asian migration to the U.S., including the Chinese-Exclusion Act and the Immigration Act of 1917. For a more in-depth discussion of the Immigration Act of 1924, see Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005) and

Pacific Coast race relations and seek some sort of explanation. More sociologists, such as Robert Park and William Smith, began to focus on the specific concerns and problems of the second generation of Asian Americans who, by the 1920s, were coming of age on campuses and in communities along the West Coast.<sup>124</sup> While the overall conclusion was that the second generation of Asian Americans (particularly the Nisei, or second generation of American-born Japanese, one of the largest population groups in California) appeared to have widespread difficulty in finding steady employment despite graduating from top colleges and universities, sociologists differed in their explanations for the cause of the employment problem. Was it an inability to fully adapt to American culture that prevented young Asian Americans from finding employment and becoming well-rounded citizens? Or had Asian Americans perhaps assimilated so well to American life that they were constantly at odds with both their families and their own racial identities as “Japanese” or “Chinese,” creating psychologically troubled young adults? Sociologists approached the “second generation problem” as an interesting study, but rarely engaged in conversations that openly dealt with the roles of racial discrimination against Asian Americans and the deep-seated racism of West Coast whites in creating a

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Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

Interestingly enough, the United States government still allowed students from barred Asiatic zones to enter America as “temporary” visitors. Asian students that travelled to the U.S. during the Exclusion Era are a severely understudied group and deserve greater attention among historians of immigration and the Asian American experience.

<sup>124</sup>See William Smith, *The Second Generation Oriental in America* (Honolulu, HI: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1927) for a more in-depth discussion of his study of the second generation problem. Smith's contributions to the sociological study of the second generation of Asian Americans post-1924 will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. See also William C. Smith, “Preliminary Paper Prepared for Second General Session, June 15-19, 1927- The Second Generation Oriental in America,” pg. 21, Pardee Lowe Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.

bleak outlook for the second generation.<sup>125</sup> More importantly, when sociologists and scholars did discuss the second generation problem, they failed to provide any concrete suggestions for improvement or tactics for changing the status of racial relations on the West Coast.

The leaders and members of the JSCA and the CSCA, however, held different opinions on the causes and larger implications of the second generation problem. They understood that the problems of the second generation of Asian Americans were directly related to larger problems of racism and discrimination on the West Coast and across the U.S. Unfortunately, however, the voices of sociologists such as Park dominate any discussion among historians of the second generation problem and the sociological studies of racism on the Pacific Coast during the 1920s and 1930s, leaving little room in the literature for opinions from the Chinese and Japanese students themselves.<sup>126</sup>

Although Henry Yu and Lisa Mar have provided useful insight into the role of Asian American students serving as research assistants for Robert Park in such projects as the Survey of Race Relations, the JSCA and CSCA's own studies of the second generation problem and racism in West Coast communities (as well as their responses to what they uncovered) have yet to be fully explored by historians.<sup>127</sup> As students who

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<sup>125</sup> Ronald Takaki discusses the appeal of this "second generation problem" to sociologists and other scholars in his monumental work *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1989), 218-220.

<sup>126</sup> Japanese scholars and government officials also wrote extensively on the "Oriental Problem" while viewing American racism against Japanese and Asian immigrants from across the Pacific during the early 1900s. Yamato Ichihashi's (former special agent of the United States Immigration Commission who later returned to Japan) *Japanese Immigration, Its Status in California* (1913), J. Soyeda and T. Kamiya's *Survey of the Japanese Question in California* (1916), and K. Kawakami's *Asia at the Door* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1914) are all excellent examples of the kind of sociological work that scholars in Japan (rather than the students who are the focus of my work) wrote in regards to Asian migration to and settlement in the U.S.

<sup>127</sup> Historians David Yoo, Henry Yu, and Lisa Mar have all discussed the activities of Asian and Asian American research assistants in their larger works. Yoo spends a significant amount of time outlining the activities of Japanese Americans in conducting surveys of race relations along the West Coast, but uses his

were, in many cases, exposed to the sociological studies in their college courses and learned of the large scale surveys conducted by nationally-known scholars such as Park, JSCA and CSCA members were eager to try their hand at sociological studies. These activities, however, have been lost in the larger historical narrative of race relations along the West Coast during the early-to-mid twentieth century. The importance of the CSCA and JSCA's surveys and attempts at dismantling racism in the larger history of race and civil rights in the U.S. are the focus of this chapter.<sup>128</sup>

The JSCA and the CSCA developed an approach to the second generation problem that consisted of three steps: defining and discussing the problem, conducting surveys to further investigate the experiences of Asian and Asian American students with racism and discrimination, and coordinating interethnic and interracial student conferences to discuss their findings and brainstorm strategies for attacking discrimination and prejudice along the West Coast. The different components of the student Christian organizations' plans (as outlined in their student bulletins, pamphlets, and conference reports) form the structure of this chapter and serve as a means of understanding how foreign Asian students played a crucial role in addressing problems of racism. Borrowing Lisa Lowe's term of "foreigner-within," I argue that shared experiences between foreign and Asian American students with being "yellow" and

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findings to argue that the second generation problem was a vital step in the development of Japanese American identity. Yu also bases a large part of his work on the experiences of famed Asian American research assistants (such as Rose Hum Lee) who assisted Park with gathering information for the Survey of Race Relations and other projects; however, similar to Yoo, Yu's discussion focuses on the "marginal man" theory and the problem of performing ethnic identities when moving between two worlds (Asian and American). See Yoo, *Growing up Nisei: Race, Generation, and Culture among Japanese Americans of California, 1924-1949* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999) and Lisa Mar, *Brokering Belonging: Chinese in Canada's Exclusion Era, 1885-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010) for more information on the roles of Asian and Asian American research assistants in conducting larger sociological studies such as the Survey of Race Relations.

<sup>128</sup> Yu, *Thinking Orientals*, 78-82, 97.

perpetually foreign brought both groups together and created opportunities for Asian students to form crucial bonds with others who were denied full access to citizenship rights and liberties.<sup>129</sup>

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In 1924, a research assistant for the Survey of Race Relations<sup>130</sup> (a project planned by the Institution of Social and Religious Research, financed largely by John D. Rockefeller and other business partners, and conducted by Robert Park, Merle Davis, William Smith, and other West Coast sociologists to analyze racial relations among whites and minorities along the Pacific Coast) interviewed Flora Belle Jan, a Chinese American member of the CSCA and a freshman at Fresno State College in California.<sup>131</sup> Jan's interview was representative of the "life story" methodology of the Survey of Race Relations (SRR) which relied heavily on first-person accounts from minorities along the Pacific Coast of their experiences in the United States. The interviewer described Jan as

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<sup>129</sup> Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 8-12. Judy Yung has also interviewed Chinese American woman and documented their feelings of inferiority and "otherness" when, despite their status as American citizens, were denied entrance into sororities and other campus organizations. See also Judy Yung, *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pg. 128.

<sup>130</sup> The Survey of Race Relations was a fascinating, yet unwieldy, study of immigrants and race relations on the West Coast. Conducted under Park, Merle Davis, and a variety of other professors and sociologists from Pacific Coast universities, the Survey received funding from other institutions and outside donations to investigate relations between whites and minority groups (including Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, and Mexican immigrants). Although the Survey had many participants and received ample funding at first, the project eventually proved too large to be efficiently carried out and by 1927, the committee was not receiving enough funding to continue. Plans for publishing volumes with results of the survey diminished and the project came to an end.

<sup>131</sup> Jan's collection of personal letters and memoirs are an interesting look at second generation, Asian American life during the early-to-mid twentieth century. Her collection is available at the Hoover Institution Archives at Stanford University in California, but the University of Illinois has also published these materials in *Unbound Spirit: Letters of Flora Belle Jan* (Urbana, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009). As a journalist, Jan was known for her witty and candid reports on Chinese American life and her letters are truly a fascinating and entertaining read. As discussed later in this chapter, Jan went on to become a very active member of the CSCA and a very keen observer of racial prejudice among Asian immigrants and Asian Americans on the West Coast.

a “leader among the native born Chinese” and Jan herself went on to describe her own take on white Americans, particularly the sorority girls at her college.<sup>132</sup> “It is very funny to watch the snobbishness of the girls at the state college,” Jan candidly began, “they judge people entirely by the clothes they wear and the money they spend and they get awfully stung this way sometimes.”<sup>133</sup> But it was not necessarily the “snobbishness” of her fellow American classmates that aggravated her. Despite the fact that “some of the girls [were] awfully good to [her],” Jan explained that “of course, being a Chinese girl, I’m not eligible to membership in a sorority.”<sup>134</sup> Jan described to her interviewer a combination of racial and class prejudice at Fresno State that characterized many of the general relationships between Asian and white students, a scenario that may seem trivial when described in the context of sorority pledges, but ultimately indicative of a larger problem with racism and prejudice along the West Coast. While Jan did retaliate by writing a satirical sketch of American sorority girls called “Miss Flapper Vampire,”<sup>135</sup> she was constantly reminded of the racial distance between herself and her American classmates, despite being American herself. Although Jan’s life history provided the interviewer and organizers of the SRR with evidence of the overwhelming role of racial prejudice in the second generation problem, Jan’s account and others similar to it were filed under the vague headings of “Americanization” and “Accommodation” in the larger collection of survey findings.<sup>136</sup> Jan herself would later become an outspoken opponent of sociologists’ race-blind take on the second generation problems, but her interviewer’s

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<sup>132</sup> “Interview with Flora Belle Jan, daughter of Proprietor Yet Far Low Chop Suey Restaurant, Fresno, California (3 pages; Life Histories, Americanization: Accommodation; Chinese; Northern California), pg. 2, box 28, folder 225., Survey of Race Relations, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.

<sup>133</sup> “Interview with Flora,” pg. 2.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 2.



classification of her experience as fodder for sociological accounts of “assimilation” and “acculturation” demonstrates, ironically enough, the SRR’s general lack of concern for the damaging effects of racial prejudice on Asian and Asian American students.

For Park and the other leaders of the SRR, Jan’s description of her reaction to the sorority girls was a prime example of the problem of the second generation of Asian Americans with assimilation and racial “hypersensitivity.” Park’s own race relations cycle (a theory which stated that immigrants and other groups went through a series of steps before finally assimilating to American culture) shaped many sociological studies and projects during the 1920s, inspiring a generation of sociologists to attempt to understand the immigrant’s process with adapting to American culture.<sup>137</sup> As a result, most studies of Asian immigrants and their children focused on their experiences with identity-formation, arguing that, as a racially and culturally different group of migrants, their experiences with assimilating to American society were different from European immigrants. In particular, sociologists surveyed Asian communities and theorized that Asian American adolescents were having a particularly difficult time reconciling the more traditional and “Asian” world of their parents with the “modern” world of their American friends. Sociologists such as William Smith claimed that, in this case, Park’s race relations theory had perhaps been *too* right, with Asian American adolescents adapting so well to American culture that they had difficulty understanding their parents’

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<sup>137</sup> Park’s *Race and Culture* (New York: Free Press, 1964) and *The City: Suggestions for the Study of Human Nature in the Urban Environment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) are some of the best works for understanding his application and explanation of his theory of race relations. Also, Park’s “Cultural Conflict and the Marginal Man,” an introduction in Everett V. Stonequist’s *The Marginal Man: A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1961), is an interesting look at Park’s ideas of assimilation, immigration, and race in the context of American society during the interwar period.

view points and had lost touch with their ethnic group's traditions.<sup>138</sup> As a result, Asian American children and adolescents suffered an identity crisis: as children of Asian descent, they could never fully be "white" regardless of how "American" they had become, but their extreme assimilation had left them unable to function in the more traditional Asian communities of their parents. Asian American children and adolescents were, as Park explained, the perfect examples of the "marginal man," or an individual caught between two worlds without a true identity.<sup>139</sup> What made matters worse was that sociologists argued that Asian-American adolescents (particularly the Nisei) were "hyper-sensitive" to the fact that they were not white and could never be fully accepted into main-stream American society. Sociologists described this phenomenon as a case of heightened "racial consciousness," an extreme awareness of their racial otherness that created a permanent state of depression and feelings of inferiority among second-

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<sup>138</sup> William Smith, a professor at the University of Southern California, an active participant in the SRR, and a member of the IPR, openly expressed his beliefs that the second generation problem was a vital one for the IPR and Americans in general to address and "may become a problem of no small significance unless the whole situation be faced squarely and on its merits." In a report titled "The Second- Generation Oriental in America" prepared for an annual IPR meeting in 1927, Smith cited an interview he conducted with a second-generation Japanese student who had travelled to California for a bachelor's degree as evidence of a problem on the West Coast. The student explained that, during a trip to a barbershop in San Francisco, he had been refused service for simply being an "Oriental." The young man went on say that the most important things he learned while on the West Coast were " the attitudes of white people towards the Japanese" and that blatant racism against all Asians and Asian-Americans characterized white-Asian interactions. While the student was explicit enough in his explanations of why he received such discriminatory treatment from Americans, Smith posited that it was his extreme feelings of inferiority and race-consciousness, rather than the state of racism in the U.S., which ultimately caused hardships for the student in adapting to his new environment. Although the student grew up in Hawaii (a land known in the fields of sociology and anthropology for its status as a "racial laboratory" where multiple racial and ethnic groups lived, worked, and loved in an interracial setting), simply travelling to the West Coast created a need in the student to adapt to white culture and, when he failed, led to depression and thoughts of worthlessness. For Smith, the key to the second generation problem was the weak psychological make-up of the student as a person of Asian heritage rather than a system of racism. See William C. Smith, "Preliminary Paper Prepared for Second General Session, June 15-19, 1927- The Second Generation Oriental in America," pg. 21. Pardee Lowe Papers, Box 126a, Hoover Institution Archives.

<sup>139</sup> Robert Park, "Human Migration and the Marginal Man," *The American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 36, no. 6 (May 1928), 881-893.

generation Asian Americans. Scholars such as Park identified the second- generation problem as a unique identity crisis and a predicament with few solutions.

The SRR represented sociologists' unwillingness to fully address the effects of racism on the second generation of Asian Americans and the large impact of this problem on all minorities along the West Coast. For Park, studying racism among Asian immigrants was one thing, but becoming involved in the problem itself was something that sociologists simply did not do. After all, scholars could not initiate policy and providing an analysis the problem of racism was just as important as taking action against prejudice and discrimination. At a conference to discuss some of the findings of the Survey of Race Relations, Park stated that Americans "might solve the problem [of racism]...by establishing regions where the Negro could live and farm and where he could not live; or regions where the Oriental could live and where he could not...All these things need to be worked out." In other words, the findings of the SRR indicated that segregation was perhaps still the best policy in the West as in the South for dealing with the "Oriental" and "Second Generation Problems." In 1925, the committee for the SRR held a conference to discuss some preliminary findings and a conference program indicated that their attentions turned briefly to the second generation problem. Amidst discussions of the "natural inferiority" of Japanese students to American students per intelligence tests and the fact that Japanese students appeared to "realize that their entry into the professions certainly depends upon being better equipped than the American student," the committee alluded to the problems of racism, but never fully address the impact of racial discrimination on the second generation of Asian Americans.<sup>140</sup> As

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<sup>140</sup> Survey of Race Relations, "Tentative Findings of the Survey of Race Relations," (Stanford University, 1924), 20-21, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.

historian Troy Eckard argued, “the immigrants and their American-born children who were the focal point of the [SRR] played only limited roles as interviewers, researchers, and administrators.” As a result, the problems of both immigrants and the second generation of Asian Americans with racism are buried beneath tables, charts, and other sociological data, muffling the voices of the second generation themselves such as Flora Belle Jan.

Interestingly enough, Jan and other members of the second generation would find their voices and be able to fully express their thoughts in the CSCA and JSCA, organizations led mainly by foreign-born Asian students. While Park and Smith discussed the problems of the second generation in terms of “racial hypersensitivity,” JSCA and CSCA leaders and members spoke directly to Asian American students and addressed their concerns with racial prejudice and discrimination. As early as 1922, the CSCA established a special Western Department of the organization that consisted of a variety of branches from West Coast schools such as Stanford University, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Southern California, and the University of Washington. Although members did not widely discuss the problems of the second generation at this time, they realized that “there were certain factors operating in the West” that made student life for Chinese and Chinese-Americans along the West Coast different from other regions in the U.S. In a *Chinese Christian Student* article from the same year, “Our Western Department,” CSCA member Y.Y. Tsu explained the need for a Western Department and cited “the preponderate number of students who are native-born” and “the racial prejudice which still remains in certain sections” as prime examples of why the CSCA should pay special attention to student experiences on the Pacific

Coast.<sup>141</sup> Similarly, during a JSCA conference at Asilomar, California in December of 1925, many JSCA members revealed their interest in the plight of the Nisei and their concern for the second generation of Asian Americans in general. Even though the majority of JSCA members at the Asilomar Conference were students from Japan and not American citizens, students explained that an “effort to serve the cause of the younger generation of Japanese Americans on the Pacific Coast” would “contribute something toward the general welfare of the Japanese in America.”<sup>142</sup> In reaction to the concerns of the second generation, the JSCA leader Roy Akagi appointed Ruby Hirose from the University of Washington, Francis Minoru Hayashi from Stanford University, George Kaneko from the California Institute of Technology, and Frank Iso Nakamura from Occidental College to form and lead a committee devoted to analyzing and investigating the problems of Japanese Americans along the West Coast.<sup>143</sup> All of the leaders of the committee were Nisei and represented Akagi’s plan to make the JSCA an organization for the second generation as well as the foreign-born Japanese.

Why did Akagi and other members of the JSCA and CSCA take a sudden interest in the second generation problem during the mid-1920s? The answer lies in both the foreign-born and American-born Asian students’ deep questioning of the racialized nature of U.S. citizenship. Apart from the shared experiences with social discrimination described in Chapter 1, the fact that even with U.S. citizenship, the second generation did not fare any better in many cases than their parents was a harsh realization that brought

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<sup>141</sup> Y. Y. Tsu, “Our Western Department,” *The Chinese Christian Student* (October 1922), 2-3.

<sup>142</sup> Roy Hidemichi Akagi, *The Second Generation Problem—Some Suggestions Towards its Solution* (New York: Japanese Students Christian Association in America, 1926), Japanese American Research Project, Box 295, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California-Los Angeles.

<sup>143</sup> Akagi, “Second Generation,” 2.

the foreign-born and second generation students together in the CSCA and the JSCA. For a young Japanese or Chinese American, what good was citizenship and how useful was being a “true” American if you continually faced the same racism and discrimination as foreigners in the U.S.? As these children grew up and went on to college, they discovered that being an American of Chinese or Japanese descent prohibited entrance into dorms, fraternities, sororities, and off-campus housing. And later, upon graduation, they discovered that a degree from Stanford meant little to employers who refused to hire Asians or saved the most lucrative jobs for white graduates. As the second generation came of age on the West Coast, they tried to express their dissatisfaction and anger over racism and prejudice in interviews with administrators of the SRR, but their growing disillusionment with the “benefits” of being an American citizen was never a focal point for sociologists who had their own theories on the second generation problem. The growing concern among sociologists post-1924 for the problems of the second generation translated into a growing concern among foreign-born members of the JSCA and the CSCA for the *racial* problems of their American-born classmates. Racism and discrimination on the West Coast against Japanese and Chinese American citizens rattled the foreign-born students’ perceptions of American liberty and freedom as well as their faith in American Christianity. JSCA member Tatsuji Suga perhaps best expressed the sentiment of fellow foreign-born students when he was interviewed for the Survey of Race Relations: “I think the Japanese born in America are not so fortunate as the Japanese born in Japan...for they cannot be proud of America when American white people are trying to deprive them of their right to citizenship.”<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> “A Visiting Student—Interview with Tatsuji Suga,”pg. 1, box 24, item 41, Survey of Race Relations.

Interacting with foreign-born Asian students at colleges and universities who not only understood their frustration, but sought to address their problems with racism also made the JSCA and CSCA attractive organizations for the second generation. While JSCA member Ruby Hirose (a member of the Pacific Coast committee mentioned earlier in the chapter as well as a later secretary of the JSCA), explained in an interview for the SRR that her although “best friends have always been white people” and at the university she “prefer[red] to associate with white girls than to association with Japanese girls and boys,” in 1924 she became very active with the JSCA and its foreign-born and Japanese American members out of a need to “mingle with my own...who understood my problems and frustration.”<sup>145</sup> In the same interview with the SRR, Ruby described a rising anti-Japanese sentiment among even the teachers in her old schools as well as her frustration in having acres of “hilly, stumpy, poor land” in her name because her Issei father wanted land to cultivate, but, per the California Alien Land Laws, could not own property in his own name.<sup>146</sup> Ruby’s negative experiences as a second generation Japanese American with social and political forms of racial discrimination encouraged her to consider befriending more Japanese and Japanese-American students in the University of Washington JSCA who understood her problems and predicaments. Flora Belle Jan also began as a Chinese American girl who considered herself more “American” than “Chinese,” but her enrollment at Fresno State College and her interactions with racist sororities persuaded her to join the CSCA and mingle with more Chinese students.

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<sup>145</sup> “Interview with Ruby Hirose,” 2, box 27, item 159, Survey of Race Relations.

<sup>146</sup> “Interview with Ruby Hirose,” 2-3.

As more Japanese and Chinese American students of the second generation graduated high school and attended colleges and universities along the Pacific Coast during the 1920s, they learned that their friendships with white classmates at home did not always translate into similar experiences on campus. A Chinese American member of the CSCA who left his home in a small town in central California to attend college at the University of California at Berkeley explained in a letter to the editor of the *Chinese Christian Student* that the fact that he had a lot of white friends in high school meant very little to him now that he was at college:

The truth is I'm not so keen for this cosmopolitan or metropolitan life. I've learnt a bitter lesson these past few months...I left with certain established connections, but now I have had them all smashed to pieces. Let me tell you, I was friends with every Tom, Dick, and Harry in high school and I got along with them first rate even though I was Chinese. You can imagine the disillusionment I experienced when I arrived in college. The first few weeks everyone was cold and some (most in fact) had that superiority complex. It hit me square on the chin...<sup>147</sup>

For this student and others like him who may have had good relationships with his white classmates in high school, venturing outside of their small communities and into the larger campus setting where they had to build interracial friendships from scratch could be frustrating and shocking. In cases such as this, the CSCA may have been one of the only organizations where a Chinese American student might have felt welcome, forcing him or her to interact more with foreign and American-born Chinese in college than they did in their hometowns. As more American-born Asian students joined the foreign-student-led JSCA and CSCA, the distinction between “foreign” and “American” Asian was blurred by shared experiences with racism and prejudice during the early 1920s.

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<sup>147</sup> “Development of Aggressive Attitude by American Born Chinese: 1931” in Indifference Folder, Box 126b, Pardee Lowe Papers.



Both the CSCA and JSCA provided socialization opportunities for Asian American students as well as a space where they could discuss their “second generation problems” within the larger context of racialization and discrimination in the United States.

Through the special conferences and committees organized by both the CSCA and the JSCA, these organizations invited more second generation members to speak out on the problems of American-born Asians with racism and discrimination, making these two topics important focal points for the groups in moving forward. Members of the JSCA had much to say about the idea of a second-generation problem among Japanese Americans, as evidenced by editions of *The Japanese Student Bulletin*. One student delegate to a conference that was specifically for Pacific Coast members of the JSCA reported that the entire second session of the conference was devoted to a discussion of the second- generation problem. The student explained that while some members were convinced that poor relationships with older Issei caused the second- generation problems, many other JSCA members were more concerned with the larger racial context of the problem, citing a “shared label as Oriental in America...as a cause of our current troubles with prejudice.”<sup>148</sup> Similarly, Walter Yoshito Mihata, a Japanese-American member of the JSCA at the University of California at Berkeley for his education, also explained to foreign-born JSCA members how important it was to understand the plight of the second generation in his article “Americans of Japanese Ancestry.” He explained that “though Japanese by blood, we are Americans, and have all the rights and privileges of American citizens...but still, because we are Japanese, we find ourselves placed under the same social and economic disadvantages as our parents who are NOT American

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<sup>148</sup> “Pacific Coast Sectional Conference,” *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (Feb. 1925), 4.

citizens...”<sup>149</sup> Mihata’s article clearly explained to JSCA members the hypocrisy of the West Coast’s treatment towards the Nisei and all Asian Americans. Rather than attributing the problems of the second generation to an inability to “fit in” with either Issei or American society, Mihata argued that prejudice and racial discrimination played an important role in the negative experiences of Japanese American students on the West Coast. His article represented both an important bridge between the foreign and American born members of the JSCA as well as a strong foundation for continued investigations of racism. “Nisei students are not foreign students,” Mihata concluded in his article, “but it is true that the realities of minority discrimination have treated Nisei as though they are foreign students.”<sup>150</sup>

With the feedback on the second -generation problem from members in mind, the JSCA President Roy Akagi published an informational pamphlet in 1926 entitled *The Second- Generation Problem---Some Suggestions towards its Solution*. This pamphlet represented the JSCA’s early official stance on the problem and provided information that combined the group’s earlier focus on cultural and Christian exchange with a heightened awareness of racial discrimination in the U.S., even among Asian students who were American citizens. The first step the that the committee took in creating a concrete understanding of what exactly was plaguing Japanese youths was to define the second-generation problem in their own terms. “The second generation problem has been discussed long enough,” Akagi began, “...featuring merely the pet theories of certain individuals.”<sup>151</sup> From the earliest pages of the pamphlet, Akagi assured readers and

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<sup>149</sup> Walter Yoshito Mihata, “Americans of Japanese Ancestry,” *The Japanese Student Bulletin* Vol. V, no. 4 (Dec., 1925), 1.

<sup>150</sup> Mihata, “Americans,” 1.

<sup>151</sup> Akagi, *Second Generation Problem*, 16.

JSCA members that there would be no discussion of “racial sensitivity” or “assimilation” in his outline of the second generation problem. Akagi continued by explaining that the second generation problem was an “American” problem with discrimination that should be addressed by all living along the Pacific Coast.<sup>152</sup>

Citing the California alien land laws of 1913 and 1920 (which prevented immigrants from owning property), the barring of Japanese from American citizenship, and the restrictive 1917 and 1924 immigration acts which prevented a majority of Japanese from entering the U.S. (all measures which primarily effected Japanese immigrants in America), the JSCA argued that these measures reinforced and created waves of racism and discrimination against all Japanese along the West Coast, those of American and foreign birth.<sup>153</sup> Akagi argued that legal discrimination against Japanese immigrants created an atmosphere that condoned and even encouraged a “culture of prejudice” and racism that affected Japanese Americans, as well.<sup>154</sup> Japanese and other Asian aliens were perpetual “foreigners” in the U.S., unable to naturalize and become American citizens and even unable to acquire access basic freedoms such as the right to own land and make a living as well as be protected from violence and abuse. Many Americans identified Japanese Americans as Japanese first, American second, making the children of Japanese immigrants who were American citizens by birthright, permanently “other.” Akagi pointed to the fact that the Nisei were “American in birth and training...yet they are not taken as Americans in daily life and the constitutional possession of citizenship does not help them in the least” as his proof of the vicious cycle

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<sup>152</sup> Akagi, *Second Generation Problem*, 16-17.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

of racism along the West Coast.<sup>155</sup> Akagi continued by arguing that “in short, race prejudice, consciously or unconsciously, separates [the Nisei] from the bulk of Americans and almost always this action emanates from the latter group,” barring them from American social life, but also subjecting them to “discrimination and unequal treatment alike with their parents.”<sup>156</sup>

Akagi also attacked the complacent attitude of many church groups towards the problems of the Japanese in American with racism as well as the insufficient explanations of sociologists for the “second generation problem.” “Their problems and destinies,” Akagi spoke of the second generation of Asian Americans, “do not ordinarily interest American organizations and clubs, even churches and other Christian bodies, which practically close doors in their face.”<sup>157</sup> Akagi was certainly not exaggerating the less-than-welcoming response of even Christian groups such as the YMCA to Asian students and immigrants, calling on the foreign students’ experiences upon first arriving in the U.S.

Akagi then turned to the sociologists, calling into a question a commonly-held belief among sociologists such as William Smith and Edward Strong that there was something inherently and psychologically different about American-born Japanese which prevented them from succeeding in America. Since the children of other (mostly white) migrant groups were able to adapt and assimilate rather successfully to American life, racial and/or cultural characteristics among Asian Americans caused a lag in assimilation; however, Akagi argued against this idea. “Whereas in the case of European immigrant groups the second generation sooner or later lose their national and even racial identities

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 11.

and merge into American life,” Akagi began, “the second generations Japanese can never lose their physical identity and will be physically ‘Japanese’ always even though they may be one hundred per cent American in every other aspect.”<sup>158</sup> Akagi encouraged sociologists and other scholars of the “second generation problem” to recognize that American racism and prejudice against Asians, rather than some inherent racial characteristics, prevented the second generation from being fully accepted in society. By addressing this issue in the pamphlet, Akagi proved that the JSCA was not an organization that overlooked the experiences of Asian Americans with racial discrimination in the U.S.

Akagi also made sure that unlike the YMCA and Park and the other sociologists of the SRR, the JSCA would actively address the second generation problem, not just report on it. More importantly, Akagi approached the “second generation problems” as an issue that touched the lives of all Asians in American, foreign-born or American, students and non. “In addressing ourselves to the important task of meeting and trying to solve this vital and most complicated series of problems,” Akagi insisted, “we must first set before us proper and basic attitudes of mind in handling the problem as a whole... [and] to consider and evolve plans for the solution of the racial problem not from a local and individual point of view, but from a broader and Coast-wide or national and

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<sup>158</sup> Akagi, 5. In his 1934 book, *The Second Generation Japanese Problem*, sociologist Edward Strong elaborated on an earlier argument of his in regards to the second generation problem, explaining that “for lack of space we have omitted many comparisons that could be made between the Japanese and other immigrant groups proving that the so called Japanese second-generation problem is primarily a ‘second-generation’ problem and only to a limited degree a ‘Japanese’ problem.” Strong made many comparisons in the book between the second generation of Japanese and Jewish Americans and concluded that there was rarely a racial component to the Japanese second generation problem; all second generations of immigrants experienced the same problems until fully assimilated into American society. See Edward K. Strong, *The Second Generation Japanese Problem* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1934), pg. v., 1.

cooperative point of view.”<sup>159</sup> Akagi assured members that their organization would not only seek to analyze and study the second generation problem as a coast-wide issue with racism, but also offer solutions for the betterment and general welfare of all Asians living on the Pacific Coast.

By the late 1920s, members of the CSCA were also discussing their interpretations of the second-generation problem during meet-ups and study groups at colleges and universities along the West Coast. In May of 1926, the CSCA sponsored a luncheon at the University of California-Berkeley and invite the JSCA and general members of the student YMCA to join in a workshop luncheon on the problems of Asian Americans which appeared to be unique to the West Coast. This meeting was part of a series of gatherings established by the JSCA and CSCA in hopes of creating cooperation in “bettering the condition of the Orientals in America” and featured a talk by Berkeley CSCA member Chingwah Lee.<sup>160</sup> Lee’s lecture, “The Cause of Unemployment Among Oriental College Graduates in California,” surveyed the “vocational possibilities” for both Chinese and Chinese Americans in California and used his past experience as an assistant secretary in the Chinese Y employment department to highlight common themes in the difficulties of recent Asian graduates in finding employment. During his report, Lee listed an “lack of progress among employers in...considering employment of Orientals” and “prejudice in cities and towns against peoples with great talents, but who are of different races” as the primary causes of unemployment among recent graduates

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>160</sup> Chingwah Lee, or Ching Wah Lee, was also a well-known actor, starring in films such as *The Good Earth* (1937) and *Flower Drum Song* (1961). Lee also became known as “Mr. Chinatown” among San Francisco locals for his devotion to changing the perception of San Francisco’s Chinatown from a dirty and dangerous place to a tourist attraction. See Atha Font, “Chingwah Lee: San Francisco Chinatown’s Renaissance Man,” *The Chinese Historical Society of America* (2012), 37-47.

and Asians in general.<sup>161</sup> Not only did Lee explain that racial discrimination appeared to play a large role in deterring intelligent and capable Chinese and Chinese American graduates from securing employment with a bachelor's degree, but also the fear alone of the experience of racial prejudice in the hiring process often prevented Chinese students from seeking out job opportunities. At the luncheon, both JSCA and CSCA members agreed that prejudice and discrimination had created an unhealthy environment for *all* Asian and Asian American students when it came to finding jobs after graduation, adding to a general atmosphere of "unchristian prejudice and waste of talents."<sup>162</sup> For Lee and the others at the meeting that afternoon, it was clear that racism, rather than some inherent, psychological weakness in Asian and Asian American students, created employment problems along the West Coast for minorities.<sup>163</sup>

Before Lee's lecture, many Asian students knew that unemployment after graduation was a very real problem in the U.S. Despite having degrees from the best colleges and universities along the West Coast, including Stanford, the University of California, and the University of Washington, foreign-born and Asian American students found themselves in a similar situation: highly educated, but without a job. These new graduates found that even with outstanding credentials and experience, employers constantly passed them over for white candidates. Also, when Asian graduates were able to secure jobs after graduation, they were rarely opportunities which allowed them to utilize their skills and specializations. A series of disheartening letters between a Japanese graduate from Stanford University with a degree in chemistry and the Office of Employment and Appointment at Stanford illustrated the devastating financial and

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<sup>161</sup> "Concluding Luncheon a Success," *The Chinese Christian Student* (May, 1926), 8.

<sup>162</sup> "Concluding Luncheon a Success," 8.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

psychological effects of a demoralizing job search. Between September and May of 1922 to 1923, the young chemist applied to approximately twenty-five different jobs in the chemical industry, only to be turned down repeatedly by various soap and toiletry factories in California. Despite his attempts to learn the ins and outs of the soap-making process to become more competitive, the graduate's efforts were met with replies of "no vacancies" from potential employers. When the young man finally earned an interview for a spot and travelled to a plant to meet the manager, he immediately learned that the job was given to another candidate who applied after him. Despite little luck in landing a job, the student continued to contact the Stanford Appointment office and maintained high spirits while accepting low-paying work until a particular experience on an interview in May of 1923 crushed his spirits. The student lamented in a letter that he had "failed again!" and that the employer he had interviewed with told him in a straight-forward manner that "it would be impossible for me to be working with American laborers for the feeling against my race is too great around here."<sup>164</sup> The student concluded his letter by painfully noting that "it is not the ability, but the barrier of human prejudice that I have to overcome before I can work among the American people."<sup>165</sup>

Pardee Lowe, a Chinese American research assistant for sociologist Robert T. LaPierre at the Institute of Pacific Relations (a think-tank of social scientists devoted to understanding transpacific relations), recorded many instances of unemployment and underemployment among Asians in his research. Lowe's research notes are filled with accounts of Asian American students who could not find employment or had to settle for

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<sup>164</sup> "Letters from a Japanese Student to Ms. Snell," box 28, item 240, Survey of Race Relations.

<sup>165</sup> "Letters from a Japanese Student to Ms. Snell."



low-paying jobs after graduation.<sup>166</sup> A Chinese American man who graduated from the University of California - Berkeley with a degree in biological sciences and a certificate in teacher's preparation "had to be content with a janitor's position in a downtown office building in San Francisco," while another Asian American woman with a degree from Berkeley in teaching was forced to become a maid in a Pullman car that traveled from San Francisco to Chicago. The young woman had originally tried to travel to China to teach (wishing to return to her "ancestral homeland"), but the Chinese schools considered her teaching methods "too modern" and not well-adapted for Chinese students, so she returned to the U.S. only to obtain a low-paying service job. Those graduates who were able to secure a position relevant to their degree often had to gain more years of experience on the job than their white counterparts. Lowe described one University of California student who had managed to get a job with the State Highway Authority that provided him with the opportunity to use his engineering skills, but only after "great difficulty." The engineer ended up working for years as an assistant doing the work of the more senior engineers, but at a significantly lower wage. Eventually, the subject, "P.K.," grew so frustrated with his inability to advance with his company and his lack of other job offers that he attempted to go to China, thinking that his chances of securing

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<sup>166</sup> Within his notes, Lowe also included references to a master's thesis completed by Chinese-American student Kit King Louis (Lei Jieqiong). Louis was a sociology student at the University of Southern California and completed her degree in 1931. Louis' thesis, "A Study of American-born, American-reared Chinese in Los Angeles," touched on similar themes as Lowe's study (although in a different community), but was more focused on identity-formation (as were many dissertations and theses with a sociological angle by Asian and Asian American students). The fact that Lowe knew of Louis' thesis and decided to reference her work in his own research is fascinating as it indicates that there was perhaps a larger network of Asian and Asian-American students interested in socio-economic issues influencing Asian communities. Louis' other main works were "Problems of Second Generation Chinese," *Sociology and Social Research: An International Journal* xvi (3) (Jan.-Feb.): 250-58 and "Program for Second Generation Chinese," in *Sociology and Social Research: An International Journal* xvi (5) (May-June): 455-62. Haiming Liu wrote an interesting article on Louis, "The Identity Formation of American-Born Chinese in the 1930s: A Review of Lei Jieqiong's (Kit King Louis) Master's Thesis," *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, Volume 3, Number 1, (May 2007): 97-121, that provides a more in-depth discussion of Louis' work.

employment may be better there.<sup>167</sup> As with social discrimination, prejudice from white employers affected Asian American citizens as well as immigrants, regardless of citizenship status.

Sociologists had different explanations for the cause of unemployment and underemployment among Asians in America. George Mears explained in his book *Residential Orientals on the American Pacific Coast* that the real cause for a lack of employment opportunities among Asians and Asian Americans was a product of practical concerns of West Coast employers. Mears argued that “the vocational problem for the American-born of Oriental parentage is serious because of an assumption on the part of employers, even when they are free from race prejudice themselves, that their employment of Orientals would be criticized by others.”<sup>168</sup> For his own research, Mears gathered a number of statements in which West Coast employers explained that, although they were not racist against Asians, they worried about the safety for minorities when it came to *other* discriminatory employees and unions. Other sociologists argued that as part of a minority group that valued high achievement and white-collar labor, there were simply not enough well-paying jobs for Asians who graduated with bachelor’s and professional degrees, leaving a large group of Asian graduates “maladjusted” to a specific job market and unwilling to accept the low-paying labor typically available to them.<sup>169</sup>

Edward Strong was particularly forceful in arguing that racial discrimination was not a major factor in unemployment and underemployment among Asians, particularly the Japanese. In his 1934 book *The Second Generation Japanese Problem*, Strong

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<sup>167</sup> “Indifference Folder,” Box 126b, Pardee Lowe Papers.

<sup>168</sup> George Mears, *Residential Orientals on America’s Pacific Coast* (New York: Knopf and Knopf, 1928), 146.

<sup>169</sup> “Economic Activity,” box 126b, Second-Generation American-Born Economic Activities and Opportunities folder, Pardee Lowe Papers.

considers unemployment a central component of the second generation problem, but approaches it as an issue with the psychological make-up of the Japanese themselves. Similar to Mears, Strong defended white employers' decisions to not hire Japanese applicants, explaining that "these Orientals are, after all, members of another race" and that "it is only just that our white laboring population should receive first consideration" for jobs and therefore "Japanese should not be employed where white labor is equally effective and desirous of working."<sup>170</sup> For Strong, white employees naturally deserved jobs over Japanese applicants as the Depression continued and employment opportunities became increasingly scarce. Strong continued by urging his readers to "recall many examples from his own experience where an employee could do the work satisfactorily, but could not be kept on the payroll because for one reason or another people didn't like him," meaning that "the white employer is not to be blamed if he dismisses an efficient Japanese American employee merely because fellow employees or customers do not like him or the general public disapproves of him."<sup>171</sup> Whether being passed up for a white employee or laid off from a job (another common problem among recent graduates who did manage to secure employment), Strong argued that there was a larger social structure along the West Coast that left any white employer with little choice in the matter of hiring a Japanese employee. Strong did not call into question or attack this racist way of thinking, but rather encouraged his readers to "take with a grain of salt" any blame the Japanese may place on their employers for unfair treatment (for the Japanese were "particularly prone to blame the whites for all of their troubles"). Strong also encouraged Japanese graduates who had difficulty finding and keeping a job to perhaps return to

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<sup>170</sup> Strong, *Second Generation*, 4.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.* 4.

agriculture or take part in the successful “gold fish business” in which Japanese excel.<sup>172</sup> Strong repeatedly played into popular stereotypes of the Japanese including their skills with manual labor and their tendency to be “shifty and sneaky” (evidenced in the second generation’s false claims of racism and discrimination) in his work, making sure that the real problems of racism on the West Coast would be of little importance when compared with the overall weak psychological make-up of the Japanese.<sup>173</sup>

As the economy continued to suffer through the early years of the Depression and desirable jobs for college graduates became increasingly scarce along the West Coast, the underlying racial causes of unemployment and underemployment among Asian students and graduates were easier for sociologists and Americans to ignore. When everyone appeared to be suffering from unemployment, how could a group of minority students possibly blame white employers and accuse them of racism for not getting jobs? While sociologists such as Mears and Strong classified the discontent among Asian graduates as sour grapes in an overall lackluster job market, anxieties over their economic future and well-being plagued members of the CSCA and JSCA. American-born students may have been able to once conclude that a lack of citizenship prevented foreign graduates from acquiring jobs, but their outlooks became bleak as they repeatedly heard tales of even top Japanese American and Chinese American scholars losing out on opportunities when competing against white applicants.

As the years progressed, CSCA members became more critical of the idea that some sort of problem specific to the mindset of the second-generation of Asian-Americans existed. With more American-born Chinese joining the CSCA, the railings

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid. 5, 235.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. 235.

against sociologists and their “pet theories” became more aggressive and demanding. “That so-called second generation problem,” Alice Fong, an assistant for the CSCA, began in a 1932 *Chinese Christian Student* article, “is NOT of our making, as we are victims of an environment forced upon us...and are NOT responsible for the plight in which we find ourselves.” Fong continued after her strong opening by explaining that, “if a changed economic outlook is necessary for our people, we will demand as well as make that change possible...if jobs are needed by our young people we will create them by operating big businesses and stimulating their growth by supporting them.” For Fong, the way out of unemployment created by racism and economic downturn was to encourage young Chinese and Chinese-Americans to break free from a reliance on wage labor run by racist bosses and instead invest in businesses run *by* the Chinese, *for* the Chinese in all West Coast communities, not just Chinatowns. Fong’s suggestion was challenging, especially for a group of Asian minorities living on the Pacific Coast during the Depression, but one that offered a possible solution to a debilitating problem among young Asian and Asian Americans.<sup>174</sup>

Not all CSCA members, however, were as confident as their colleagues in a minority student organization’s abilities to take on West Coast racism. In fact, some even questioned if such a task would benefit Chinese and Chinese American students in the U.S. *The Chinese Christian Student* published editorials and articles that suggested other ways for students to overcome discrimination. In a 1931 *Chinese Christian Student* article titled “An American-Born Looks at Young Chinatown,” Flora Belle Jan argued

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<sup>174</sup> Alice Fong, “A Challenge to the Chinese-American,” *The Chinese Christian Student* (Nov. 1932), special insert to regular edition.

that “there can be no wholesale remedy” to the second-generation problem’s with finding employment or, more specifically, to racism anywhere in America:

First of all, is the prize worth the struggle? With thousands of fair-haired, blue-eyed collegians at his elbows, looking for a job, with thousands of other similar tinted fellow employees working for a raise, ready to take his the moment he slips, is there a chance for a person with yellow skin? Is it worth a lifetime of hardship, with possible failure or possible at the end—to prove the efficacy of the preamble of the Constitution of the United States? Let every American-born Chinese answer this question for himself.<sup>175</sup>

Francis Y. Chang, a Chinese sociology student at Stanford University, also had similar ideas as the skeptical Flora Belle Jan. In 1934, Chang published an article titled “An Accommodation Program for Second-Generation Chinese” in *The Journal of Sociology and Social Research* and explained both his interpretation of the second-generation problem and his plan to address the situation. While Chang did not deny the existence of a problem that plagued the second generation of Chinese in America, he did not believe that racism and discrimination were entirely to blame. “We often hear Chinese people in this country complaining against ‘racial prejudice’ and ‘inequality opportunities,’” Chang explained, “[and] while these and other unjust racial relationships undoubtedly exist...the fault is really ours if we do not try to show and prove to other people that their conception of our race is wrong.”<sup>176</sup> Chang advised fellow Chinese-American and Chinese students in the U.S. to identify a career choice early on and pursue it (rather than wait until the last minute before graduation to begin thinking about job opportunities) while building up a “positive working philosophy on life” that included being “ready to cooperate with the

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<sup>175</sup> Flora Belle Jan, “An American-Born Looks at Young Chinatown,” *The Chinese Christian Student* (Mar., 1931), 7.

<sup>176</sup> Francis Y. Chang, “An Accommodation Program for Second Generation Chinese,” *The Journal of Sociology and Social Research* (1934), U.C. Berkeley Ethnic Studies Library, Asian American Studies Archive, AAS ARC 2000/70- Yuk Ow Research Files, ca. 1930s-1982.

good and stand against the evil” and facing “reality bravely and withstanding criticism.”<sup>177</sup> Chang’s advice echoed earlier plea from Charles Hurrey and the Committee on Friendly Relations Among Foreign Students to attempt to cure “cultural and international misunderstandings” through bridge building and good behavior while in the U.S. Despite varying reactions and opinions on how to move forward, all members of the CSCA held an opinion on the unemployment problem among immigrants and the second generation.

The experiences of members with racial discrimination in the job market and growing anxieties over their futures led the CSCA and the JSCA to think broadly about the problem of discrimination along the West Coast. Unemployment was a problem that affected both foreign and American students, yet did not seem to garner serious attention from outside scholars, officials, or even the YMCA. What could two student-run, minority, Christian organizations do to both expose the degree of racism against Asians to other CSCA and JSCA members as well as the larger campus community? More importantly, what could these organizations do to help their members in their almost daily battles with prejudice? CSCA and JSCA leaders tackled these questions head-on with the assistance of their fellow students and asked for guidance and suggestions. Despite his general disagreements with the CSCA’s definition of and solutions to the second generation problem, Chang did suggest that Chinese Americans of the second generation engage in “making systematic surveys of the economic conditions of the Chinese in America” that were “critical, scientific, and constructive, with suggestions for improvement.”<sup>178</sup> Like many other members of both the CSCA and the JSCA, Chang

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<sup>177</sup> Chang, “An Accommodation,” 8.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-9, 11.

agreed that the next step after general discussions of the second generation problem and its relation to racism and discrimination was to conduct thorough and extensive surveys of both Asian and Asian-American students along the West Coast.

The surveys that the CSCA and the JSCA designed in order to understand the problems that racial discrimination posed for Asian students were different from those designed by sociologists such as Park and Smith. Rather than focusing on topics of assimilation, identity formation, and intergenerational conflict (subjects that sociologists often featured in their own projects), the student-designed surveys not only included direct questions relating to the students' experiences with racism and discrimination, but were also more inclusive in that they did not restrict the surveys to only one ethnic group or only second-generation students. By asking hard-hitting questions, leaving room for discussions relating to discrimination, and seeking responses from American and foreign-born Chinese and Japanese students, the CSCA and the JSCA uncovered a startling and wide-spread pattern of racial prejudice and discrimination along the West Coast.

As sociologists were conducting the Survey of Race Relations, a group from the CSCA designed their own project in 1926 to uncover the different problems that Asian and Asian American students faced along the West Coast. In a 1928 *Chinese Christian Student* article, Chingwah Lee explained that when he agreed in 1926 to make a survey of the Chinese on the West Coast following the suggestion of then CSCA president Paul Meng that each CSCA unit should make a "social survey of each Chinese community" near its campus, he had "no idea of the difficulties" he was about to encounter.<sup>179</sup> Lee's

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<sup>179</sup> "The Chinese in Central California," *Chinese Christian Student* (Mar. 1928), 3-7; 1926 Annual Meeting of the Central Executive Board, 2. Paul Meng was one of the most active CSCA presidents in terms of investigating the causes and effects of racism and discrimination among Chinese and Chinese Americans along the West Coast. Meng designed many surveys and created committees of CSCA members and



original intent was to design a survey that would focus on the plight of all Chinese (students and non-students, immigrants and Chinese Americans) in the central valley of California (at the time, one of the most anti-Asian regions of California).<sup>180</sup> The result, however, was that Lee's survey (distributed with the help other CSCA members) addressed the concerns of other Asian ethnic groups, including Filipino and Japanese students. In the article, Lee listed "interracial marriages, vocational difficulties, and racial prejudices" as the main concerns among all students after completing the survey and items for discussions at upcoming conferences.<sup>181</sup> Although "racial prejudices" and "vocational difficulties" were broad categories, Lee explained that many of those interviewed seemed to have much to say in regards to interracial marriages. The older Chinese explained that if "Americanization" was the ultimate goal for themselves and their children, perhaps the best way to go about this would be interracial marriages (an interesting interpretation of assimilation indeed and one which Park and Smith may not have considered).<sup>182</sup> The younger Chinese, Chinese American, and Filipino students were more fond of interracial relations for the sheer fact of building "cosmopolitan" friendships, but worried that, as minorities, they would have to intermix with the "less desirable stratum" of white society.<sup>183</sup> Both groups, however, also noted that racial

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leaders to both carry out the investigations and write reports on what they had found on campus and in larger communities. Meng eventually retired in 1930, but left a legacy of anti-racism to the CSCA. See *Chinese Christian Student* Collection, 1922-1934 Box D, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota Special Collections, Minneapolis, MN.

<sup>180</sup> The central areas of California, or The San Joaquin Valley, were often the sites of extreme anti-Asian sentiments among native white Californians. Riots, harassment, and other forms of general violence against Chinese, Filipinos, and Japanese were common practices in this area of the West Coast. As Allison Varzally explains, many white Californians living in the San Joaquin Valley did not approve of Asians owning land and/or serving as competition for agricultural jobs. See Allison Varzally, *Making a Non-White America: Californians Coloring Outside Ethnic Lines, 1925-1955* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2008).

<sup>181</sup> Lee, "Chinese," 6.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

discrimination seemed to play an important role in keeping interracial relationships between whites and Asians from becoming a commonplace occurrence in the West. From relationships to employment, Lee explained that “even a superficial reading” of the data he and his partners collected from the survey revealed problems that were of great importance for not only those who “cared about the general welfare of the Chinese,” but also West Coast social workers in general, envisioning a use for his survey among charitable and welfare agencies.<sup>184</sup>

The CSCA’s surveys are necessary for understanding the importance of Asian student involvement in investigating West Coast discrimination, particularly in that they addressed the concerns of a mixture of Asian ethnicities, rather than just one main group of students. By venturing deep into the central valley of California, Lee and his colleagues came into contact with the various Asian ethnic groups that called this region home. In this sense, the CSCA survey demonstrated that Asian students were beginning to realize by the mid-to-late 1920s that discrimination and racism against Asian and Asian Americans was a West Coast dilemma that touched the lives of various groups. Second, although Lee did not provide specific suggestions for how to combat the problems of racial prejudice and employment discrimination, he made a powerful argument that these problems were ones of great importance for all members of society and that all agencies (not just those that specialized in assisting Asian groups) should acknowledge and address such problems.

CSCA members also claimed that student-run surveys should go beyond the campus and engage the Chinese in the larger community. In the article “Chinese Students and Their Compatriots in America,” a CSCA member explained that “there are

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 4.

about 2,000 Chinese students and 70,000 Chinese in various occupations in this country” and “as the former live around the universities and the latter largely in segregated sections, the two groups do not mingle freely.”<sup>185</sup> The student, however, continued by calling attention to the fact that “a mutual feeling that they should be nearer each other and show greater measure of mutual help” was growing among Chinese students and the larger Chinese and Chinese-American communities.<sup>186</sup> The author included a variety of examples of such mutual cooperation (including that of P. Chu, a Chinese student of architecture at the University of Pennsylvania who was dubbed “Prime Minister of Chinatown” in Philadelphia by students for his active role in politics and social welfare in the larger Chinese community) and called on more students in the West Coast states to become more involved in the lives of other Chinese. “Closer relationships between Chinese students and their compatriots in other walks of life,” the student concluded, “is not only highly desirable, but also practicable.” In the same edition of the *Chinese Christian Student*, another CSCA encouraged further investigation of the conditions of Chinese and Chinese Americans outside of the ivory tower and suggested that students conduct “a survey of the Chinese population in each college community and make it the topic of discussion at the various conferences next summer.”<sup>187</sup> The student concluded by promising that such a survey would “be of more than academic interest.”<sup>188</sup> By turning towards understanding the plight of the Chinese of other occupations and classes

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<sup>185</sup> “Chinese Students and Their Compatriots in America,” *The Chinese Christian Student* (March, 1929), 7-8.

<sup>186</sup> “Chinese Students,” 8.

<sup>187</sup> “Chinese Students and Their Compatriots in America: Is Closer Relationship Possible?” *C.S.C.A. Fellowship Notes* (Feb., 1927), 2.

<sup>188</sup> “Chinese Students and Their Compatriots in America,” 2.

in their communities, CSCA members made an important step in crossing class lines to combat racism and discrimination.

Similar to the CSCA, JSCA members devised questionnaires to be handed out to other students on campus as well as to the Japanese communities at large in order to “foster clearer thinking [on the problem] and gather data as well as various points of view.”<sup>189</sup> What was different in the JSCA’s approach, however, was the initial desire to make the questionnaire distribution as wide-spread as possible, “to coincide and evolve solutions to the problem not from a local and individual point of view, but from a broader, coast-wide or national and cooperative point of view.”<sup>190</sup> The JSCA attempted to break the more traditional methods of researching the second-generation problem which involved focusing on one Asian community rather than understanding how all Asian groups experienced racism and discrimination along the West Coast. The JSCA (in similar fashion as the CSCA) discarded the hypotheses that scholars used to explain the second-generation problem and chose instead to use a broad surveying method to get answers.

In 1931, the JSCA conducted a survey of Japanese students studying in America to gain a sense of how racism and prejudice affected their impressions of the United States. The results were quite startling. The survey began with a general, open-ended question: “Do you consider, generally speaking, America to be as good as you thought she was while you were in your own country?”<sup>191</sup> An overwhelming majority (seventy percent) of the students answered that their impressions were “unfavorable” when compared with what they expected to find in America and cited “racial prejudice” against

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 15-16.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>191</sup> “What Some Japanese Students Think of America,” *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (Apr., 1931), 4-5.

themselves and other minorities as the main reason for their answer.<sup>192</sup> Another question asked students to describe specific instances of “not being treated right by American people” and answers included a number of experiences with discrimination (including being barred from certain YMCA/YWCA facilities) as well as the “insulting immigration laws” that prevented Japanese and other Asian migrants from coming to America and gaining access to citizenship rights.<sup>193</sup> One student even took the opportunity to explain how his experiences with racism in America had transformed his outlook on Christianity. “I have become a hater of Sham Christianity,” the student declared and continued by explaining that in America, even Christian people tended to “hate colored people,” making Christianity “the religion of white supremacy.”<sup>194</sup> This survey and others like it highlighted the common problems with discrimination that Japanese and Asian students experienced on the West Coast, making the causes of the second generation problem more concrete.<sup>195</sup>

The JSCA conducted a number of surveys throughout the 1930s, but members were sometimes met with disapproval by college administrators. In 1937, Masatane Mitani, then Secretary of the West Coast board of the JSCA and Stanford student, designed a survey focusing on American-born Japanese students and enlisted the help of JSCA members to conduct interviews with Nisei in colleges and universities in California. Masatane wrote to University of California President Robert Sproul in March of 1937 to request permission to conduct the survey and distribute questionnaires on the Los Angeles and Berkeley campuses. The JSCA leader also sought permission to

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<sup>192</sup> “What Some Japanese Students,” 5.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

conduct a follow-up meeting with members of the university administration and University of California JSCA members to address any problems with racism or discrimination that might be uncovered. Surprisingly, although Dean Miller cleared permission for the distribution of questionnaires, he advised Sproul to deny Masatane his meeting, explaining that “as we know nothing of the nature of the questionnaires this man wishes to pass out...the meeting should not be sponsored by the University, nor held on the University campus.”<sup>196</sup> While there is no record of Sproul meeting with Masatane, it is clear that the JSCA’s survey did not win approval from Sproul or the University of California administration, signaling the administration’s possible reluctance to a careful inspection of race relations and potential problems on campus.

Once the JSCA and CSCA analyzed the results of the questionnaires, members decided that a clear and definite plan of action was needed to move forward and began by focusing on secondary problems of racism that they could tackle themselves. Every year, both organizations received complaints from members who had difficulty finding room and boarding when beginning their studies at a new college or university. The problems that plagued foreign-born Asian students with finding housing once they arrived in the U.S. also characterized life for many Asian Americans, as well. When the JSCA and CSCA realized that the problem was widespread among the second-generation and foreign students, they created bureaus that specifically assisted Asian and Asian-American students with finding affordable housing off campus. These bureaus promoted tactics such as writing about landlords and Y officials who refused to rent to Asians and other minorities in order to raise awareness of this problem in student newspapers and

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<sup>196</sup> Letter from Masatane Mitane to President Robert Sproul of UCLA, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1937, ox 24, Record Group 359, University of California Chancellor Records, University of California-Los Angeles, Charles E. Young Library Special Collections Department.

bulletins. The JSCA also developed a Vocational Bureau for the purpose of helping members and other Japanese students in finding employment during school and after graduation (a challenging task considering all of the responses from the surveys indicating discrimination on the job and during the hiring process). Although these were commendable measures, JSCA and CSCA officials as well as fellow members knew that the problems of discrimination and the second generation were too large for any one organization to attack.<sup>197</sup>

In order to effectively address the problems of racism and discrimination, members of the JSCA, CSCA, and the Filipino Students' Christian Movement advocated for inter-organizational conferences and workshops.<sup>198</sup> By the mid-1920s, Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino students were already forming mini-sessions to discuss the experiences as foreign students in the U.S. at larger, YM/WCA and WSCF-sponsored organizations; however, after the turn towards understanding the racial problems of the second-generation, many members began to call for more meetings and conferences that were specifically devoted to foreign-born and Asian-American students. In a 1926 edition of *The Japanese Student Bulletin*, an article titled "Miscellaneous Work" outlined

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<sup>197</sup> JSCA Movement," *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (Feb. 1926), 4.

<sup>198</sup> While Filipino students were not as active in directly addressing the issues of the second generation of Chinese and Japanese Americans, FSCM members did contribute to the interracial and multicultural conferences and meetings that were results of the JSCA and CSCA's surveys and studies. During the 1920s and early 1930s, Filipino migration to the U.S. was in its earliest days, consisting of mostly Filipino men coming to the U.S. to work in agriculture in California and Oregon or the canning factories in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. Filipino students were relatively few in number when compared with the larger population of Filipinos in the U.S. (which were significantly less in number than Japanese and Chinese immigrants, even after the 1924 Immigration Act) and there was virtually no second-generation of Filipinos in America at the time. More importantly, however, as colonial subjects studying in America, members of the FSCM expressed time and again in *The Filipino Student Bulletin* the need to remain relatively neutral on any major social or political issues (although they eventually became out-spoken advocates for Filipino independence from the U.S.). That being said, the FSCM was very supportive of the "Oriental" student conferences that the JSCA and CSCA planned and always sent large numbers of delegates to the meetings where the students discussed issues of race and discrimination. The FSCM's involvement in the conferences illustrates the wide-reaching influence of the surveys and publications of the CSCA and JSCA as well as the growth of social activism among Asian and Asian American students.

the next important steps for the JSCA in addressing the racial problems of Asian students in the U.S. which included “encouragement of friendships between Japanese students and other foreign student groups...and joint meetings with the Chinese Students’ Christian Association and other similar organizations.”<sup>199</sup> CSCA members agreed with the sentiments of the JSCA and used *The Chinese Christian Student* to build support for increased interaction among Asian students of all backgrounds. In 1931, CSCA officials announced that there would be a meeting of West Coast Asian and Asian-American students at Stanford University to “discuss the needs of American Born Orientals.”<sup>200</sup> The conference joined JSCA, CSCA, FSCM members as well as other Asian students from other religious and secular groups together on Stanford University’s campus to establish an open dialogue concerning “social and economic issues” that the surveys raised.<sup>201</sup>

As FSCM members attended more student conferences, they also began to use these meetings to call the attention of JSCA and CSCA members to the role of colonization in promoting racism, adding an international aspect to the gatherings. Rather than accepting that racial prejudice was simply another ugly aspect of life in the United States, these Filipino students viewed segregation and discrimination through the international lens of imperialism. Filipino students warned in editions of *The Filipino Student Bulletin* that racism was a bi-product of nationalism and imperialism.<sup>202</sup> All imperial projects, including America’s experiment with colonization in the Philippines, were “evidence of

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<sup>199</sup> “Miscellaneous Works,” *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (Oct. 1926), 7.

<sup>200</sup> “Chinese Students in West to Meet,” *The Chinese Christian Student* (Nov., 1931), 5.

<sup>201</sup> “Chinese Students in West to Meet,” 5.

<sup>202</sup> “Ideals and Objectives of the Filipino Students’ Christian Movement,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin*, (1927), 4.



aggressive nationalism and a lack of respect for God's authority over humanity."<sup>203</sup>

Although many FSCM members called for fellow students to do their best to exhibit good behavior while in the United States to further the cause of Filipino independence, many more Filipino students warned against fighting imperialism for the sake of independence alone.<sup>204</sup> There were large issues at stake in the global struggle to free peoples from the grips of colonization and nationalism besides individual independence movements. For Filipino students in America, prejudice and discrimination in Los Angeles, Stockton, or Seattle were results of ignorance, pride, and greed rather than simply pure racial hatred. As FSCM member Sergio Acena explained during a meeting of Asian students at the University of Washington in 1928, "American racial prejudice against foreigners and those of other races denies us of the protections, love, and fellowship that we are guaranteed as members of the Kingdom of God, for no one nation has the right to strip a man of his humanity through ignorance, hate, or prejudiced thoughts and actions."<sup>205</sup>

Filipino students often explained that Americans denied Filipinos access to basic rights in the United States and treated them with contempt not because they were necessarily of a different race, but because colonization of the Philippines had led Americans to believe that Filipinos were politically, socially, and culturally inferior.<sup>206</sup> A group of Filipino students from Los Angeles suggested in a *Filipino Student Bulletin* article that one solution to this problem was to petition the U.S. government for assistance in building a Filipino Club House in Washington, D.C. This club house would

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<sup>203</sup> "Ideals and Objectives," 4.

<sup>204</sup> Sergio Acena, Editorial, *Filipino Student Bulletin* (January 1936), 2.

<sup>205</sup> Acena, Editorial, 2.

<sup>206</sup> As nationals under American colonization, Filipinos had access to certain privileges (such as the ability to migrate to America when other Asian peoples could not under the Immigration Act of 1924 and the opportunity for an American education), but were technically not citizens of the United States and therefore not entitled to all of the benefits of U.S. citizenship. See Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 101-114, which includes an analysis of the role of the 1924 Act on Filipino migration and American colonialism.

not only serve as a place where Americans could travel to learn about Filipino culture and realize that Filipinos were as American as anyone else; the meeting space would also be a “worthy representation in the heart of the American nation of Filipino dignity, pride, and ideals.”<sup>207</sup> Filipino students like those involved in the club house campaign, argued that racism was actually a product of imperialism and viewed anti-imperialism as an opportunity to reach out to other minority groups in the U.S. A *Filipino Student Bulletin* article from 1925 reported that a few FSCM members in Chicago had joined other Filipinos in the larger community in taking “steps toward the welding together of Latin-Americans and Filipinos...for a joint struggle for liberation of their native countries from American imperialism and racial prejudice.”<sup>208</sup> This meeting included Filipinos, Cubans, and Mexicans from the Chicago area and helped these groups to build ties with Latino anti-colonial groups such as *Solidaridad* and the Anti-Imperialist League.<sup>209</sup> The Chicago meeting was an important step for FSCM members, allowing them to not only begin to speak out against imperialism (a topic that was largely taboo for many students), but also build connections with other groups committed to protesting U.S. imperialism in Asia and Latin America.

The response of FSCM members to their experiences with discrimination while in the U.S. illustrates a continued reliance among students on the theory of “cultural bridge building” within the realm of racial rights activism. Rather than define racism in the U.S. as mainly a product of prejudice, Filipino students approached the problem within an imperial and human rights (or, “Christian rights,” as many students identified inalienable

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<sup>207</sup> “Filipino Students Seek Funds for International Club House,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (February 1928), 8.

<sup>208</sup> “Anti-Imperialism Movement,” *Filipino Student Bulletin* (December 1925), 2.

<sup>209</sup> “Anti-Imperialism,” 2.

rights) framework, arguing that the deeds of Americans overseas shaped their experiences of foreigners and fueled racist reactions (and vice-versa). While many of the Asian students had moved beyond seeing themselves as cultural ambassadors or cosmopolitan players in the U.S., others, such as FSCM members, identified a specific need for continued ambassadorship, not only for building bridges between the Orient and the Occident, but for attempting to move beyond the largely imperial relationship between Filipinos and Americans. As a result, these students worked to expose the connections between imperialism and racism in the U.S. and abroad while highlighting the unchristian nature of these acts and the violations of basic rights they created. The emphasis that FSCM members placed on connecting imperialism with racism assisted them in building networks with Chinese and Japanese students, as well.

Seeking to create connections with other students, the FSCM became involved in advocating for more Asian and Asian American conferences. In a *Filipino Student Bulletin* article titled “Filipino Students vs. Chinese and Japanese Students,” FSCM president E. J. Corballo explained that Filipino, Chinese, and Japanese, despite whatever national tensions may exist among their homelands, should strive to read each other’s student newspapers as “members of the human race and particularly of the Mongoloid race.”<sup>210</sup> As Christians and of Asian descent, Filipino, Chinese, and Japanese students should bond together and share tactics for dealing with racism in the U.S. and political, social, and economic problems abroad; however, as the author argues, it is a preoccupation with Filipino independence that prevents these connections from forming. While political independence is “the birthright of every one of God’s peoples,” Filipino

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<sup>210</sup> E. J. Corballo, “Filipino Students vs. Chinese and Japanese Students,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (March 1928), 6-7.

students in America should not let the project of Filipino independence from the United States overshadow all that could be accomplished (such as advocating for racial equality and an end to discrimination) by forming relationships with Chinese and Japanese students. The article ends with a rallying cry for all Asian students in American to form a national organization to create a “powerful group for molding public opinion” and a “terrific argument for the capacity of the people they represent” abroad and in the United States.<sup>211</sup>

As Corballo predicted, Asian student conferences became important meetings for students to discuss the problems of race relations in the U.S. as well as possible solutions. At an annual YM/WCA-sponsored conference in Asilomar, California in 1926, Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese student delegates formed their own session where they passed a number of resolutions concerning racial discrimination and prejudice. Such resolutions included drafting a petition to Congress in protest against the 1924 Immigration law which prevented the “spirit of true education and understanding from transcending racial boundaries,” vowing to “unite in protesting against acts of racial discrimination on campuses...or in communities wherein [they] live,” and assisting Japanese students at the University of California-Berkeley with their difficulties in “rebuilding their recently burned Club House on the lot owned by them due to the discriminatory opposition of local property owners in Berkeley.”<sup>212</sup> Other Asian student conferences held at Stanford University and Silver Lake, Oregon addressed key issues of discrimination and possible solutions included those similar to the ones reached at Asilomar, but also the development of specific Pacific Coast secretaries and bureaus to focus solely on the

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<sup>211</sup> Corballo, “Filipino Students,” 6.

<sup>212</sup> “Foreign Students at Asilomar,” *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (Mar., 1927), 5.

needs of students in California, Oregon, and Washington. For instance, during a 1927 Stanford meeting, Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students devised a plan for curriculum reform for colleges and universities in California and advocated submitting the revisions (which included “more authors of various races in literature discussions...greater offering of history of non-Western nations classes, and seminars for professors and students...on responding to prejudiced remarks”) to the University of California system administrators.<sup>213</sup>

Soon after Asian students met to discuss their own needs in dealing with racism and discrimination, they began to realize that these problems plagued all minority groups along the West Coast. Along with education, for example, the JSCA also advocated interracial cooperation on a variety of levels. “Interracial group contacts” were necessary for completing the JSCA’s plan of both creating partnerships with Americans and ending racism and discrimination.<sup>214</sup> Sponsoring large, coast-wide, national, and international conferences was a tactic that groups such as the YMCA/YWCA and the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) relied on for establishing networks among Christian students.<sup>215</sup> The JSCA also saw the value of using conferences to promote interracial and multiethnic communication among Asian, Asian American, African American, and other minority and foreign students. Whether in the form of conferences, discussion groups, forums, or retreats, “more occasions must be created where the Japanese and the American younger generations can get together and think together and come to know each other’s problems intimately.”<sup>216</sup> The JSCA officials reminded members that if they

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<sup>213</sup> “Foreign Students at Asilomar,” 5.

<sup>214</sup> Akagi, 17.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 17.

were to come across resistance to forming opportunities for interracial cooperation, “they must go sixty or seventy percent, ninety percent, if necessary, of the way first” to create action.<sup>217</sup>

At larger conferences, Asian and Asian American students met with African American, Latino, and students from other nations and discussed the results of surveys as well as the wide-spread occurrence of racial discrimination on and off campus. During an annual conference in Evanston, Illinois in 1929, CSCA, JSCA, and FSCM members had the opportunity to discuss issues of race with church leaders and other Christian students (including African-American and white students), as well as listen to guest speakers. By the end of the conference, Asian, African-American, and white students found that “present relationships between the races [were] inconsistent with the mind and teaching of Jesus” and resolved that they “give [themselves] to an unbiased study of the races in an effort to find a solid basis for relationships of equality and mutuality, work to remove discrimination against Negroes...and endorse the Dyer anti-lynching bill and inform Congress to that effect.”<sup>218</sup> As more CSCA, FSCM, and JSCA members served as delegates to the larger student conferences, the more they became aware of exactly how widespread the problems of racism were, particularly along the West Coast.

An important example of combined student association efforts in the name of promoting awareness of racial inequality and prejudice along the Coast took place during the fall of 1927. Over Thanksgiving break, sixty American and foreign-born students of West Coast colleges and universities met at the Montezuma Mountain School near Los Gatos, California for four days to discuss a variety of foreign and national issues at a

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>218</sup> “Updates from the Evanston Conference,” *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (May, 1929), 3-4.

mini-conference sponsored by the Northern California Institute of Pacific Relations and the YMCA. Although the topics of the conference were wide-ranging, a CSCA student who attended the conference reported in the *Christian World Education Scrap Book* (a WSCF publication) that “perhaps the most concrete suggestions by students were made with references to race prejudice by the group discussing Pacific Coast problems.”<sup>219</sup> As students, this group of conference attendees “suggested that university departments preparing students for the teaching profession incorporate within the regular curriculum a course designed for the specific purpose of considering how to remove racial prejudice.”<sup>220</sup> While students had approached the problems of race relations and prejudice along the Coast during other meetings and conferences similar to the Student Institute of Pacific Relations gathering, this group of students appeared to argue for addressing racism on campus at the “root” level by raising awareness of racism among all students in attendance at colleges and universities.

The discussions, resolutions, and plans for future action in regards to racism and discrimination that characterized Asian student meetings during the late 1920s and early 1930s prove the evolution of the Christian student associations. While Asian students groups originally viewed their purpose in the U.S. as serving as “unofficial ambassadors,” this had changed by the late 1920s and into the 1930s. By becoming more active with second-generation Asian American students and aware of the deeply ingrained problems of racial discrimination even among American citizens, members of the student associations recognized that the problem of racism went beyond a lack of

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<sup>219</sup> “Student Institute of Pacific Relations,” *Christian World Education Scrap Book, 1927-1928*, box 5 (Christian World Education, 1927-1929), Student Work Records, Kautz Family YMCA Archives

<sup>220</sup> “Student Institute,” 5.

cultural understanding and exchange among Asians and white Americans.<sup>221</sup> In tackling the issue of the “second generation,” members of the CSCA, JSCA, and FSCM not only strengthened their ties with each other (creating a panethnic identity crafted from shared experiences with racism and prejudice in America), but also built networks with American minority students. As a result, students transformed their organizations from cosmopolitan-minded cultural groups into budding, religiously-oriented activist associations, demonstrating the roles of these Asian Christian students in a burgeoning activist movement along the West Coast during the interwar years.

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In 1924, JSCA cabinet member and University of California, Los Angeles graduate student Kazuo Kawai wrote a letter to Robert Park asking for assistance in addressing the second generation problem. “We have some wild, vague, ambitious plans,” Kawai explained in his letter, “but we are so inexperienced and limited in our ability that we shall need many practical suggestions from people like you.”<sup>222</sup> Kawai’s early letter illustrates how much the JSCA grew during the 1920s and 1930s in terms of understanding and attacking discrimination on the West Coast. While Kawai and other JSCA and CSCA leaders may have been initially overwhelmed and puzzled by the depth of racial problem on the campuses and in larger communities, they eventually led their

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<sup>221</sup> “Foreign Students in the Institutions of Higher Learning of the United States,” *Institute of International Education: Eighth Annual Report of the Director* Record Group 13, box 17, folder 2, Yale Divinity School Special Collections.

<sup>222</sup> Letter from Kazuo Kawai to Robert Park, August 13, 1924, box 26, item 105, Survey of Race Relations. Kazuo Kawai would later become a professor of history at Stanford University and an expert of transpacific relations, writing books such as *Japan’s American Interlude* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1979). See also William Smith, “Interview with Kazuo Kawai,” box 26, item 100, Survey of Race Relations, and “Life History of Kazuo Kawai,” March 2, 1925, box 30, item 296, Survey of Race Relations for more information on Kazuo Kawai.



organizations in openly discussing racism and discrimination as well as joining forces with other student groups in attempts to more fully understand race relations in America and offer possible solutions. Park never replied to Kawai's early letter, forcing the JSCA leaders and members to take matters into their own hands when so few outside of their organizations were willing to lend suggestions on the second generation problem, let alone recognize and address the role of racism in the issue.

The concern of CSCA and JSCA foreign members over the second generation problem created a lasting impact on the organizations and as well as their understanding of racism along the West Coast. Issues such as discrimination in the job force as well as prejudice in the YMCA and YWCA itself created a relationship between foreign-born and American Asian students in these groups that rarely existed before. The deep questioning of the limitations of American citizenship also brought CSCA and JSCA members into contact with other minorities on campus. As Akagi suggested, Asian students were able to see that they were, indeed, a raw element in the racial laboratory of America and that their experiences were similar with other oppressed racial groups. A larger understanding of the extent of racism on the West Coast as well as the existing Christian networks through groups such as the YMCA and the Committee on Friendly Relations among Foreign Students allowed the CSCA and JSCA to branch out and form interracial and multicultural groups that were very interested in issues of racial equality and civil rights.

The actions of CSCA and JSCA members also helped to create changes in the attitudes of the YMCA, WSCF, and Committee on Friendly Relations among Foreign Students. By the time chairman of the Race Commission of the Pacific Southwest

division of the YWCA Miriam Matthews reported that “we feel it necessary to extend our work to other minority groups than the Negro” and that the Commission needed “help in getting information about other minority groups which are particularly large in our region such as Chinese and Japanese...” during a conference in Asilomar, California in 1938, the CSCA and JSCA had already been active in such pursuits and offered to assist the YWCA with achieving its interracial goals.<sup>223</sup> Similarly, the World Student Christian Federation acknowledged the influence of the student Christian associations in helping the organization to “become such a powerful factor in promoting right race relations” in 1937.<sup>224</sup> Even Charles Hurrey, leader of the Committee on Friendly Relations among Foreign Students, acknowledged by the 1930s that the CSCA and JSCA had become important organizations for the promotion of civil rights (an increasingly important topic for Christian organizations). In 1934, Hurrey explained in his article “Oriental Students in America” that “prevailing racial and color prejudices on our part often humiliate [Asian students] in their social relationships in this country” and in order to “improve cooperative relationships with Oriental students, we must practice Christianity which our missionaries preach...which will mean speedy recognition of racial equality, repeal of discriminatory legislation, and the early granting of citizenship rights annually to Orientals...”<sup>225</sup> And where could the Committee on Friendly Relations and other Christian groups turn for examples of how to address these problems? According to Hurrey, the Committee should “seek to enlist the help of the Japanese and other student Christian associations” to assist with dismantling “prejudice and the problems of the

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<sup>223</sup> Student Field Councils, Pacific SW 1936-1938, Minutes of Executive Committee Pacific Southwest Field Council and Asilomar Regional Council, YWCA, January 2, 1938, Kautz Family YMCA Archives.

<sup>224</sup> “The Federation and International Relations,” 1937, Kautz Family YMCA Archives.

<sup>225</sup> Charles Hurrey, “Oriental Students in America,” *Missionary Review* (1934), 4-5.

second generation of Asian Americans with hatred.”<sup>226</sup> By the late 1930s, the Asian student Christian associations in America had established a reputation among other organizations for effectively addressing the problem of racial relations along the West Coast.

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<sup>226</sup> Report to the Administration Board-Confidential Report, 1937, 25-26, CFR History, Box 058-72, Katuz Family YMCA Archives.

### Chapter Three

#### “We Ask Not for Mercy, but for Justice:” Filipino Students and the Battle for Labor and Civil Rights

*Suffering without end  
We sustain in Alaska  
Salmon and blubber everyday  
Because the Chinese contractor is a miser  
We lay down under a pile of blankets  
And we sleep curling and still it is cold  
And when 5 'oclock rings  
We rise groggily, for we could hardly move our legs  
We are still chewing our breakfast  
The bugles sound furious and fast  
And we rush to the cannery pronto  
And we work as hard as water buffalo  
I go to the restroom often to while away the time  
Why, oh why  
Did I come to the Land of the Midnight Sun  
I used to dress and eat well in my beloved Philippines...*

~ Untitled poem by Trinidad A. Rojo, Cannery Workers' and Farm Laborers' Union President and Filipino Student Christian Movement Vice-President.

Beginning in the late 1920s, disturbing stories of deplorable working conditions in seasonal industries began to circulate among Filipino students. Filipino Students' Christian Movement (FSCM) members themselves often served as summer employees in the Alaskan salmon canneries and vegetable and fruit fields of Washington and California, providing first-hand descriptions of the racism and discrimination they encountered. D. H. Ambrosio, Emeterio Cruz, and Sebastian Abella (all University of Washington Students and members of the FSCM) wrote articles describing discrimination in the canneries while Antonio Hamay, an FSCM member from the University of Nebraska, wrote a 1936 *Filipino Student Bulletin* article on his experiences as a seasonal agricultural worker. Hamay outlined the misery and isolation of agricultural work, focusing on American perceptions of Filipinos as “trash,” and the fact

that “Americans want [a Filipino] only because he works for them and because he patronizes their business.”<sup>227</sup> Hamay was so outraged by his experiences that he encouraged other Filipino workers to return to the Philippines, but other FSCM members like Ambrosio and Abella chose a different path: they became members of the Seattle-based Cannery Workers’ and Farm Laborers’ Union (CWFLU) and fought for racial equality and labor rights.

The CWFLU holds an important place in Filipino American history as the first Filipino-lead union, but the important roles of FSCM members in the organization and their contributions have not been fully explored by historians. Founded in 1933 by Filipino laborers known as *Alaskeros* who participated in seasonal work canning salmon during summers in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest, the CWFLU represented an opportunity for Filipinos to demand better working conditions and payment as migrant laborers. Long hours, low wages, and corrupt labor contractors characterized seasonal work and presented Filipino laborers with obstacles to achieving financial stability and the dreams that many Filipino migrants brought with them to America. Dorothy Fujita-Rony and Rick Baldoz have both described the crucial role of the CWFLU in forging a Filipino American identity out of competing regional affiliations among Filipino immigrants, while Chris Friday has called for understanding the union’s influence on later Asian labor movements.<sup>228</sup> As Fujita-Rony has argued, the CWFLU reminds us of

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<sup>227</sup> Antonio Hamay, “Student Opinion: Mr. Marcuelo is Wrong,” *Filipino Student Bulletin* (1936), 3.

<sup>228</sup> Dorothy Fujita-Rony, *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919-1941* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2002), Rick Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion: Empire and Migration in Filipino America, 1898-1946* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), and Chris Friday, *Organizing Asian American Labor: The Pacific Coast Canned-Salmon Industry, 1870-1942* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1994). The CWFLU was not the only Filipino labor union that played an important role in organization during the interwar period and beyond; however, the CWFLU was, as I argue, a union that explicitly promoted both labor AND civil rights for its members. The Filipino Labor Union (FLU), founded by Filipino sugar laborer Pablo

the connections among American empire, the demand for labor along the West Coast, and the early stages of Filipino migration to the West Coast, highlighting the unique status of Filipino migrants as American nationals during the early twentieth century while the Philippines was a U.S. colonial possession. Although colonialism and labor rights are important threads that historians have described in their work on the CWFLU, understanding the roles of FSCM members and Filipino students in the founding and development of the union highlights the ideological and civil rights activism that students brought to labor organizing during the 1930s.<sup>229</sup>

Filipino students who participated in the CWFLU as members and leaders represent a unique cross between student and worker that explains the union's focus on racial equality and liberties as well as labor rights for its members. From its beginning, the CWFLU had been staffed by Filipino student-laborers, but some of the organizations' key leaders were also FSCM members. Ireneo Cabatit and Trinidad Rojo, both FSCM members, became two of the CWFLU's most important administrators and transformed

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Manlapit, was a large union devoted to pursuing labor rights for Filipino and, eventually, Japanese workers in the Hawaiian sugar cane industry during the early 1900s. In 1934 and 1936, a reformed FLU led Filipino workers in the lettuce industry in a strike for higher wages in Salinas, California. Later in 1938, Filipino labor organizers from various unions along the Pacific Coast came together to form the Filipino Agricultural Laborers Association, the fore-runner of the Federated Agricultural Laborers Association (FALA). Although the FALA had early successes in demanding wage increases for workers in California's asparagus industry, the organization eventually declined by the late 1940s. While all of these organizations are important for understanding Filipino labor history, this chapter focuses on the CWFLU for its belief that labor rights were intricately connected with civil rights.

<sup>229</sup> The CWFLU is a problematic topic in Filipino American history. As Fujita-Rony explains at the end of Chapter 6 of her work *American Workers*, "the CWFLU'S history is contested space in which competing narratives articulate different versions of this story." Oral histories have formed a large base of any historical work on the CWFLU and these oral testimonies can be problematic in their own rights. Also, as Fujita-Rony has noted, Filipinas were often excluded from the CWFLU and constant conflicts and clashes among leaders often left the CWFLU disorganized and, at times, exclusive. "In order to more fully understand the union's history," Fujita-Rony explains, "it is important to contextualize it within the formation of the community as a whole and to listen carefully to the stories of community members, not only to what is said but also to what is left out." My angle on the CWFLU as a civil rights organization is influenced by Fujita-Rony's advice in that I consider the ways in which the CWFLU challenged the "national" status of Filipinos as well as the perpetual "otherness" of all minorities along the West Coast. See Fujita-Rony, *American Workers*, 199.

the CWFLU into a civil rights organization. As I argue in this chapter, the FSCM served as a foundation for later leaders of the union. Filipino students such as Cabatit, Rojo, Ambrosio, and Abella often worked as Alaskeros and agricultural laborers during the summers to pay their tuition, room, and board in the fall and, as a result, were exposed to blatant racial discrimination from employers and members of the larger West Coast communities. Coming from an organization devoted to working with other student associations as well as dismantling racial inequality in America, FSCM members viewed racial equality in the workplace as the first step to achieving labor rights. Also, the FSCM leaders' often negative perception of student laborers as lackluster scholars prone to sins such as prostitution and gambling played an important role in pushing members such as Cabatit and Rojo towards other means of organizing and pursuing equality in the workplace when their student organization was not willing to help.

Fujita-Rony's theory that the "ideology and experience of education" was a key shaping force among Filipino students who migrated to the U.S. is central to this particular chapter and forms a base for understanding how and why FSCM members became active in labor organizing.<sup>230</sup> I posit that the connection between FSCM members and the founding of the CWFLU is a critical, ideological link that is important for understanding the development of the union's campaign for civil rights. Filipino

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<sup>230</sup> Fujita-Rony, *American Workers*, 52-53. Fujita-Rony explains that by the time the larger migration of Filipino students came to America, most of the interactions they had with Asian students were with those Chinese and Japanese from the second-generation (the groups discussed in Chapter 2). While second generation Asian Americans were beginning to enter colleges and universities and join organizations such as the Japanese Students' Christian Association and Chinese Students' Christian Association, foreign Chinese and Japanese student members of these organizations also interacted with Filipino students. Through conferences, workshops, and meetings sponsored by larger groups such as the Committee on Friendly Relations among Foreign Students, Filipino students interacted with foreign students, sharing their concerns for the treatment of foreign and American-born minority students and further complicating the Filipino students' perceptions of themselves as American nationals, yet also "foreign" immigrants in the U.S; Fujita-Rony, 59.

students were acutely aware of their problematic status as both American “nationals” and racial minorities while in the U.S. during the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>231</sup> As scholars and Christians, men such as Cabatit and Rojo were shocked that their education and religious affiliation meant little to Americans: Filipinos were part of the “yellow peril” and, as a result, received often hostile and discriminatory treatment. The Filipino students’ status as both nationals and minorities inspired them to use a language of “natural” rights to argue for racial justice and draw upon their education and exposure to the Christian concept of world-wide citizenship espoused by the FSCM. Filipino student-workers associated labor rights with natural and civil rights, and called attention to the inconsistencies of American perceptions of Filipinos as both “little brown brothers” and a racial menace to society. FSCM members who later organized and joined the CWFLU used discussions of natural rights to not only legitimize their participation in the demand for labor and civil rights, but also to join Chinese, Japanese, and African American cannery workers (whom Lisa Lowe has defined as “foreigners within” America) together in their struggle for racial justice.<sup>232</sup> As a result, these Filipino students turned the labels of limitations bestowed upon them into interracial and interethnic possibilities. Jack Masson and Donald Guimary included a brief synopsis of the role of Filipino students in their article on the CWFLU, but the full importance of Filipino students and particularly

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<sup>231</sup> In 1934, Congress approved the Tydings-McDuffie Act (named after Maryland Senator Millard E. Tydings and Alabama Representative John McDuffie) and the Philippines officially entered its Commonwealth status, a ten-year period in which Filipino leaders would create a Constitution and seek approval from the U.S. for newly formed government structures. During this ten year period, the U.S. was able to maintain a military presence in the Philippines and call on all armed forces from the Philippines in defense situations. For the purposes of this chapter, the Tydings-McDuffie Act also reclassified all Filipinos living in the U.S. as aliens, restricted their incoming quotas to fifty persons per year, and provided legal means for the Filipino Repatriation Act of 1935 (a resounding “failure” that resulted in only 2,190 Filipinos returning to the Philippines and the U.S. Supreme Court declaring the Act unconstitutional in 1940).

<sup>232</sup> Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996), 8-10.



FSCM members in the development of the union's ideology and purpose remains a topic which no historian has fully explored.<sup>233</sup> As a result, the CWFLU exists in historical literature primarily as a Filipino organization devoted to Filipino workers' rights rather than a civil rights group devoted to equality for all workers along the West Coast.

Against the backdrop of the Depression, a rising labor movement, and the questionable status of Filipinos as "Americans," this chapter argues that FSCM members played a critical role in making the CWFLU a civil rights organization. It was not a coincidence that many influential members of the union were also participants in the FSCM. The records of the CWFLU as well as the writings of the FSCM student laborers reveal an unexplored connection between the two organizations that speaks to the various ideological backgrounds of the developing West Coast civil rights movement during the early-to-mid twentieth century. Imperialism, racial relations, and labor are themes that come together in the telling of the FSCM's involvement with the CWFLU and create a richer story of the relationship between labor and civil rights. While the concept of "civil rights unionism"<sup>234</sup> is certainly not new (particularly in relation to the narrative of the

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<sup>233</sup> Jack K. Masson and Donald L. Guimary, "Pilipinos and Unionization of the Alaskan Canned Salmon Industry," *Amerasia* 8, no. 2 (1981), 25.

<sup>234</sup> Robert Rodgers Korstad, *Civil Rights Unionism: Tobacco Workers and the Struggle for Democracy in the Mid-Twentieth-Century South* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003). See also Vicki Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1987) for a discussion of the role of Mexican women in the creation and leadership of UCAAWA (United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing, and Allied Workers of America), a canning union for workers employed in California canneries. Ruiz's work provides an excellent analysis of the strength and resilience of Mexican women in the fight to secure labor rights for employees, but does not explicitly connect union/labor rights to civil rights (an area where my paper intervenes in the larger subject of West Coast labor organization). Zaragosa Vargas' *Labor Rights are Civil Rights: Mexican American Workers in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005) discusses the role of labor unions in fighting for and securing Mexican American rights during the twentieth century, a process that was similar to that of Filipino laborers in America; however, my work places a greater emphasis on the problematic status of Filipinos as colonial subjects under American rule. See also Veta Schlimgen, "Neither Citizens nor Aliens: Filipino 'American Nationals' in the U.S. Empire, 190-1946" (PhD. Dissertation, University of Oregon, 2010) for a more in-depth analysis of the legal status of Filipinos in both the Philippines and the United States.

Southern and African American component of the civil rights movement), this chapter complicates our understanding of this theme by exploring the role of Filipino students and nationals who challenged the limitations of their “non-citizen” status by participating in the struggles for labor and civil rights. Like the Japanese and Chinese Student Christian Association members who called attention to West Coast racism in their newspapers by analyzing the second generation problem, FSCM members who joined the CWFLU used the union to expose and fight racial discrimination.

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“O what thrills are coming with the advent of June!” University of Washington student Victorio Velasco penned in a 1934 article describing life as a cannery employee in Alaska for readers of *The Filipino Student Bulletin*. Velasco, who was editor of *The Filipino Student Bulletin* and a “veteran” in the seasonal cannery industry, spoke favorably of life in “the land of the midnight sun,” painting vivid pictures of canoeing, romances with “native” girls, friendships with other students eager to earn wages and tuition money for the up-coming academic year, and, of course, the “manly labor” that characterized work in the canneries. For Velasco and the hundreds of other Filipino students along the West Coast who signed up to labor in Alaska from June to August, cannery life was part of the experience of living in the United States as a self-supporting student striving to make the most of the American educational system. Although Filipino laborers began to arrive in Hawaii during the early 1900s to work in the pineapple and

sugar cane fields, by the 1920s, thousands moved to the mainland to pursue work in agriculture when Asian exclusion laws increased the demand for workers.<sup>235</sup> Hundreds (and by the 1930s, thousands) of Filipino students were part of this migration, straddling the line between “scholar” and “laborer.” Year after year, students such as Velasco returned to Alaska, letting the “punk smell of the fish bin,” old friendships and loves, and the promise of a decent wage lure them back to their cannery uniforms of “overalls [and] heavy working shoes.”<sup>236</sup>

To characterize Velasco’s account of his summer in Alaska as sugar-coated would be an understatement. His romanticized vision of cannery work may have been acceptable for an edition of the *Filipino Student Bulletin* and perhaps Velasco (who later became a leader of the CWFLU and ardent opponent of labor exploitation), as editor of the newspaper, felt less than comfortable in putting himself in a vulnerable position by speaking out against his employers in print. In reality, however, the canning industry had a reputation for presenting its employees with low pay, long hours, and deplorable working conditions. In a 1922 *Daily Observer* article, reporter Max Stern recounted his experience on a journey to an Alaskan cannery, including the story of a “crowd of college boys from the University of California” who “thinking the voyage would be a lark” and expecting to make some extra money during the summer did not make it much farther than the China Basin section of San Francisco before two of them “jumped over the side of the vessel...and [swam] ashore...,” crying that the cramped, crowded, and unsanitary

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<sup>235</sup> Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 135-137, 165. During the early 1900s, the Hawaiian Sugar Planters’ Association (HSPA) began to heavily recruit laborers from the Vigan, Ilocos Sur, and Cebu regions of the Philippines to build a workforce to harvest their vast sugar cane fields. These male, Filipino laborers who travelled to Hawaii beginning in 1906 were known in Hawaii and America as *sakadas* and *Hawayanos* in the Philippines.

<sup>236</sup> Victorio Velasco, “The Call of the Silver Horde,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (Jun. 1934), pg. 5-6 in Victorio A. Velasco Papers, Folder 3/9, Box 3, University of Washington Special Collections Department, Seattle, WA

conditions aboard cemented the salmon transporting boats' reputations as "Hell Ships." Stern went on to report the tales of "neglect, distress, danger, privation, and exploitation" that summarized life in the Alaskan canneries once employees dragged themselves from the Hell Ships, turning an opportunity for summer employment into a risky and dangerous undertaking.<sup>237</sup> While other forms of labor in the agricultural industry were more back-breaking and intensive, cannery work and the journey to the canneries themselves did not appear to fit in to Velasco's descriptions of lush, summer days in Alaska.

With stories circulating of the less than ideal working conditions in the canneries, why would students like Velasco commit themselves to two to three months of exploitative labor, not to mention continue doing it for more than one summer? While Velasco would have liked his readers to believe that the summer romances, canoe trips, and friendships were what drove him back to the canneries every summer while he was in college, there were two explanations as to why he and other students risked the journey to Alaska and stuck with the hard work: education and money. Unlike the early wave of *pensionados* who came to the United States during the early twentieth century from elite families in the Philippines and on full, government scholarships, the majority of Filipinos who attended colleges and universities during the 1920s and 1930s were from working-class families in the Philippines who could barely afford to pay for their children's steerage, let alone their college education.<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Max Stern, "The Orientals in the Alaskan Salmon Industry," *Daily News* (1922), 2-3.

<sup>238</sup> In 1926, the Philippine and U.S. government decided that instead of appointment, future *pensionados* would be chosen by merit and examination, helping to eliminate those scholarship students who may have come from elite families, but lacked the ambition or intellect to succeed in U.S. colleges and universities. As a result, a more varied class of *pensionados* came to America during the late 1920s and included working-class Filipinos from less wealthy families as well as elites. The FSCM eagerly supported the reform and went as far as recommending that the examination for *pensionados* be administered to those

Filipinos who entered American colleges and universities dreamed of becoming educated professionals and returning home to their families in the Philippines with riches, gifts, and, more importantly, a new level of respect. “I was in grade school,” Ponce Torres explained, “when I thought of coming [to America].”<sup>239</sup> As the son of farmer and part-time carpenter who had fallen upon hard times in the Philippines, Torres found hope in the news he heard at school that “coming to America [would] help a student to be able to get an education through his own efforts.”<sup>240</sup> The plan was simple: apply to an American college, find your own way across the Pacific, and at the end would be a bona fide degree from the United States. Torres’ father borrowed money from friends and family and mortgaged off some of his farm land to help his son purchase a \$75.00 one-way ticket to Seattle on the S.S. President McKinley. In 1925, at the young age of seventeen and armed with little more than a steerage ticket, a high school diploma, a few bucks and a lot of dreams, Torres arrived in Seattle to begin his studies at the University of Washington.<sup>241</sup>

Eutiquio “Vic” Bacho also travelled to America during the 1920s with the expressed goal of attending and graduating from college. “My real purpose in coming to this country was to obtain a college education,” Bacho explained.<sup>242</sup> Unlike Torres who came to the U.S. fresh from high school, Bacho had already been attending the Cebu Junior College in the Philippines before arriving at the University of Washington.

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students already in the U.S. as well as the Philippines to ensure that any talented, self-supporting students would have equal opportunity to win scholarships and government aid. The FSCM argued that many self-supporting students were “mentally and physically equipped [for college study, but because of constant hard knocks of the time, they have left school.” See “Common Sense,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (January 1926), 4.

<sup>239</sup> Maria Schenk, “Birds of Passage: Perspectives on the Filipino Experience,” pg. 4, Maria Schenk Papers, Special Collections Department, University of Washington.

<sup>240</sup> Schenk, “Birds,” 4.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

Although Bacho was well on his way to receiving a secondary-education degree from a college in the Philippines which was technically part of the American educational system, he wanted more. “The desire to travel abroad, to work my way through school prompted me to leave Cebu and come to America,” he later explained in an interview.<sup>243</sup> Similar to Torres, there was something that drew other young Filipino men (and later women) to America for an education. Although there were college opportunities available in the Philippines (and, as Catherine Ceniza Choy has pointed out, nursing schools were becoming increasingly popular choices for Filipinas in the Philippines), these colleges and universities were often reserved for the Filipinos from the elite colonial official classes or for those who could afford the often steep tuition (and many times, these were one in the same).<sup>244</sup> While Cebu Junior College and other similar institutions were always options for the less affluent, Filipinos such as Bacho did not want to settle for less than the best. The work-ethic that was so popular in America and taught throughout the schools in the Philippines with stories of Abraham Lincoln and other American heroes who had pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps inspired Filipinos like Bacho to believe that they too could aspire to greatness. Many Filipinos longed for the chance to travel to America, to see the land that they learned so much about during their school days in the Philippines, and to return home with the ultimate marker of respectability and success: an American college degree.<sup>245</sup>

By continuing their education in colleges and universities in the United States, Bacho and Torres were simply following the paths of any other American student longing

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>244</sup> See Catherine Ceniza Choy, *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).

<sup>245</sup> Fujita-Rony, *American Workers*, 53-54; E. V. “Vic” Bacho, *The Long Road: Memoirs of a Filipino Pioneer*, (self-published, 1992), 9.

for advancement; so far as Filipinos could see, the only difference between themselves and American students across the Pacific gearing up for college life was that they came from the Philippines. All in all, Filipino students recognized college opportunities as basic paths to intellectual and economic fulfillment if one worked hard enough. The American-style education system in the Philippines did much to precondition Filipinos to the idea that there were educational opportunities for any American, regardless of their economic or class backgrounds. As Fred Cordova, a Filipino student migrant, explained during an interview, “the American educational system was already implanted by 1910 so that these men, who could have come in [to America] as young as seventeen and eighteen, were already part of that American school system where Abe Lincoln was the emancipator and George Washington was the father of the country.”<sup>246</sup> Historic tales of patriotic glory, self-reliance, and determination filled the lectures, lessons, and textbooks that teachers provided to students in the Philippines, helping to create what Benedict Anderson has described as an “imagined community” that connected young Filipinos to their American counterparts. “All of their heroes...were *puti* (white)...they felt *puti*,” Cordova continued. Filipino students felt “very, very American” and genuinely believed that they were entitled to everything that all Americans were entitled to, including access to colleges and universities in the United States.<sup>247</sup> A college education in America was much more than an opportunity for economic or class advancement for Filipinos; it was a way for them to work hard and prove that they too could follow in the footsteps of Lincoln by rising above the economic hand they had been dealt and fulfilling the American dream of self-sufficiency. To succeed through hard work was the essence of

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<sup>246</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., 14-15.

what it meant to be an American for many young Filipinos and this definition of “American” guided them to the U.S. in search of an education.

In order to pay for their education, many Filipino students took summer jobs in the canneries to help cover tuition, room, and board for the following school year. Typically, a summer work season would begin in early June and end in late August, just in time for the workers to strip off their overalls and become students once again. They would receive approximately \$150 in pay for three months work, as well as transportation to and from the work site, meals, and lodging. Lured by the promise of a decent wage and an all-expenses-paid trip to Alaska or elsewhere along the Pacific Coast, many students would sign up with the local labor contractor in groups with their friends, attempting to make the journey and work environment more hospitable by surrounding themselves with college buddies. For example, Velasco typically traveled to Alaska with a group of University of Washington and Washington State University journalism students committed to sharpening their skills by writing reports on the laboring conditions in the canneries (to be discussed later in this chapter) as well as earning an extra buck. While Filipinos formed the majority of students working in the canneries after 1924, when the migration of other Asian groups declined, there were still Japanese and Chinese students that joined the FSCM members in summer employment. Despite the terrible stories of life in the canneries, many students may not have had many choices when it came to earning their keep while far from their families across the Pacific and studying at college. They could tolerate three short summer months as well as cramped conditions on the boat and in run-down bunks in Alaska if it meant being able to come one year closer to a college degree.



But the summer work days proved to be anything but short, with many Filipino students pushing on through work conditions that proved all of the rumors of life in the canneries. One of the largest problems that Filipinos and all cannery employees faced was corruption among labor contractors hired by the cannery owners to drum up workers along the West Coast (particularly among students). Reports from individual cannery employees as well as investigations into labor conditions in the canneries by unions and the National Industrial Recovery Administration (NIRA) in 1934 and 1935 revealed a virtual form of indentured servitude in Alaska. Labor contractors were Chinese, Japanese, Filipino or white and gained an unfavorable reputation among cannery workers for corruption and sexual harassment.<sup>248</sup> Ponce Torres explained that by the end of May labor contractors would begin to gather around local hang-outs, looking for students and particularly recent Filipino migrants to sign up for cannery work and promising “a chance to go [to Alaska] so long as we went along with their techniques.” Such “techniques” consisted of packing ships headed to Alaska full with employees (often 500 to a ship that had a maximum capacity of 250, leaving the contractors to split the extra money for

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<sup>248</sup> Labor contractors in the cannery and agricultural industries were a motley crew from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds. During the late nineteenth century, Chinese, then later Japanese, men dominated the contractor positions. By the early 1920s, however, and as a result of increased Filipino migration to the U.S. and the decline in Chinese and Japanese migration post-1924, Filipinos became some of the most powerful contractors. Often, Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese contractors showed favoritism to those from their own ethnic groups, possibly easing up on transportation costs or helping them get better-paying positions (such as foreman in a cannery); however, such favoritism was more specifically saved for those who might have migrated from the same region as the contractor or shared a similar circle of friends, meaning that such favoritism was not widespread among all cannery workers from a specific ethnic group. For example, one would think that if Filipino contractors played an important role in labor recruiting by the 1920s, Filipino laborers themselves would not have been so concerned about trying to destroy the corrupt contractor system if they would have benefited from favoritism. Filipino contractors, however, often reserved their displays of favoritism for those from specific regions; in other words, a Filipino laborer from the Cebu region might have received more favorable treatment from a contractor from Cebu than a Filipino laborer from the Illocos Sur region and vice versa. White contractors (who also played an important role in serving as recruiters for the industry) typically discriminated against all minority employees and, as expected, displayed favoritism towards white employees in the canning industry. See Chris Friday, *Organizing*, 56-60 and Gunther Peck, *Reinventing Free Labor: Padrones and Immigrant Workers in the American West, 1880-1930* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000) for a more in-depth discussion of labor contractors.

steerage with the ship captain) and forcing them to buy food tickets that would increase the transportation debts already owed to their contractors. One cannery worker later explained that the Filipino workers were “packed like sardines... [with] no space to move around” on the *North Sea* ship.<sup>249</sup> The contractors also provided cigarettes, alcohol, and gambling opportunities to employees in exchange for extended contracts or additional debt. Torres described the ways in which Filipino and other Asian employees suffered the most on the trips to Alaska as they were the ones crammed and squeezed into the steerage and lower decks and given the left-over food after the white employees and contractors were finished eating. Not only were the labor contractors cruel and predatory, they often showed favoritism to those employees from their own ethnic group and bestowed discriminatory treatment on others, making them sleep in the worst quarters and go days subsisting on little more than food scraps (or, in one instance, nothing but bones for lunch).<sup>250</sup>

The NRA’s 1934 investigation into living and working conditions in the canning industry also revealed the sexual exploitation of Filipino laborers who travelled to Alaska for work. An intricate system existed between the labor contractors who hired the workers, the foremen who oversaw the transportation of the new hires from the West Coast to the canneries, and other cannery employees which those who testified referred to

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<sup>249</sup> Delegates’ Report, February 23, 1939, Box 11, Folder 19, CWFLU records; Subject Series-AFL-CIO Jurisdictional Dispute 1938-Letter from James Moithan, Attorney for CWFLU to Office of the Director for the 19<sup>th</sup> Region, NLRB, Seattle, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1938, Folder 14/31, Box 14, CWFLU records.

<sup>250</sup> Schenk, *Birds of Passage*, 5-6. Labor Report, 21-23, Cannery Workers’ and Farm Laborers’ Union records, Box 36, Folder 24, Special Collections Department, University of Washington. Delegates’ Report, February 23, 1939, Box 11, Folder 19, CWFLU records; Letter from James Mousing, Attorney for CWFLU to Office of the Director for the 19<sup>th</sup> Region, NLRB, Seattle, January 11, 1938, Subject Series-AFL-CIO Jurisdictional Dispute, Folder 14/31, Box 14, CWFLU records.

as “moral perverts”.<sup>251</sup> A cannery employee explained during the investigation that the “perverts” would use cigarettes, candy, marijuana, and other luxuries purchased from the general shops the foremen operated in the canneries to lure Filipino university students as well as minor employees into sexual relationships. Once a Filipino accepted the goods, the foreman and “pervert” considered the victim a “wife” and linked their pay together. In this situation, both the foreman and “pervert” benefitted (the “pervert” receiving a sexual partner and control over his wages; the foreman receiving a steady supply of “business” from the wages the “pervert” used to pay for the gifts from the foreman’s store), while young Filipino workers entered into a never-ending cycle of sexual and labor exploitation.<sup>252</sup>

This relationship between laborers and their contractors was complicated and speaks to Nayan Shah’s concept of “border intimacies” which often characterized migrant male experiences in workplaces such as the Alaskan canneries.<sup>253</sup> In situations such as that described above among the Filipino laborers, homosexual relationships were not indications of a fixed sexual identity, but rather “situational ties forged by transient workers and farmers to pool resources and labor and develop relationships of trust to ensure economic survival and social conviviality.”<sup>254</sup> Shah has argued that border intimacies “thrived in labor-intensive, migrant-drawing, and capital-organizing” ventures

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<sup>251</sup> I use the word pervert because this was the colloquial term among the cannery employees themselves for men who supposedly bribed others into relationships and then exploited them sexually and economically.

<sup>252</sup> “Code Hearing: National Industrial Recovery Administration,” Folder 24- Cannery Code Hearing, 1934, Box 36, CWFLU Records, 22-25.

<sup>253</sup> Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2011), 90-97. Shah’s work focuses primarily on relationships and sexuality among Indian immigrants in Pacific Canada and Northwest United States, but his concepts speak to larger themes in other male-dominated, migrant labor circuits during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

<sup>254</sup> Shah, *Stranger*, 92.

such as agricultural and cannery work and rested on “material exchange and abused trust.”<sup>255</sup> While not all male sexual relationships were corrupt or forced, the exploitative system of the contractors certainly fits Shah’s characteristics of material exchange and a betrayal of trust among the workers: laborers entered into relationships largely by receiving goods in an environment where certain luxuries were scarce and, in return, were betrayed by the very contractors they entrusted their care and safety to while in Alaska. The conditions of this particular border intimacy as well as a lack of sources to fully delve into the nature of these relationships makes it difficult for historians to discern how enthusiastically laborers accepted the propositions of the contractors and entered into these relationships.<sup>256</sup> From the NRA investigation (one of the only sources that fully discusses the sexual relations among contractors and laborers), it appears as though workers may have been hesitant to perform sexual acts for cigarettes, alcohol, or gambling money at first, but ultimately were more concerned with the exploitative nature of the relationship through garnished wages rather than any feelings of victimization as a result of a forced sexual encounter. By stressing the exploitative nature of the relationships and the corruptness of the contractors, laborers who did speak out against this sexual practice during investigations may have downplayed their own willingness to enter into these relationships for the sake of publicly protecting their masculinity. For however commonplace these contractor-labor “marriages” may have been in the cannery

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 113-114.

<sup>256</sup> Few sources exist that openly discuss homosexual relationships among male Filipino laborers in the Alaskan canneries or in other agricultural settings. While there are some accounts of Filipino laborers (including Victorio Velasco) dressing up as females to spice up cannery dances where no women may have been present, there are few details beyond “masquerading” in the records of the CWFLU or elsewhere. Velasco, “The Call of the Silver Horde,” Friday, *Organizing*, 132-133.

circuit, they later became an indicator of the corrupt nature of the contractors and a rallying point for labor reform and unionization among the Filipinos.

Racial discrimination in the workplace and in larger communities also characterized cannery and agricultural work along with corrupt contractors and “Hell Ships.” Discrimination against Filipinos existed in both legal and social forms in communities such as Watsonville and Stockton, California (two of the areas in central California with the largest Filipino populations) and, as Fred Cordova explained, was a shock for Filipinos who were “all of a sudden...slammed into the wall called American racism.”<sup>257</sup> “I was so disappointed to come to this country because I found it was not so easy as we were led to believe when we were in the Philippines,” Bacho explained. “We were not considered as human beings like white people here,” Bacho continued, “...I tell you, when I was in Sacramento, there was this habit of people [Filipino laborers] coming to town after working in the country: they would stand on the sidewalk for fresh-air and to talk. A policeman would come along...and if you were standing there on the sidewalk, he would kick you in the pants. That’s how much they regarded us as human beings.”<sup>258</sup> Bacho also expressed surprise at the less than warm welcome he and other Filipinos received from Americans along the West Coast, explaining that “it was hard to make contact with the Americans because they seemed to feel that we were a different kind of people and they could not deal with us...unless you were working for them.”<sup>259</sup> Torres also found himself in cannery work before he had the opportunity to graduate and

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<sup>257</sup> Schenk, “Birds of Passage,” 14-15. Filipinos who worked in the canneries often migrated throughout the West Coast during the “off” months, searching for other forms of employment in areas of central California, Oregon, and the Yakima Valley of Washington state. If employment was not readily available in these areas, they would bide their time until other opportunities arose.

<sup>258</sup> Interview by Maria Schenk, “Birds of Passage: Perspectives on the Filipino Experience in North America,” (Aug. 1975) Maria Schenk Papers, 4.

<sup>259</sup> Schenk, “Birds,” 5.

explained that Filipinos “were not given a chance to deal with American society” as they should have been. “We could not enter the theater where the American people were,” Torres elaborated, “or in any public picnics or public places along with American people.” Signs of “Positively No Filipinos Allowed” as well as blatant racism, discrimination, and segregation were common in communities in central California. “We learned that they [white Americans] hated us, especially when they harmed us physically,” Torres hauntingly concluded.<sup>260</sup>

White inhabitants of Alaska expressed discontent (in verbal and physical forms) with the large number of Filipino and other Asian cannery workers entering their territory during the 1920s and 1930s. “Seventy percent of all the insane that Alaska is supporting come out of the salmon canneries and practically all of that seventy percent comes from the Chinese gangs,” U.S. Deputy Marshall for the Bristol Bay region of Alaska, S.O. Calder, told a reporter in 1922.<sup>261</sup> Calder continued by explaining that about a “dozen insane” were left up in Alaska every year from the cannery crews, and while he admitted that most of those insane were “Mexicans and other Latins [sic] who go crazy from the marihuana [sic] weed, or booze, or venereal disease...,” he insisted that “we want Alaska made safe for white cannery hands, not a dumping ground for all the cheap labor from the states.”<sup>262</sup> W.S. Craig, former Commissioner for Dillingham in the Bristol Bay area credited the Chinese labor contractors and Asian crews with “selling booze to our natives and taking their last dollar,” while delegate Dan Sutherland insisted that “we want white men sent up here to help colonize Alaska instead of Asian and minority workers.”<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>260</sup>Schenk, “Birds of Passage,” 6.

<sup>261</sup> Quoted in Stern, “Orientals,” 10.

<sup>262</sup> Quoted in Stern, “Orientals,” 10.

<sup>263</sup> Quoted in Stern, “Orientals,” 11-12.

Later in 1938, after the majority of Chinese and Japanese cannery workers were replaced with Filipinos, Republican Party member Frank Foster submitted an article to *The Alaskan Fishing News* in which he vowed to fight for an “Alaska for Alaskans” (meaning white Alaskans) and prevent the “Filipino union” (CWFLU) from stealing jobs from Alaskans by passing a law to prohibit the employment of non-residents in Alaska.<sup>264</sup> From the early days of the canning industry in Alaska, Asian and minority workers often received less-than-welcoming receptions from white inhabitants of the territory.

Physical violence against Filipino male laborers in communities along the West Coast (primarily in central California, but also in parts of Oregon, Washington, and Alaska) was the most horrific example of racial discrimination. As Paul Kramer explains, mob violence, including the burning of Filipino quarters and beatings from white males, was primarily the result of perceived competition for agricultural jobs and, more commonly, the belief that Filipino men had voracious sexual appetites that could only be quenched by seducing local white women. Considering that relatively few Filipinas migrated along with Filipino men to the U.S. and the Filipinos’ belief that they were, in fact, Americans, Filipino men had one of the highest intermarriage rates with white women of all Asian immigrant groups along the West Coast. Whites in West Coast communities, however, believed that Filipinos cold-heartedly took advantage of white women, often forcing them into prostitution or taxi dancing.<sup>265</sup> Of course, Torres had a

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<sup>264</sup> Frank Foster, “Mr. Voter,” *The Alaska Fishing News* (Apr. 1938), Folder 50, Box 10, CWFLU records.

<sup>265</sup> Although Filipinos received the majority of accusations of pimping and abusing white women, Chinese, Japanese, and Southeast Asian men were also the victims of slanderous and exploitative tabloid reporting. Americans loved salacious reports on taboo subjects such as interracial lust (especially when they had tragic endings) and created a demand for ill-fated romances involving Asian men and white women. More often than not in such tales, it was a white woman who had been seduced by a male member of the Asian race, forcing the white woman into a life of prostitution, drugs, and misery. Filipino men were often accused of seducing and the sequestering white women off from the rest of the world. Ultimately, the story typically went, the white woman would commit suicide, finally realizing either that her Asian husband was

different explanation for why young Filipino men ended up in the taxi dance halls with white women, asking “what could we do? There was nothing there [on the West Coast]...people would go to town after work and when they were there they would amuse themselves playing pool, dancing, going around with cheap women...whores...that was about the only entertainment they could get.”<sup>266</sup> In 1935, violence ignited when a group of local white men attacked a Filipino-run dance hall in Watsonville, CA that employed white women. The white mob also subjected the Filipino men to brutal beatings and set fire to their homes and establishments. Whether for job competition or competition for white women, the Watsonville scene played out in different communities up and down the West Coast during the 1930s when economic hardships intensified long-simmering racial tensions.<sup>267</sup>

The experiences of the Filipino students who worked during the summer with violence and discrimination did not always elicit sympathy from other FSCM members who remained on campus year round. Some FSCM members were concerned that the rumored involvement of laborers in gambling, sex, drinking, and other un-Christian-like behavior would harm the overall reputation of Filipino students in the United States and, ultimately, persuade Americans that Filipinos in general were not civilized enough to deserve their independence. With a form of “triple consciousness” (to borrow from W.E.B. Du Bois and authors such as Juan Flores and Miriam Jimenez Roman), Filipino

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a monster or that society had shunned her and she had little left to hope for. Other times, it was the Asian man who failed to emerge from an interracial romance unscathed. For example, see a 1928 *Oakland Enquirer* article titled “Suicide Note Ends in Tragedy” which describes George Merchizuki’s horrific suicide involving a razor across the neck, an act of desperation when he (according to his suicide note) could no longer bear his white wife’s inability to overcome the social stigma attached to marrying a Japanese man.

<sup>266</sup> Schenk, “Birds,” 4.

<sup>267</sup> See Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 407, 409, 412-418.



students were acutely aware of their three identities while in America: Filipino, Asian or “yellow,” and colonial subject.<sup>268</sup> Balancing these three identities could be complicated and many Filipino students expected their fellow countrymen to assist them in putting their best image forward. FSCM member Luis Quisano argued in his 1935 *Filipino Student Bulletin* article that Filipinos who misbehaved while in the United States had “gotten themselves into a great deal of a mess” and now constituted a “real social problem” for other Filipinos in America.<sup>269</sup> Similarly, an editorial from an anonymous student in a 1936 edition of *The Filipino Student Bulletin* encouraged other members to “admit that, by and large, we have been poor ambassadors” while in the U.S., prompting Americans to judge the Philippines based on the disgraceful actions of a few rogue Filipinos.<sup>270</sup>

The FSCM’s emphasis on proper behavior influenced a number of members to write articles for the *Filipino Student Bulletin* which accused student workers of losing focus on their studies and jeopardizing the Filipino independence movement. Such articles also highlighted the class tensions between the remnants of the pensionado class and students from wealthier families in the Philippines and those FSCM members who did not receive scholarships or outside assistance for their education. In 1925, FSCM

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<sup>268</sup> See W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Cambridge, MA: University Press John Wilson and Son, 1903) and Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993). Juan Flores and Miriam Jimenez Roman also provide an interesting discussion of Afro-Latino culture and the “triple consciousness” element in this particular racial and ethnic experience in their 2009 article “Triple Consciousness? Approaches to Afro-Latino Culture in the United States,” *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* Vol. 4, no. 3, while filmmaker Akosua Adoma Owusu’s 2010 short-film *Me Broni Ba* raises interesting questions about the role of “triple consciousness” among African immigrants to America. An interesting study for scholars would be a comparative look at how triple consciousness plays out in a variety of colonial settings (similar to the Filipinos).

<sup>269</sup> Luis Quisano, “Preaching the Gospel of Hope,” *Filipino Student Bulletin* (March 1935), 5.

<sup>270</sup> “Editorial,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (January 1936), 5.

President E. J. Carballo, concerned with the negative image that working Filipinos were gaining, pleaded for fellow members to “realize more and more the part they must play in the promotion of goodwill between men and nations” and recognize that they “have to deal with those institutions [in America] that endeavor to portray the heart and soul of the Filipino people.”<sup>271</sup> *Filipino Student Bulletin* assistant editor Manuel Escarrilla supported Carballo’s call to fellow Filipino students, but focused on the “failure students” who had “become a burden and a problem to whichever Filipino community they happen to fall into.” “A good number of the irresponsible class,” Escarrilla continued, “have already raised such serious social and industrial problems, that there have been rumors already in the Congress of the United States of a measure to exclude us from immigration like the rest of the Asiatics...cannot our government help the situation by at least paying a little more attention to those who shall henceforth leave our shores?”<sup>272</sup> For Escarrilla, the working Filipino students not only represented a threat to independence, but were also such trouble-makers and failures that they might possibly prevent “more worthy students” from coming to the U.S. to study. Other FSCM members recommended that those Filipino students who were underperforming in school because of juggling work and academics should be expelled because “they give the country a black eye in the University where they enroll,” making acceptance among American peers more challenging for successful Filipino students.<sup>273</sup>

Even Charles Hurrey, director of the Committee on Friendly Relations among Foreign Students in the U.S., doubted the benefit of working Filipino students in the U.S.

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<sup>271</sup> E. J. Carballo, “In Appreciation,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (December 1924-January 1925), 3.

<sup>272</sup> Manuel Escarrilla, “An Evaluation of Filipino Student Life in America,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (December 1928), 6.

<sup>273</sup> “Changing Attitude,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (February-March 1929), 7.

In 1929, Hurrey reported in an article for the YMCA's *Intercollegian* publication that although Filipino migration to the U.S. had rapidly increased, "far too many unprepared young men have attempted to carry on their education here" and blamed the "full 80% of Filipino students who are self-supporting" for this unfavorable reality.<sup>274</sup> After discussing at length the dangerous and unsavory activities that those Filipino students who labored for their tuition had fallen into while in the U.S., Hurrey concluded that "we are not meeting, in four-fifths of the Filipino students in America, a representative class who can hold their own scholastically, socially, or economically with students of other nationalities" and "if influential leaders in the Philippines are really concerned about sending their best students here for...study, they will speedily adopt such measures as will restrain those who are unprepared" from coming to America.<sup>275</sup> Hurrey was quick to credit all of the working-class Filipino students' problems to their lack of ambition and weak wills in the face of temptation rather than any larger economic or racial issues. For many FSCM members, Hurrey's statement served as proof that self-supporting students such as those working in the canneries were a blemish on the reputation of all Filipino students in America.

Other FSCM members, however, understood the plight of the student worker and his struggles off campus. The articles from students such as Hamay outlining the hardships of seasonal work along the West Coast and in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska elicited responses from subscribers of the *Filipino Student Bulletin* that denounced judgmental attitudes and snobbery in the organization. Dominador B. Ambrosio, an assistant editor for the *Filipino Student Bulletin*, conceded that "a good number of

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<sup>274</sup> Charles Hurrey, "Shortly After the Intervention" (1929), Articles by Charles Hurrey, Box 058-69, YMCA Archives, 16.

<sup>275</sup> Hurrey, "Shortly," 16.

Filipino students have undoubtedly failed, in the scholastic sense of the word, to complete an academic course,” but insisted that “this should not carry a stigma, nor should it be made the butt for sneer or ridicule.”<sup>276</sup> Another FSCM member suggested that the Filipino worker-student served as an opportunity to analyze the current socio-economic relationship between “the student and the non-student” in Filipino communities in America, explaining that “these so-called students here think that just because a man cannot express himself in good English or just because he is not identified with any one college or university he is not fit to be associated with.”<sup>277</sup>

In his 1924 *Bulletin* article “The Filipinos in San Francisco,” FSCM member A. Almonte, a student at the University of California, Berkeley, set out to dispel “cruel accusations” levied against working Filipinos by other students. In his article, Almonte used the tensions between working-class and wealthier Filipinos to promote what he believed to be the true message of the FSCM and Christians in general: friendship and understanding across class and other boundaries.<sup>278</sup> Almonte noted that many of these Filipinos came to America with “high and noble purposes in life” and unfortunately fell upon hard times by no fault of their own.<sup>279</sup> Almonte, along with suggesting that Filipino students “study carefully and intelligently the supposedly unclean life of his countrymen in San Francisco and befriend them first of all,” issued a simple suggestion from the book of Matthew in the Bible: “Judge not, that ye not be judged.”<sup>280</sup> Intent on reaching out to the working-class Filipino, Almonte encouraged other FSCM members to become mentors to the laborers “so they might become better citizens possessed of Christian

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<sup>276</sup> D. H. Ambrosio, “‘Failure’ Students,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (November 1926), 11.

<sup>277</sup> “An Issue Before Us,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (November 1925), 8.

<sup>278</sup> Almonte, “The Filipinos in San Francisco,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (April 1924), 2.

<sup>279</sup> Almonte, “San Francisco,” 2.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

spirit and character.”<sup>281</sup> Almonte’s emphasis on “Christianizing” the Filipino student worker and making sure that he does not stray from the righteous path while may have seemed “preachy” to the student laborers who might have read his article and certainly did little to address the problems of racism against Filipinos, but his piece highlights class tensions between members of the FSCM that did not always appear in the *Bulletin* or in other organizational writings.

A far more powerful article from associate editor Francisco G. Tonogbanua appeared in 1930 following the Watsonville Riots, which Tonogbanua deemed the “California incident.” Rather than attribute the riots to misbehaving Filipinos, Tonogbanua pleaded with fellow Americans on “behalf of our fellow countrymen on the Pacific coast, who, recently were given what, in America you call ‘the works,’ simply, according to press dispatches because of...Filipino boys going out with a few white girls.”<sup>282</sup> Tonogbanua continued by arguing that the “California incident leaves a horrifying stain upon the good and benevolent name of America” and that the riots were “inhumane and outrageous—a shameful deed and becomes more so when one considers that the victims were citizens of one of America’s territorial possessions.”<sup>283</sup> Tonogbanua’s article was as much a criticism of the negative attitudes towards working-class Filipinos as it was an indictment of the racial discrimination Filipinos received while in the U.S. Tonogbanua connected the plight of the Filipino student-worker with the overall climate of Filipino discrimination on the West Coast by concluding his article with a plea to the U.S. government to “give us the protection that other citizens of the

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<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>282</sup> Francisco G. Tonogbanua, “California Incident,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (January-February 1930), 4.

<sup>283</sup> Tonogbanua, “California Incident,” 4.

world enjoy in your country, even if we are only citizens of the Philippines owing allegiance to the United States.”<sup>284</sup>

The FSCM member who worked represented a cross-class position and a connection with the larger Filipino working-class community that other members did not always experience or appreciate. While the FSCM existed to protect and promote the interests of students, this same protection did not always extend to those students who spent two to three months of the year away from campus living in a more hostile and less welcoming environment. Organizations such as the FSCM served as a means of both socialization and, in the case of those students who went on to become members and leaders of the CWFLU, politicization. Although student-laborers were able to find some support among fellow FSCM members, by and large the often unwelcome reception they received from the organization forced them to search for acceptance and understanding elsewhere. The negative attitudes of the more elite FSCM members towards student laborers left them without a base for creating an understanding of the poor working conditions and racial discrimination outside of the relative safety of campus walls. As a result, FSCM members brought experiences and ideas from their student group to their roles as labor leaders. Student-laborers in the FSCM related to the Christian ideas of their student organizations, but also understood that labor rights were crucial to the promotion and protection of Filipinos and other minority workers in the U.S. As a result, many working-class FSCM members carried the larger ideas of fellowship and interethnic/interracial cooperation with them to the worksite, but focused on other ways to achieve their goals of racial equality and labor rights than sharing their experiences through the *Bulletin* or other FSCM venues.

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<sup>284</sup> Ibid., 4.

Creating company newspapers and distributing information on problems and issues among the different canneries became a way for FSCM members to pass the time while in Alaska as well as build important friendships. Filipino students who worked as seasonal laborers during the summer were some of the first to report on the racist and unsavory working conditions that characterized life in the “The Land of the Midnight Sun” for a Filipino or minority employee. In fact, journalism students such as Velasco often created company newsletters, an activity which presented them with the opportunity to share their experiences with each other as well as employees from other canneries, gain journalistic experience, and call attention to problems of discrimination.<sup>285</sup> Although reports of daily social activities, special events, and gossip always appeared in the newsletters, special articles describing the racism among cannery employers and supervisors often received front-page attention from editors.

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<sup>285</sup> Cannery employees who published newsletters often subscribed to those of other canneries and engaged in friendly competitions to see who could get the most subscribers. Student employees who were both journalism majors and editors of their newsletters (such as Velasco) especially took pride in being able to return to campus in the fall and brag about their experiences as journalists in the “real world.” Sebastian Abella, a University of Washington journalism student and later a founding member of the Cannery Workers’ and Filipino Laborers’ Union, repeatedly won praise among other students for his editing of one of the most successful newsletters, *The Sunny Point Chronicle* from the Sunny Point cannery in Alaska. Velasco was editor of *The Sea-Gull News* from the Port Althrop Cannery in Alaska (where he frequently spent his summers).



Cover from *The Chomley Spectator*. Courtesy of the University of Washington Special Collections Department.

The student editors of *The Chomley Spectator*, for example, devoted the first page of their July 13<sup>th</sup>, 1929 edition to denouncing a segregationist policy developed by the employers at the Chomley cannery in Alaska after white employees blamed Filipinos for spreading meningitis among the camp. “In Chomley, where Filipinos stationed for work are declared and found free of the disease by the Seattle Health Officers before they come,” editor Emeterio Cruz explained, “our white workers still fear our contact.”<sup>286</sup>

<sup>286</sup> Emeterio Cruz, “Filipinos Still a Problem,” *The Chomley Spectator* Vol. 1, no. 1 (Jul 13, 1929), Folder 3/18 Speeches and Writings of Others, 1935-1964, Victorio Velasco Papers. Nayan Shah also discusses



Cruz went on to lament that, despite the fact that “impure air and unsuitable food given to steerage passengers” were the primary causes of the disease among any employee regardless of color, the employers blamed the spread of the disease among the cannery employees on the “natural unsanitariness” of the Filipino workers and issued a “prohibitive order” that called for immediate discharge of any white employee found among the “Oriental quarters” of the cannery.<sup>287</sup> Although the policy of the cannery employers appeared to punish whites more than the “Oriental” employees, the Filipinos found the order segregationist and discriminatory as well as insulting to Filipinos. A July 28<sup>th</sup> edition of *The Spectator* followed up on the incident and was more straight-forward in its criticism of the superintendent’s decision to segregate the cannery community:

If there is any real importance in the publication of this paper, it is to attain friendship between the White and Brown<sup>288</sup> populace of Chomley... To this, *The Spectator* is religiously devoted and is champion of it without fear of contradiction of any kind. ..We recommend that freedom and rights of contact be given to both the Whites and the Browns. We abhor the idea of social seclusion as a breeder of personal, if not national, hatred. This is the cardinal point of importance for both peoples.<sup>289</sup>

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common attacks from white West Coast health officials against Asian immigrants for bringing in diseases and “filth” and infecting the “clean” communities of cities such as San Francisco and Los Angeles during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. San Francisco health officials blamed a cholera outbreak in San Francisco during the 1850s on the Chinese immigrant population, citing poor sanitation and uncivilized notions of hygiene among the Chinese as the main cause of the spread of the disease. Shah goes on to cite other examples of outbreaks in San Francisco and the racist reactions of white Progressives and health officials against the Chinese to counter the spread of diseases such as tuberculosis and the bubonic plague (incidents which later led to a “clean-up” of Chinatown by the twentieth century). Shah argues that “manipulation of racially coded languages of health and hygiene [by white officials]” led to a “promiscuous application to any racialized population” of blame for disease. It was almost a “natural” albeit racist reaction for the Chomley employers and overseers to blame the “Orientals” of the camp for the spread of meningitis among other workers (following Shah’s argument). See Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco’s Chinatown* ( Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 24-25, 175, 179.

<sup>287</sup> Cruz, “Filipinos Still a Problem,” 1.

<sup>288</sup> In this case, “brown” refers to Filipinos. Both whites and Filipinos themselves often identified themselves as part of the “brown” race, as Orientals, but not African-American or black. This racial characterization also came from the American referral to the Filipinos as “little brown brothers” from the Pacific.

<sup>289</sup> *The Chomley Spectator* vol.1, no. 3 (July 1929), 5.

While Cruz was clearly speaking out against this particular instance of discrimination against Filipino employees, he also touched on the larger subject of racism in the canneries and the problems with segregation policies as breeders of hatred at the cannery and on the “national” level. Cruz’s response to the cannery’s accusations that Filipinos were the carriers of meningitis was a combined call for the protection of civil rights for Filipinos and an outspoken attack against what Natalie Molina has described as “medicalized nativism.”<sup>290</sup> During the early twentieth century in port cities such Seattle and Los Angeles, whites often accused Asian and Latino immigrants of carrying malicious germs and disease with them on their journeys to America, endangering all inhabitants upon their arrivals. In 1928, the city government of Seattle attempted to limit Filipino immigration to the city when 339 Filipinos were found to be exposed to meningitis, touching off a wave of anti-Filipino sentiment.<sup>291</sup> While overlooking, as Cruz pointed out in his article, the fact that structural issues such as a lack of public sanitation services and contaminated water often caused outbreaks such as tuberculosis and typhoid fever, whites blamed the immigrants’ so-called “uncivilized”, “backwards”, and “unhygienic” practices for spreading disease throughout the cities, leaving Asians and Latinos open to racial attacks and discriminatory legislation designed to supposedly protect the general public.<sup>292</sup> Cruz and the other Filipino employees who contributed

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<sup>290</sup> Natalia Molina, *Fit to be Citizens? Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006), 58-61.

<sup>291</sup> History Link Essay: Filipino Americans in Seattle, The Carlene Sobrino Bonnavier Collection, MISC 2-I-Hotel, Asian Pacific Islander Collection, Asian Division, Library of Congress. Two years after Seattle attempted to limit Filipino migration to the city based on the fear of a meningitis outbreak, the Surgeon General of the U.S. issued a report clarifying that “the prevalence of meningitis on ships could not be traced to Filipinos.”

<sup>292</sup> Molina, *Fit to Be Citizens*, 67-69. In 1916, after neighboring whites accused them of bringing and spreading typhus among Los Angeles’ rural suburbs, Mexican agricultural laborers spoke out against their attackers and lobbied for a greater understanding of the poor living conditions of migrant workers that could lead to the spread of disease as well as protection of their basic rights.

articles to the *Spectator* decrying their treatment at the hands of their employers also attacked the belief that they were less than American and somehow “dirtier” and more prone to diseases. More importantly, the Filipino student editors of the cannery newspaper passionately railed against the idea that their basic rights should be curtailed for the protection of the white populace at Chomley.

Almost immediately after the supervisors at Chomley prohibited contact between whites and Filipinos following the meningitis outbreak, another incident involving a group of missing local girls created more unrest among the Filipino employees. Once again, *The Spectator* and Filipino students covered the developments of the story and provided their own opinions which were further indications of their growing displeasure with the racism in the canning industry. An “Extra! Extra!” Monday, July 29<sup>th</sup> edition of *The Spectator* featured a front-page story with the headline “Natural Rights in Danger.” As the article described, supervisors placed Filipino workers on lock-down after locals from the town of Chomley reported a group of young Native American women missing. Those who reported the incident to the local law officials and the supervisors of the cannery recalled that they had last seen the women with a group of “brown” men who appeared to be cannery workers. Eventually, officials found the “missing” women (who had apparently simply failed to report home by curfew), but the cannery supervisors still dealt out punishments to the Filipino workers. As the article explained, the new order prohibited contact between Filipinos and local women as well as ensured that “no walking with the girls or going to their places” would be allowed. The weekly or monthly dances that were held on the cannery grounds and attended by all cannery

employees (regardless of race) as well as local Native American women were also considered illegal activities according to company rule under the new policy.<sup>293</sup>

Although the Filipino employees were more than likely vexed by the discontinuance of one of their main forms of entertainment after a long work week, the article reveals a deeper concern for basic rights. In the “Natural Rights” editorial, Cruz and assistant editor Jose Blando revealed that “as [part] of a group identified with this affair, we are more concerned with the matter...and consider the order as the most daring and restrictive attempt to ever lay on the way of man’s enjoyment of his natural rights...It is a wholesale denial of rights.”<sup>294</sup> Cruz and Blando continued by arguing that “the order...will never find support from any conscious group of people like we have in Chomley, for grievances of the highest kind will soon follow if enforced in absolute spirit.” As the “mouthpiece and spokesman for the whole Oriental group” at the Chomley cannery, the editors went on to declare the prohibition of contact between Asian cannery employees and Native American women a “curtailment of one’s own natural rights.” “NATURAL RIGHTS<sup>295</sup>,” the editors continued, “are defined to be the fullest enjoyment to live...and to pursue his happiness as he likes to.” Furthermore, Cruz and Blando made a daring point in their article relating to Filipino access to natural rights and

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<sup>293</sup> Cruz and Jose Blando, “Natural Rights in Danger,” *The Chomley Spectator* (July 1929), 2-3. Chris Friday also describes CWFLU-documented rape charges brought against a group of Filipino cannery employees in Alaska in 1938 by a disciplinary committee of the union. A group of employees had walked in on the accused forcing a Native Inuit woman to perform sexual acts, leading to a labor trial and the firing of the rapists. Chris Friday also explains that many Filipino men entered into relationships and marriages with local Native American women (the majority the Tlingit from Alaska) with one example being CWFLU member Romero Alin who married a Tlingit woman after meeting her at a dance held at the Ketchikan cannery. Before the influx of Filipino workers to the canneries, Japanese men also engaged in relationships with Native Alaskan women. Friday also describes a particularly disturbing incident from the late 1930s involving an alleged rape of a Native woman by a group of CWFLU members. The union officials eventually dropped the investigation arguing that “no one cares about the Native women anyway” and that a rape would draw unwanted, bad press and attention to the union. See Friday, *Organizing*, 115, 134, 178.

<sup>294</sup> Cruz and Blando, “Natural Rights in Danger,” 3.

<sup>295</sup> Original emphasis in text.

freedoms, explaining that “we have the freedom to live, the freedom to speak, and the freedom to pursue...happiness and be happy---these are rights inalienable because they are inherent and emanating from man himself [and] it will be both a mistake and a failure on our part if we let this order go unnoticed and stay unanswered...<sup>296</sup> .

Not only did the editors denounce the segregationist policies of the Chomley cannery, they also insisted that rights guaranteed by the American constitution were basically natural rights guaranteed to all men, regardless of race or nationality. While the cannery employers may have only restricted the rights of the Filipino workers to meet up with Native American women, Cruz and Blando read this policy in context with the racist reaction to the meningitis outbreak and found a pattern of denial of the human right to speak and interact freely with others regardless of race or nationality. The cannery supervisors, according to the editorial, had violated basic rights and freedoms listed in the constitution and based on “inalienable” natural rights, and these rights applied to all including Filipinos (despite the fact that they were not Americans with full citizenship status). More importantly, the editors concluded that the only way to combat the discrimination of the cannery was to unite all workers together to form an interracial bond which would include white, Filipino, and other workers such as the Japanese and small numbers of African Americans who also went to the canneries for employment. As the largest group of minority employees at Chomley, the Filipino students used the meningitis and Native American women incidents as well as *The Spectator* to call attention to the racism that plagued the canneries in Alaska.

The students at the Chomley cannery were not the first FSCM members to comment on the sad state of Filipino rights, but they were leaders in making explicit

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<sup>296</sup> Ibid.,3.

demands for employers to recognize that they were entitled to Constitutional protections. In 1925, FSCM member E. J. Carballo wrote an article for *The Filipino Student Bulletin* describing a gruesome incident involving violations of free speech in the Philippines. In 1924, “Mr. Montenegro” graduated from an American college and returned to his homeland seeking employment. As Carballo explains in the article, earlier in 1925, Montenegro made “some unpatriotic utterances” against Manuel Quezon, then Philippines Senate President and later first President of the Philippines.<sup>297</sup> While it is not clear from the article what exactly Montenegro said against Quezon, his “unpatriotic utterances” were enough for a “band of men in the guise of peace officers” to kidnap him. Law officials later found Montenegro dead and tied to a tree.<sup>298</sup> Horrific wounds, including a missing ear, led officials to believe that those who kidnapped Montenegro had tortured him and later left him to die alone and suffering. Although the exact details of the case are unclear, Carballo did not hesitate to draw attention to the violations of rights in the Montenegro incident:

Mr. Montenegro was a product of [America’s] institutions. He believed in the freedom of speech...But the power of intimidation was exercised. We seem to be approaching a regime of the Ku Klux Klan. In the name of Protestant Christianity, the Roman Catholics are terrorized in America, in the name of LIBERTY, unthinkable crimes are committed. These are days when the sword of Damocles hangs by a thread over the destiny of the Filipino people. Must we maintain a complacent attitude toward such a despicable violation of one of the fundamental rights of a liberty-loving individual?<sup>299</sup>

As early as 1925, Carballo identified a glaring inconsistency with the idea that the Philippines were part of America. If this was true, then why was Montenegro’s case

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<sup>297</sup> E.J. Carballo, “The Montenegro Case,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (March, 1925), 2.

<sup>298</sup> Carballo, “Montenegro,” 2.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

largely forgotten? Why was the freedom speech, a basic American right, not granted to Montenegro? Carballo exposed the fact that American rights and liberties did not extend to the Philippines simply because the Filipinos were “little brown brothers” or that the colony was technically “American.” Carballo was desperately trying to enlighten fellow Filipinos in the U.S. and convince them that the colonial status of the Philippines was a hindrance to the basic protection of the Filipino people in the U.S. *and* in the Philippines (breaking the traditional stance of students not to rock the political boat while in America by bringing up the issue of independence). While Carballo’s article was an important step in convincing other FSCM members to understand the limits of their status as nationals, the Chomley student workers took a more direct stance in demanding civil rights for the Filipinos in the U.S. and arguing for the extension of Constitutional guarantees to Filipinos.

For Antonio Hamay (the FSCM member from Nebraska mentioned earlier), however, cannery and agricultural work was a firm reminder of how much of a racial outsider the Filipino was in America. Hamay responded to California labor-leader D. L. Marcuel’s urging that Filipino laborers remain on the Pacific Coast and resist returning home to the Philippines where conditions were “despicable” and hopeless. Hamay disagreed with Marcuel and cited poor pay, racial discrimination in social settings (resulting in Filipino workers forced into unsavory social situations involving prostitution and gambling and resulting in the loss of their money and savings), and disease and illness from the deplorable living conditions in the seasonal bunks. While the CWFLU members sought to address these issues through the union, Hamay championed another solution: return home to the Philippines as quickly as possible. Under the “Better Off

Home!” sub-heading, Hamay presented his argument for repatriation as opposed to remaining in the U.S. (and especially along the West Coast):

A very deplorable situation indeed! It seems that something ought to be done about it. My suggestion is this: encourage them to go home. There probably isn't much money at home...but they could be happy because they are among their people; they could be independent because they could work for themselves instead of working for someone...If they return to the Philippines and roll up their sleeves and settle down to work with determination and zest, their future is secured.<sup>300</sup>

For Hamay, the dead dreams and promises that America offered to the working-class Filipinos who crossed the Pacific were heavy burdens on the continued path to success. Like other Filipino students who went off to the canneries and fields to earn a living and tuition during the summer, Hamay was disgusted and disheartened by what he found there. Racial discrimination and poverty made it painfully clear that Filipinos were *not* Americans, but rather than stay and fight for rights, Hamay believed deeply in returning to the Philippines. Although, as he explained, there was not any more money to be found there than along the Pacific Coast of the U.S., the Philippines offered Filipinos a chance to be with their own people and benefit from the safety and security of solidarity with their people. Racism outweighed any chance for economic or social success while in the U.S., so returning to the Philippines was a natural course of action for Hamay. Hamay's response, while drastically different from that of the CWFLU members and its supporters, still aggressively put forth a similar message: life for Filipinos in the U.S. was not what they expected and fell short of providing the basic rights and protections offered to other Americans.

Of course, for other Filipinos such as those who assisted with the organization of the CWFLU, returning to the Philippines was not an option for a variety of reasons. As

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<sup>300</sup> Hamay, "Student Opinion," 3.



laborers, many often did not have the money to pay for steerage to return as a result of having their pay controlled by the bosses and foremen and their savings diminishing rapidly to cover living costs during the off-seasons. As students, Filipino cannery and agricultural workers wanted to remain in the U.S. as long as possible to obtain their degrees and possibly find employment afterwards. For Ponce Torres, returning to the Philippines was simply unthinkable. Not only was he “completely broke” and “had no way of going home,” but Torres also explained that he was “ashamed to go home without going through school” and that he knew he was going to stay in the U.S. because “he had no face to go back.”<sup>301</sup> “You see,” Torres continued, “if you go home without any change at all---without money or an education—it would be *nakababain* (shameful).”<sup>302</sup> Even those Filipino students and FSCM members who would eventually have to withdraw their college studies due to lack of funds never thought of going home, “because to think of going home was too far away from [their] minds.”<sup>303</sup> Although Hamay suggested repatriation as an option to escape the racism, discrimination, and poverty that Filipino laborers faced, returning to the Philippines was not the easy solution. And for those Filipinos who insisted on remaining in the U.S., labor organization was an important avenue to economic and civil rights.

Somewhere between the racial discrimination, the unfair working conditions, the brutal violence, the sexual abuse, and the indentured servitude, Filipino employees in the cannery industry decided that they had reached their breaking point by the early 1930s. For labor leader Torres, it was impossible to separate the exploitation from the discrimination in the canneries and the racial violence on a larger scale in Alaska and

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<sup>301</sup> Schenk, “Birds,” 12.

<sup>302</sup> Schenk, “Birds,” 12.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

along the West Coast. Torres described an attack at a cannery in Sumner, Alaska as one of his final straws:

I experienced an attack by mobs. We were sleeping in our bunkhouses one night and they threw bombs in our building. White people started to organize Themselves because it was then the beginning of the Depression and they thought that we Filipinos and others like us were responsible because we were working long hours for very low wages. One night in Sumner about twenty-five people approached our rooms, opened the doors, and beat us up. They were vigilantes, an organized mob that included big business people...It was done with the knowledge of city officers so [we] could not report [them].<sup>304</sup>

Like the Filipino students who originally publicized the climate of racial humiliation in Chomley, Torres and others employees recognized that the promotion of civil rights for Filipinos was directly connected to the promotion of labor rights. As Torres explained, “Our last resort was to fight back ...we learned to fight back, organized ourselves into unions...we wanted to organize to combat against white people who were beating us up and to raise the wages of our people and to get the public to sympathize with us.”<sup>305</sup> The next step in the fight for civil and labor rights was the formation of the CWFLU.

The labor union itself began as a series of conversations among a group of *Alaskeros* who had temporarily settled down in Seattle at the end of the season towards late October in 1933. In pool halls and cafes, dormitories and flop houses, Trinidad Rojo, Tony Rodrigo, Aurelio Simon, Joe Mislant, Frank Alonzo, and Virgil Duynugan (all but Virgin Duyungan and Tony Rodrigo were University of Washington students and associated with the FSCM) met to discuss what they could do as laborers to address the wretched working conditions and blatant racism of the canning industry. Filipino students were originally interested in forming a labor organization “to FIGHT RACE

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<sup>304</sup> Schenk, “Birds,” 5.

<sup>305</sup> Schenk, “Birds,” 5.

DISCRIMINATION ANYWHERE<sup>306</sup> ...and to seek through proper legislation in the State legislatures and Congress the general betterment of Filipino laborers in the U.S....as well as improvements in their social, economic, and political status” in 1932 after their experiences in the canneries, but had failed to gain enough support from non-Filipino employees.<sup>307</sup> In 1867 and again in 1877, Chinese employees in Alaskan canneries had attempted to organize and strike for better wages and job stability, but their efforts resulted in a piece-rate system of pay that benefitted the labor contractors more than the employees themselves.<sup>308</sup> The lack of a history of success in cannery organization as well as the uncertain climate of the Depression left many workers wondering if such a union could succeed.

With the help of other members (including Velasco) who spent many cold days during the winter of 1932 drumming up support for the organization on the streets of Seattle, the American Federation of Labor officially granted a charter to the CWFUL in June of 1933 at the beginning of the salmon cannery season, but the union had a rocky start.<sup>309</sup> The approximately 120 mostly Filipino union members voted Virgil Duyungan and Aurelio Simon as their leaders and attacked their first major problem: the corrupt and

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<sup>306</sup> Original emphasis in text.

<sup>307</sup> “Our Platform,” *Filipino Labor Journal* (1932), 2, The Filipino American National Historical Society Archives, Seattle, WA. This early push for Filipino labor organization from the students did not win approval from the other non-Filipino employees and the students did not make an effort to persuade other laborers that securing civil rights for Filipinos meant helping to secure civil rights for all cannery employees regardless of race or ethnicity.

<sup>308</sup> Friday, *Organizing*, 38-39.

<sup>309</sup> Although the CWFLU was originally affiliated with the AFL, the union eventually left the AFL to become part of the Congress of Industrial Organization (CIO) in 1938. The NLRB held an official election to determine which parent organization would represent the CWFLU from May 5<sup>th</sup> to May 7<sup>th</sup> in 1938 following an almost five year debate among CWFLU members on whether the AFL or CIO would be more beneficial for the young local. While some CWFLU members (particularly the Japanese and Chinese cannery laborers) believed in a continued affiliation with the AFL for financial and political stability, other Filipino members argued that the CIO’s interethnic and interracial appeal would provide for a more inclusive and therefore effective union. Other CWFLU members called attention to the AFL’s unwelcoming stance towards Asian and other minorities and believed that the CIO’s more left-leaning policies would direct the CWFLU in a new and better direction. See Friday, *Organizing*, 163-171.

dangerous labor contractors. The fight against contractors proved to be difficult for the CWFLU, not only because the contractors were a powerful group, but because many Filipino cannery workers themselves had close ties to particular contractors, such as Pio De Cano. De Cano was a Filipino labor contractor from Seattle as well as a prominent member of the Filipino community who donated hundreds of dollars to charities, Filipino benevolent associations, and even Filipino students in the form of scholarships. Some CWFLU members who were ardently anti-contractor when it came to dealing with Chinese or Japanese contractors held a more favorable view of the Filipino contractors who might have supported their education (Victorio Velasco was an example of a follower of De Cano and even worked on De Cano's newspaper along with CWFLU and FSCM member Trinidad Rojo). Also, the Filipino contractors often catered to workers who migrated from their own hometowns or regions from the Philippines, creating interethnic and regional conflicts among the Filipino workers in the CWFLU and making cooperation and solidarity in the early years challenging and nearly impossible. The CWFLU also experienced difficulties in recruiting members from outside their ethnic group as many Chinese and Japanese cannery workers also benefitted from the contract system, and early elections for various positions within the union were often volatile and highly-charged, pitting regional loyalties against regional loyalties. These conflicts also led to rival Filipino "unions" such as the Filipino Labor Association, which were more fraternal or benevolent orders than labor organizations, but, nonetheless, competed with the CWFLU for members. While the CWFLU struggled to do away with the contractor system during its early days (which was formally ended by the NRA's Code of Competition for the salmon industry in 1934, but continued to operate in an informal

sense in the canneries) and succeeded in weakening the institution, it ultimately failed early on to forge solidarity among all Filipino laborers let alone create an interracial and interethnic union.<sup>310</sup>

Amidst a struggle against the powerful contractors and a desperate attempt to establish itself as a real force, the young CWFLU faced an unthinkable tragedy in 1936, just three short years after its creation. On December 1<sup>st</sup>, the nephew of a noted labor contractor invited Duyunagan and Simon to dinner at a Japanese café in Seattle, claiming he wanted to discuss the CWFLU's plans for abolishing the contracting system. As soon as Duyunagan and Simon arrived, however, the nephew shot and killed both men, leaving the CWFLU leaderless and its members stunned and deeply saddened. Although those two fatal shots could have destroyed whatever existed of the beginnings of a Filipino civil rights movement, the CWFLU members picked themselves up after an enormous funeral in Seattle for the slain leaders and installed former University of Washington student and FSCM member Irineo Cabatit as president.<sup>311</sup> Instead of dwelling solely on the issue of demolishing the contractor system, Cabatit and a white member of the union, Conrad Espe, encouraged members to focus on broader goals, including promoting interracial cooperation and ending discrimination on the shop floor and in the larger communities.<sup>312</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> See Michael S. Brown, *Victorio Acosta Velasco: An American Life* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2007), 64-68.

<sup>311</sup> Cabatit had served as "Second President" of the CWFLU under Duyunagan and was also on the board of directors for the University of Washington YMCA.

<sup>312</sup> Conrad Espe was an important figure in sustaining the CWFLU after the deaths of Duyunagan and Simon. Originally a cannery employee during the early twentieth century, Espe (a Norwegian American) became the business agent for the CWFLU in 1936 after having served in the Fishermen and Cannery Workers' Industrial Union (FCWIU) from 1933 to 1935. Interested in racial justice and interethnic/interracial labor cooperation, Espe left the FCWIU in late 1935 to join the CWFLU and assist the organization in broadening its appeal to attract more Chinese, Japanese, African American, and white cannery employees. Following a brief hiatus from the CWFLU in 1936 to assist the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing, and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWA) in establishing itself in California and

Cabatit and the other members of the CWFLU realized that while ending the labor contracting system was an important step, building interethnic and interracial solidarity with other cannery employees was necessary for the larger goal of ending racial discrimination. Cabatit was the first CWFLU president to put forth a great amount of effort in attempting to unite the various ethnicities in the canneries. The Filipino members of the CWFLU had to convince the Chinese and Japanese employees that the discriminatory actions of the employers against the Filipinos were proof of a larger racist system in the canneries that affected all laborers. While Filipinos formed the largest minority group in the Alaskan cannery industry, the Japanese also composed a significant component of the workforce; however, relations between the Japanese and Filipinos were often strained.<sup>313</sup> Japanese employees often benefitted from associating with a foreman or labor contractor who was Japanese himself, so they did not necessarily see the need for the Filipinos' push to end the labor contracting system. Also, antagonisms between Japanese and Filipino cannery workers often spilled into everyday interactions between workers and cannery foremen, many of whom were Japanese. Ethnic tensions between the two groups of employees seemed to heighten when either a Japanese or Filipino worker was in a position of power over a majority of the other group. In 1937, a group of CWFLU affiliated workers from the Astoria and Puget Sound Canning Company located

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along the West Coast, Espe returned to the CWFLU in 1937 to continue to support racial justice and equality within and outside the organization. See Friday, *Organizing*, 163.

<sup>313</sup> In 1936, the CWFLU reported a break-down of employees in the Alaska cannery industry by "nationality" as follows: Whites: 12,995; Natives: 5,758; Filipinos: 3741; Japanese: 1,181; Chinese: 656; Mexicans: 622; Puerto Ricans: 120; Negroes: 63; and Others (Koreans, Chileans, Peruvians): 46. See Letter from Charles E. Jackson to Trinidad Rojo, "Subject: Alaska Fishery Statistics," December 29, 1937, Box 18, Folder 4, CWFLU records. See also Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 2003) for a more in-depth discussion of the ethnic tensions between Japanese and Filipino laborers in California during the early-to-mid twentieth century in Chapter Eight of his work; Letter from Virgil S. Duyungan and Cornelio Mislang, to Mr. Joe Dismone, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1934, Folder 3, Box 8, CWFLU records.

at Excursion Inlet, Alaska, wrote a letter to Cabatit and the other leaders of the CWFLU expressing their concern over the anti-Filipino and anti-union attitudes of two Japanese foremen at the plant. The workers charged the Japanese foremen with “favoritism” and creating “poor working conditions,” but were most appalled that these two foremen had claimed that the CWFLU was a “f---k union”<sup>314</sup> and stated that “union or no union, we will always get our jobs as foremen anyhow.”<sup>315</sup> The workers closed by urging the Executive Board of the CWFLU to take “immediate action,” but did not specify what that action should be. While there is the possibility that the workers could have exaggerated their claims against the Japanese foremen due to existing ethnic antagonisms in the workplace, the petition demonstrates the heightened tensions between Japanese and Filipino workers in the canning industry as well as the difficulties the CWFLU faced in overcoming these tensions to create unity.<sup>316</sup>

Ultimately, the greatest struggle for the CWFLU in overcoming ethnic tensions was the competition for cannery workers from a Japanese-led union. Clarence Arai, a former Japanese student from the University of Washington who labored in the canneries during the summers and went on to become both a powerful lawyer for many of the labor contractors themselves, stirred ethnic antagonisms between the Japanese and Filipinos by advocating for a rival, all-Japanese labor union to compete with the CWFLU (naturally,

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<sup>314</sup> In original text.

<sup>315</sup> Petition from Workers of the Astoria and Puget Sound Canning Co. of Excursion Inlet, Alaska, August 31st, 1937, Folder 20, Box 9, CWFLU records.

<sup>316</sup> The records of the CWFLU are filled with letters, petitions, and accounts from CWFLU affiliated workers at canneries throughout Alaska and the Pacific Northwest claiming that they were not being fed properly. Usually, “properly” meant ethnic-specific foods that the different groups were accustomed to and expected while at the canneries. For example, many Filipino, African-American, and white cannery employees would write to the CWFLU and complain that they were only being fed “Chinese” or “Japanese” food rather than “wholesome” and filling “American” food.

Arai insisted on serving as the leader for the proposed union).<sup>317</sup> Arai also claimed that the CWFLU was infiltrated with Communists and other radicals in hopes of luring potential members away from the union. The charges of radicalism as well as the claims that the CWFLU discriminated against African-American and Japanese employees and mishandled union funds drove Arai's early popularity among Japanese cannery employees and placed the CWFLU in a difficult position. Because of existing tensions between Filipino and Japanese workers, there may very well have been Filipino CWFLU members who instigated fights with the Japanese or former Filipino contractors and foremen who were guilty of favoring their own ethnic group over another. Also, the charges of mishandling funds and discrimination against African Americans were difficult for the CWFLU to fight. In the early days of the union, CWFLU members who ran for elected positions would often levy charges (sometimes true, other times not) of corrupt money handling against competing candidates, while a 1937 incident involving two white CWFLU workers who refused to travel or live with "Orientals" or African Americans in the cannery led to Arai's cries of discrimination against the union.<sup>318</sup> In general, Arai took advantage of existing ethnic tensions between Japanese and Filipino workers to attempt to undermine the influence and power of the CWFLU in the canning industry.

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<sup>317</sup> "Executive Board Meeting, Joint Session: Emergency Committee and Executive Board Held October 25, 1937 at Union Hall, 84 Union," Folder 2, Box 1, CWFLU records. Arai campaigned heavily for the continued affiliation of the CWFLU with the AFL prior to the NLRB's election in 1938, helping to further alienate himself from other members of the organization. Espe's insistence on having the CWFLU hire Japanese interpreters for meetings also greatly helped the CWFLU in diminishing Arai's appeal to other Japanese cannery employees. See Friday, *Organizing*, 159-161; "Reactionaries Raise False Cry of Discrimination," Undated Shop Bulletin, Folder 7, Box 18, CWFLU records.

<sup>318</sup> The two white CWFLU employees were later expelled from the union for violating the racial code of the constitution. Letter from Conrad Espe to CWFLU (in relation to Fred Davidson incident), Folder 9, Box 7, CWFLU records. Fred Davidson was the name of one of the white employees charged with racism and discrimination; Letter from Fred Davidson-Local 20195-to the President of the CWFLU, February 20<sup>th</sup>, 1937, Folder 9, Box 7, CWFLU records.



Espe, Cabatit, and CWFLU leaders Sebastian Abella (an FSCM member) and A.B. Bigornia responded to Arai's threats by focusing on the organization's potential for interracial and interethnic solidarity in the fight for labor and basic rights. On February 11, 1937, Abella, Bigornia, and Espe hosted a special meeting just for Japanese employees to stress the benefits of joining and supporting the CWFLU. While Espe set out to "clarify and enlighten" the Japanese employees on the "erroneous" message that Arai had spread, Abella and Bigornia stressed that the union "was not only for Filipinos, but for all races regardless of religious creeds or political affiliations" and that any attempt, be it from Arai or the cannery employers, to "split the organization by separate charter based on race prejudice [was] futile and wrong."<sup>319</sup> Abella and Bigornia also explained that the supervisors' practice of saving the grueling labor and disgusting bunks for Asian employees and utilizing contractors and foremen to carry out their racist practices were problems that could be better attacked as one unified force under the CWFLU rather than fragmented ethnic or racial groups. All three union leaders also called attention to the new CWFLU charter, which explicitly stated that the organization welcomed all members and did not discriminate based on "color, creed, or religion."<sup>320</sup>

Later in February, Bigornia held a successful continuance meeting to help the CWFLU push back against Arai and lay to rest the tensions between Japanese and Filipino workers. While Bigornia explained in a letter that the "express attempt" of the meeting was to "enlighten the minds of our Japanese brothers that our UNION bars racial discrimination...and to cast away the confusion created by Mr. Arai in propagandizing

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<sup>319</sup> "Minutes of Special Meeting with Japanese Group, February 11, 1937," Folder ¼: Minutes, Membership Meeting, Feb-May 1937, Box 1, CWFLU records; Letter from Andres Bigornia (Recording Secretary) to Secretary Mangawang, February 11, 1937, General Correspondence, Folder 6 (Portland Branch), Box 7, CWFLU records.

<sup>320</sup> "Minutes of Special Meeting."

and stigmatizing our Japanese group to make them an isolated race,” the “main issue of the evening, however, was to give Mr. Arai a chance to appear and express his viewpoints regarding the cannery labor situation for the next coming Alaska season.”<sup>321</sup> Espe and Bigornia had extended an invitation to Arai as well as Japanese employees to come to the CWFLU sponsored meeting and explain his positions to the whole union with “the assurance that he be given a democratic hearing;” however, Arai failed to respond to the invitation and appear at the meeting, leaving Bigornia and the group to charge him as “a man devoid of principle.”<sup>322</sup> Along with making a fool out of Arai, the CWFLU had succeeded in drawing a “great number of Japanese brothers” to the meeting and Espe and Bigornia fielded questions “regarding doubts and confusions [sic] pertaining to the stand and purpose of the union” from Japanese workers and potential CWFLU members.<sup>323</sup> Although the letter did not state how successful the CWFLU was in attaining all the Japanese at the meeting as members, Bigornia explained that “everything seemed to have been ironed out” and the CWFLU appeared to have made a strong inroad with the Japanese employees by ousting Arai.<sup>324</sup>

Cabatit followed up with Bigornia’s accomplishment by working to form closer ties with Japanese employees through specific actions. In April of 1937, Cabatit issued an “official statement to Japanese cannery workers and to the general public to clarify the position of the CWFLU in respect to the Japanese cannery workers” through the CWFLU’s newsletter.<sup>325</sup> Through the statement, Cabatit assure workers that:

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<sup>321</sup> Letter from Andres Bigornia to Secretary Mangawang, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1937, General Correspondence, Portland Branch, Folder 6, Box 7, CWFLU records.

<sup>322</sup> Letter from Andres Bigornia.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid.

<sup>325</sup> Official Statement, Newsletter dated April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1937, Folder 7, Box 10, CWFLU records.

The CWFLU is a democratic union open to all cannery workers, irrespective of race, color or creed. Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos, Negroes, and Whites---all are welcome to be members of our union as long as they are cannery workers or farm laborers. Japanese, as well as other racial groups, have equal standing in our union... THERE IS NO RACE DISCRIMINATION IN OUR UNION. WORKERS OF ALL RACES STAND UNITED!<sup>326</sup>

Along with the newsletter, Cabatit also appointed George Taki, a Japanese employee and CWFLU member, to a special position to continue to reach out to other Japanese workers. Taki took a special interest in his task and developed a publicity campaign for the CWFLU to continue to counter-attack any propaganda from Arai or other rival union leaders vying for the affections of minority employees in the canning industry.<sup>327</sup>

Cabatit's efforts, while aimed largely at the Japanese workers, created a new image of the CWFLU as an interracial, interethnic organization. More importantly, the conflicts with Arai presented an opportunity for the CWFLU to move beyond "Filipino" interests and embrace workers' rights as those of ALL workers, regardless of regional, ethnic, or racial background. While the CWFLU still continued to fight regional loyalties among Filipinos as well as attacks from rival unions, leaders turned their attentions to becoming spokesmen for all cannery employees and rethinking the ways in which the union had related to Japanese and other ethnic and racial workers.

Cabatit also used the CWFLU to fight House Bill 301, a piece of Washington legislation designed to prevent interracial marriage and curtail civil rights, in 1937. Virgil Duyungan had originally spoken out against HB 301 when legislators first proposed the law in 1936. The most offensive language in the bill was found in Section 2, which stated that "all marriages of white persons hereafter performed or solemnized in

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<sup>326</sup> Official Statement.

<sup>327</sup> Executive Board Meeting, Joint Session: Emergency Committee and Executive Board Held October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1937 at Union Hall, Folder 2, Box 1, CWFLU records.

the state of Washington with negroes, Mongolians, or Oceanics as herein defined as illegal and void.”<sup>328</sup> At a time when many anti-miscegenation bills along the West Coast and even in states like Arizona and Utah targeted the marriages between white women and Filipino men, Duyunagan took a special interest in fighting this particular piece of legislation. Duyunagan himself was married to Margaret Duyunagan Mislant, a white woman of Scottish descent born in Seattle in 1901 who raised seven children with Duyunagan and later, after Duyunagan’s death, married the children’s godfather Joe Mislant.<sup>329</sup> Duyunagan had a personal stake in preventing HB 301 from passing, but also rallied the union in sending delegations, writing letters, and drafting petitions to help shoot down the discriminatory piece of legislation.<sup>330</sup>

After Duyunagan’s death, the CWFLU’s struggle against HB 301 continued. In February of 1937, Cabatit, with the help of CWFLU and FSCM member Antonio Rodgrigo, formed a special “Youth Section” of the union to help rally college students and cannery workers in fighting the anti-miscegenation law. During the regular membership meeting in February, Rodrigo (who was chairman of the committee) reported that the youth committee was “busy fighting the intermarriage bill now pending

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<sup>328</sup> Letter to Rex Strickland of Public Morals Committee of Olympia, WA from Association of Salmon Packers, March 27<sup>th</sup>, 1935, Folder 2, Box 2, CWFLU records. See also Baldoz, *Third Asiatic Invasion*, 55-59.

<sup>329</sup> Fujita-Rony, *American Workers*, 1-3. Margaret Duyunagan Mislant has a prominent role in Fujita-Rony’s work and represents an interesting, yet untold and problematic history of the CWFLU. Through oral interviews with Fujita-Rony, Mislant claims to have played a pivotal role in the formation of the CWFLU, explaining that she was the one who told her husband about the changing political climate during the 1930s making unionization more favorable and advised him that forming a union would be a good idea. She also offers her own take on why Duyunagan was murdered: she claims it was because of the money that the union had and that someone, possibly from a rival union or someone within the union itself, murdered Duyunagan to get his or her hands on union money. Mislant had a rocky relationship with the CWFLU after her husband’s death, even suing the union in court to get some sort of aid for helping her raise her children (she was awarded \$2,000) before eventually travelling to the Philippines with her husband’s body and living there for three years before returning to the U.S. Fujita-Rony’s inclusion of Mislant in her discussion of the CWFLU is fascinating in that it highlights not only the absence of women in the formation of the union, but also the complex nature of writing the history of the union itself.

<sup>330</sup> Letter to Rex Strickland.

in the state legislature” by sponsoring a fundraiser to help support a “youth caravan to go to Olympia on March 2<sup>nd</sup>” to protest the bill.<sup>331</sup> At the meeting, Rodrigo encouraged “everyone who can afford to come to lobby the said Bill which, as planned, discriminates colored people to marry white women in the State.”<sup>332</sup> By forming the special youth committee, Cabatit and Rodrigo recognized that not only were there a large number of cannery workers who were also students, but that these students were also key players in helping the CWFLU take on HB 301. Since many of the student workers were also active in other organizations on campus and in their larger communities (such as the FSCM and other Filipino associations based in Seattle and other cities along the West Coast), they were important for building connections between the CWFLU and other groups who were also devoted to fighting discriminatory and racist legislation. Cabatit and Rodrigo’s plans for involving the students in the struggle against the anti-miscegenation bill not only helped the organization to build the role of the students in the union, but also helped to stop the bill itself: Washington legislators never passed the bill, thanks to the joint efforts of the CWFLU and other civil rights organizations in the state.

The real test of the CWFLU’s commitment to civil as well as labor rights, however, came during the winter of 1937 when Filipino agricultural workers in Washington’s Yakima Valley became the victims of brutal racial discrimination and violence. Two instances occurred during that tense winter that resulted in the CWFLU taking a prominent stand against racism and discrimination against Filipinos in America, the first involving the Yakima law officials’ confiscation of property that Filipino members of the CWFLU had been farming on the Toppenish Indian Reservation in 1927.

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<sup>331</sup> Regular Membership Meeting held on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 1937, Folder 4, Box 1, CWFLU records.

<sup>332</sup> Regular Membership Meeting.

Under Washington's Alien Land Law of 1919, aliens were not legally able to purchase and own land. Recognizing that they were not technically aliens as the U.S. government granted them permission to enter the U.S. and recognized them as American subjects, many Filipinos successfully managed to purchase land prior to and even after the passing of the various alien land laws. Also, many Filipinos were able to serve as share croppers on Japanese-owned portions of the Indian Reservation, making them not legally the owners of the land, but able to form cooperatives and farm for profit. However, in the midst of increasing tensions between Filipinos and whites in the Yakima Valley and a new Washington State bill outlawing cropping contracts for those "ineligible to citizenship by naturalization", Yakima officials seized the property of the Filipino CWFLU members in 1937 and auctioned off the land to the highest bidder.<sup>333</sup> Yakima County charged six of the Filipinos with perjury (for lying under oath by claiming they were Americans), two with violation of the alien land law, and one with assault after resisting arrest. A month later, the second incident occurred when a group of fifty Filipino members of the CWFLU employed on William Beauchane's hop farm asked for a raise to compensate for the \$.65 that Beauchane deducted from their wages for room and board, leaving them with net pay of \$1.00 for a twelve to fourteen hour day (depending on the workload). In response, Beauchane, a group of white employees, members of the Hops Growers' Association in Yakima County, and the Yakima County Highway Patrol, forced the Filipino employees to flee the county on foot, chasing them

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<sup>333</sup> Gail Nomura, "Within the Law: The Establishment of Filipino Leasing Rights on the Yakima Indian Reservation," *Amerasia* 13, no. 1 (1986-1987), 4-6, 8. In her article, Nomura also discusses the role of Filipino Community of Yakima, Inc., a defense organization led by Roy Baldoz (a Filipino farmer from Washington) in the leasing conflict in Yakima.

down the road in cars and trucks and warning them to never show their faces again in Yakima.<sup>334</sup>

Cabatit wasted no time responding to the events and calling on all union members and West Coast communities to recognize the serious infractions on the Filipinos' civil and labor rights in Yakima. The CWFLU partnered with the Filipino Defense Committee (a special interest group formed in direct response to the Yakima incidents) in issuing a joint resolution on the actions of Yakima officials against the Filipinos who had supposedly purchased land through "illegal" means. The CWFLU and Filipino Defense Committee (FDC) forcefully claimed in the resolution that the Filipinos were "subjects owing allegiance to the United States Government, and therefore, [were] not aliens and entitled to these lands" and that the officials' confiscation of both their property and crops was "flagrant proof that these brothers [were] being abused and being robbed of their civil rights to life, liberty, and happiness."<sup>335</sup> The resolution concluded by describing the actions of the Yakima officials as a "vicious violation of civil liberties...[that] constitutes a serious threat not only to foreign-born workers, but all workers as well" and reminding readers that the "civil authorities in Yakima have systematically discriminated against Filipino workers in particular" for years.<sup>336</sup> In April, Ponce Torres, then Secretary for the CWFLU, penned a letter to Kent, Washington mayor R. E. Wooden stating the CWFLU's continued support of any agricultural workers who would attempt to strike for better working conditions:

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<sup>334</sup> "Resolution for a Fair Trial of Nine Filipinos Now Being Tried in Yakima County Accused of Perjury in the Second Degree and Conspiracy Against the Alien Land Law," Delegate Reports, 1937, Folder 8/6, Box 8 CWFLU Records. "Special Statement on Yakima Vigilantism," Yakima Filipinos: Subject Series, Folder 8/13, Box 8, CWLU records.

<sup>335</sup> "Resolution for a Fair Trial," Delegate Reports.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

We have fully understood that you have mobilized a bit force of vigilantes and that you are directing and commanding it with the full idea to terrorize all the farm laborers in the White River Valley. We further noted that you and your vigilantes are in full accord to drive all those strikers out of the Valley should they refuse to work under those deplorable conditions and the slavery system which the employers are practicing for years upon them. Mr. Wooden, these Filipinos are now striking in the valley and are trying to maintain a better standard of living not only for the Filipinos workers but for the American people as a whole.<sup>337</sup>

The language of both Torres' letter as well as the joint FDC/CWFLU resolution did not restrict the full power and meaning of the documents to Filipino workers alone. Thanks to the work of Cabatit and Espe in redefining the CWFLU as a multiethnic and multiracial organization, the union now spoke for all laborers along the West Coast, Filipino and non, foreign and American, cannery and agricultural. Before the Yakima incidents, agricultural workers and unions had accused the CWFLU of being too concerned with the cannery employees, leaving the already vulnerable migrant field laborers in Washington, Oregon, and California out in the cold.<sup>338</sup> Torres himself had pushed for the CWFLU to be more inclusive when claiming to fight for migrant workers and reminded members that "farm laborers" were an integral part of the union, represented by the name of the organization itself, calling for farm workers "to be given as much attention as the Alaska Workers, since our Union has jurisdiction of the Farm Workers too."<sup>339</sup> The working conditions of agricultural workers often led to violent clashes between workers, employees, and, in the case of the Yakima Valley, police and community vigilantes. As a result, the CWFLU became more focused on the needs of agricultural workers and saw that the problems these workers dealt with reflected on a

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<sup>337</sup> Letter from Secretary Ponce Torres to Mayor R. E. Wooden of Kent, WA, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1937, Folder 3, Box 8, CWFLU records

<sup>338</sup> Fujita-Rony, *American Workers*, 189-190.

<sup>339</sup> "Farm Policy Committee," "Minutes of the Regular Membership Meeting Held at the Sailors' Union Hall, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1937," Folder ¼, Box 1, CWFLU records; quoted in Fujita-Rony, *American Workers*, 190.



larger loss of civil rights for all minority employees in West Coast communities.

Attaining civil rights and labor rights for CWFLU members and all employees in migrant work merged into one goal for the union during the late 1930s, reflecting on the organization's new outlook on its role in labor, politics, and society.

The CWFLU leaders and members were even more direct when detailing Beauchane and the Hops Growers' Association's violations of civil rights and turned their directions towards criticizing the New Deal's failure in terms of assistance for minority agricultural workers in the West. "William Beauchane," the CWFLU began in a "Special Statement on Yakima Vigilantism," "is a feudal baron under the present intolerable set-up in Yakima County... [and] he and his fellows in the Hop Growers' Association make their own Fascist laws and call upon the tax-supported state highway patrol and private thugs to enforce them."<sup>340</sup> In response to the demands of the Yakima workers, the CWFLU clarified that "the working men who were subjected to this vigilante terrorism asked nothing unreasonable nor un-American," but that Yakima County and the United States in general had failed to recognize the connections between labor and civil rights and an American way of life based on freedom and the pursuit of happiness.<sup>341</sup> The CWFLU leaders concluded their statement pointed questions:

We ask the civil authorities of Yakima County: Where is the New Deal in the state of Washington? Did 26,000,000 people vote for vigilantism and coolie wages when they went to the polls last November? The People of Washington demand that the New Deal be imported to Yakima and that the civil authorities there...enforce at least the bare minimum of civil rights to which every workingman in the United States is entitled to under the construction of the New Deal.<sup>342</sup>

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<sup>340</sup> "Special Statement on Yakima Vigilantism."

<sup>341</sup> Ibid.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid.

In their statements regarding the tragedies of the workers from Yakima, Cabatit and fellow CWFLU/FSCM member Trinidad Rojo made it clear that they believed in the laborer's access to basic American liberties, regardless of racial or ethnic identity. The right to a decent wage, the right to racial equality, and the right to protection from discrimination and violence were all intertwined and if anyone, be it Beauchane or a law official from Yakima, violated one of these rights, he violated them all. The CWFLU, as a labor organization, tied Filipino claims to American civil rights to their status as employees in a supposed new era that supported the laborer as well as his rights. By highlighting the fact that the employees involved in the Yakima incident happened to be Filipino laborers, the CWFLU heavily criticized New Deal policies for neglecting racial minorities and turning a blind eye towards all agricultural and cannery workers in Washington and along the West Coast. "Our work," CWFLU member P.V. Algas explained in a statement published in a bulletin of the Filipino Protection Association, "found in various phases of American industry, have become indispensable in the American economy...in return, we only ask for the gaining of rights which she accords her citizens."<sup>343</sup> The CWFLU extended this labor-based notion of civil rights access to all employees, regardless of racial or citizenship status, arguing that anyone who worked for America and labored for the good of the nation, earned basic protections and rights as any other native-born American.

The protests and actions of the CWFLU led to a small, yet memorable victory for the labor organization, Filipino workers, and Filipinos along the West Coast. After the Filipino workers who were tried by Yakima County for perjury, conspiracy, and assault

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<sup>343</sup> "United We Can Win Our Struggle!" *Filipino Unity Bulletin-Official Organ of the Filipino Protective Association*, 1, 2 (Oct. 1939): 2, Box 4, Folder 4/18: Newsletters: Misc. Filipino, 1926-1964, Victorio Velasco Papers.

met with prosecutors along with CWFLU leaders on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 1937, the court released warrants of arrest for more than a dozen white men in the area accused of inflicting mob violence on the Filipinos of the Yakima Valley.<sup>344</sup> After ten years of white persecution of Filipino laborers in central Washington, the CWFLU had succeeded in helping to provide justice for its representatives. More importantly, however, the organization made its stance clear: Filipinos who labored, lived, and contributed to American society *were* Americans and entitled to the same rights and privileges as all Americans, particularly racial equality and protection of the law against violence and discrimination. From the earliest days of the student laborers' outcry over segregation in the canning industry to the CWFLU's devotion to protecting its members and arguing for justice for the Yakima Filipinos, Filipino members formed the organization to promote and protect both labor and civil rights for racial minorities in the canning and agricultural industries along the West Coast.<sup>345</sup>

Cabatit and the CWFLU also issued a petition to the state of Washington in late March of 1937 urging the veto of House Bill No. 663, which would permanently prevent Filipinos from leasing or owning land in Washington.<sup>346</sup> When the CWFLU leaders and members asked the governor to veto the discriminatory bill, however, they included the fact that they represented not only Filipinos, but also a "great number of Japanese,

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<sup>344</sup> "Plan to Arrest in Labor Trouble," *Spokane Daily Chronicle* (Nov, 1937), 14.

<sup>345</sup> In April of 1940, Pio de Cano also began on a journey that would result in an eventual victory for Filipino lessees in Yakima. DeCano managed to win a King County, Washington Supreme Court ruling that declared the 1937 amendment to the 1921 Washington Alien Land Law unconstitutional. Although De Cano's victory did not have an immediate impact on the Yakima Filipinos, in 1941, the Washington State Supreme Court officially ruled the 1937 amendment unconstitutional. See Nomura, "Within the Law," 8-10.

<sup>346</sup> The Washington state Grange was instrumental in crafting and publicizing HB 663.

Chinese, Americans, Negroes, Hawaiians, and American Indians.”<sup>347</sup> According to the CWFLU, HB 663’s prohibition of Filipino-owned land in Washington would also have a negative impact on all minority workers in Washington. “The measure,” the CWFLU petition continued, “interpreted from a broad economic standpoint is a decided backward step in progressive social movements in local, national, and international situations.”<sup>348</sup> The CWFLU argued that the ability to own and lease land for farming or other purposes was an important economic safety-net for cannery workers or farm laborers during the off-season; although many employees had to save for years or pool their resources together to become landowners, basic access to land for all in America regardless of race or ethnicity was an important civil liberty. Many Filipino members of the CWFLU who did manage to purchase or lease land also employed large numbers of cannery workers and farm laborers when the seasonal work was over, providing economic opportunities during the off-season for those who planned their year around summer labor. The CWFLU also feared that if HB 663 passed, the discriminatory measure would also help “to increase the army of unemployed” in Washington.<sup>349</sup> Although Filipinos led the organization, the CWFLU represented workers from a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds and insisted that all workers, including those who were not citizens, were still entitled to basic rights and privileges as laborers in the U.S. HR 663 was not only a violation of the rights of Filipinos; it was the violation of the rights of any laborer who worked and lived in America. With the assistance of sympathetic political leaders, the CWFLU played an important role in preventing HB 663 from passing.

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<sup>347</sup> “Resolution Petitioning Against House Bill 663, Designed to Prevent Filipinos Owning or Leasing Land in the State of Washington-March 19, 1937,” Box 9, Folder 9- Resolutions, 1936-1937, CWFLU records

<sup>348</sup> “Resolution.”

<sup>349</sup> Ibid.

As current and former students became more active in leadership roles in the CWFLU, the union continued to take the shape of a civil rights organization during the later 1930s. Fujita-Rony has argued that the late 1930s was a period when the student “literati” among the union members came into conflict with those cannery workers who did not share in their ideological pursuits or goals.<sup>350</sup> The election of Trinidad A. Rojo (a University of Washington graduate student and national vice president of the FSCM) as president, in 1939 is often viewed as a turning point for the CWFLU, or the “beginning of the end” when the union fell on difficult times during the war years, followed by accusations of communism and red-baiting immediately after the war.<sup>351</sup> However, rather than a turning point for the worst, the elevation of Rojo to the presidency of the CWFLU should be seen as a continuation of important civil rights initiatives began by Cabatit and other members of the CWFLU. While Rojo gained respect from the workers for leading a strike at a cannery in Kiawak, Alaska in 1929 (years before the formation of the CWFLU and while Rojo was still a student at the University of Washington), he also quickly gained a reputation for commitment to issues of racial justice.<sup>352</sup> Rojo’s presidency, much like Cabatit’s, placed the CWFLU within a growing concern for racial equality along the West Coast, not just for Filipinos, but for all ethnic and racial minorities.

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<sup>350</sup> Fujita-Rony, *American Workers*, 192; Masson and Guimary, “Pilipinos,” 25-26.

<sup>351</sup> Fujita-Rony, *American Workers*, 192, 202; Masson and Guimary, “Pilipinos,” 28.

<sup>352</sup> Rojo’s position as vice president of the FSCM also challenged the organization’s previous stance on student-workers. With a laborer himself as president, the FSCM became less focused on the views of the thinning pensionado group and more focused on issues of discrimination against Filipino workers and the problems of Filipino communities in America in general (as opposed to just the concerns of the students).

## **For PRESIDENT**

C. W. & F. L. U., Local 7, U. C. A. P. A. W. A., C I O.



**T. A. ROJO**

*A New Dealer and Square Dealer*

**Summary of Activities:**

- 1. Knows the problems of Cannery Workers. Worked eleven summers in Alaskan canneries.**
- 2. Led a successful strike in Klawak, Alaska, 1929.**
- 3. Technical Adviser to Hon. Francisco Varona, Labor Envoy of President Quezon to U. S., 1938.**
- 4. Helped frame the constitution of C. W. F. L. U., Local 7, U. C. A. P. A. W. A., C I O.**
- 5. Private consultant to V. O. Navea, Business Agent of the Local.**
- 6. Quieted the rebellious spirit of 1500 members of the Union who booed the officials at a meeting May 20, 1939.**
- 7. Forceful speaker, able writer, honest leader.**

CWFLU election pamphlet from circa 1938. Courtesy of the University of Washington Special Collections Department.

In 1939, Rojo confronted a particularly challenging bill aimed at dismantling the CWFLU and other immigrant-led unions. Under the proposed legislation, non-citizens would be prohibited from joining any labor union, endangering the CWFLU's position as a leading union in the cannery and agricultural industries as well as the livelihoods of many migrant workers who depended on labor organizations for the protection of their labor and civil rights. In a special CWFLU news bulletin issued by Rojo, the headline read "Anti-Alien Bill! Important to ALL Union Men and Friends of Organized Labor!"

and continued by asking readers that “if the law passes, are the Filipinos and other non-citizens entitled to ship to Alaska?” “Sure,” the article continued, “we can still go. We can go to Alaska, BUT not through the Union! We go direct or indirect through an agency controlled by the packers. In short, we will be force to abandon our Union, BACK TO THE GOOD OLD DAYS of 1933 and contractors!”<sup>353</sup> Rojo warned that the proposed bill “aim[ed] to destroy labor unions, Local 7 in particular,” demonstrating the CWFLU’s belief that, once again, the state of Washington (influenced by powerful and wealthy agricultural owners) was fighting New Deal labor measures by targeting immigrants and non-citizen workers. The proposed law was a painful reminder to Rojo and other Filipino workers that despite their contributions to American society and coming from an American colonial education and background in the Philippines, they were not citizens and therefore not accorded certain benefits and rights guaranteed to American citizens (such as the right to form and join unions). If unions such as the CWFLU were dismantled, thousands of cannery and agricultural workers of various races and ethnicities would be forced to fend for themselves in Washington, a strategy which had previously proved dangerous and all but impossible without entering a form of indentured servitude to either a contractor or employer. The CWFLU actively protested the law along with other unions and, fortunately, the bill never passed; however, the legislations served as rallying point for Rojo and other CWFLU members to see themselves as part of a large group of immigrant and racial minorities who had to battle for basic rights and protections while in America.<sup>354</sup>

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<sup>353</sup> News Bulletin from 1939, Folder 18, Box 18, CWFLU records.

<sup>354</sup> Devra Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold: California Farm Workers, Cotton, and the New Deal* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2006), 112-116.

After his battle against the anti-union bill, Rojo led the CWFLU further into the larger struggle against inequality and discrimination along the West Coast. His work with national civil rights organizations (such as the NAACP and Southern anti-racist groups) characterized much of the activism of the CWFLU during WWII and through the following years. Rojo's commitment to causes as varied as racial justice, the protection of workers around the world, and independence for the Philippines continued the pattern of activism that Cabatit and other current and former members of the FSCM has established during the mid-to-late 1930s. As the times and the issues changed, so did the causes which the CWFLU supported; however, the student-laborers' recognition of civil and labor rights as combined necessities for all workers supported the union's political activities and continued involvement in interethnic and interracial issues.

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The contributions of FSCM student-laborers to both the development and guidance of the CWFLU as well as the West Coast labor and civil rights struggles should not be overlooked in the larger narrative. The few historians who have noted the role of Filipino students in the organization of the CWFLU have been quick to point to the class tensions that the "college men" brought to the union, but have not discussed the ideological contributions that helped to place the organization in the center of civil rights battles on the West Coast during the 1930s. As outsiders in the FSCM, those members who had to work to support their educations found brotherhood and purpose in the canneries or agricultural fields and formed relationships with other laborers which later



developed into social and political organizations. While the FSCM itself may not have been preoccupied with the struggles and problems of the student workers, the students themselves not only took advantage of the opportunity to remind fellow members of the deplorable working conditions and racism in print, but also sought alternative ways to engage in political action outside of YMCA- sponsored conferences or dinners and workshops with the Japanese and Chinese Student Christian Associations. Although this chapter has focused largely on the activities of FSCM members outside of the FSCM itself, it is important to remember that those students who formed a critical core of the CWFLU were also members of student groups and organizations that fought for racial equality on campus and through larger networks of Christian students. As a result, the FSCM members who worked during the summers and later went on to lead the CWFLU juggled multiple identities and straddled class, ethnic, and racial lines—a difficult position to be in, but one which was bolstered by their educational experiences and interactions with other minorities, both on and off campus.

## Chapter Four

### **“A Sweet and Sour World:” The Second Sino- Japanese War, Christian Citizenship, and Racial Equality**

During the 1930s, Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students paid rapt attention to the global political and social unrest that was challenging their attempts to construct a world based upon Christian principles. While dictators came to power in Europe, political and military conflicts in Asia also became a concern for Americans and others from around the world. Japanese encroachment on Chinese territory in Manchuria would later give way to the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, while questions concerning the political status of the Philippines (a commonwealth after the passing of the 1934 Tydings-McDuffie Act) circulated among Filipinos and Americans. These conflicts did not escape the members of the Chinese Student Christian Association (CSCA), the Filipino Student Christian Movement (FSCM), or the Japanese Student Christian Association (JSCA), many of whom anxiously read the reports on incidents from across the Pacific and offered opinions on, as one Filipino student described the global situation at the time, the “sweet-and-sour world” in which they lived.<sup>355</sup> While these students were attempting to combat racial inequality as well as earn their degrees in America, transnational ties to their homelands potentially threatened the interethnic and interracial movement for racial equality they were constructing in the U.S. as national tensions flared. Rather than allow their progress to disintegrate in the midst of diplomatic problems, however, CSCA, FSCM, and JSCA members attempted to look past ethnic conflicts by focusing on the “sins” of imperialism and nationalism and arguing that these two unchristian “isms” created prejudice and racism on a global scale. In turn, many

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<sup>355</sup> Juan Dahilig, “Moderation Beckons Us,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (March 1936), 3.

students identified imperialism and voracious nationalism as threats to equality both in America and around the world.<sup>356</sup>

However, the Second Sino-Japanese War and the growing threat of Japanese military power during the 1930s led to ethnic tensions among Asian immigrants living in the U.S. Rising Chinese and Japanese nationalism during the late 1920s and early 1930s placed Christian Chinese and Japanese students in American in a difficult position: Do they support their homeland or do they hold fast to their Christian beliefs of pacifism, equality, and humility? The topics of nationalism and expansion also created controversies among Asian students, with some arguing that nationalism and expansion were necessities for economic and political independence, while others claimed that Christianity, by its very nature, did not leave room for any nation to gain dominance over another land or group of people. As the growing military and political conflicts in Asia strengthened transpacific ties between students and their homelands, these political and military events also complicated the principles of brotherhood and cooperation which the students had embraced while in the U.S. years before. The idea of owing allegiance to a world-wide kingdom of God appeared plausible during peace time, but more complex and abstract in times of war.

This chapter follows the student organizations through the turbulent decade of the 1930s and argues that members attempted to relate racial struggles in American to global problems of imperialism, nationalism, and inequality, even amidst growing tensions among the students themselves. Although opinions differed within the organizations on the exact level of incompatibility between the concept of “Christian citizenship” and

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<sup>356</sup> Timothy Tseng, “Religious Liberalism, International Politics, and Diasporic Realities: The Chinese Students Christian Association of North America, 1909-1951,” *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 5, no. 3 (1996): 305-330.

nationalism, students agreed that when humans learned to respect one another and embrace a Christian life, the desire for conquest and oppression would wither and die. The rise of militarism in Japan during the 1930s, American imperialism, and the British Empire were all the targets of criticism from the CSCA, FSCM, and JSCA, with multiple Oriental Student Conferences organized by the groups on campuses across the U.S. to discuss these often volatile topics as well as their impact on race relations. Students used their Christian view of the world in attempts to order and make sense of the tragedies surrounding them, including racial inequality.

The efforts of these students to set aside national and ethnic tensions in order to pursue their goal of racial justice constitute an important addition to the larger history of American civil rights. A global or more international civil rights movement is not a new idea: historians Mary L. Dudziak and Thomas Borstelmann have argued that a more transnational American civil rights movement emerged post-WWII while Glenda Gilmore has traced the radical roots of the Southern push for civil rights from international elements during the early twentieth century.<sup>357</sup> W.E.B. DuBois's own ideas on the "color line" and the international push to end imperialism have also been the subject of works such as Nico Slate's recent *Colored Cosmopolitanism*.<sup>358</sup> However, while this chapter builds on these concepts of international cooperation, I argue that the students' Christian concepts of "nationalism" and "citizenship" also contributed to a growing movement for racial equality and rights along the West Coast and across

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<sup>357</sup> See Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), and Glenda Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2009).

<sup>358</sup> See Nico Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism: The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

America prior to the Second World War. As groups composed of both American and foreign-born Asian students, the Christian organizations created opportunities for students to discuss how political and social unrest in the Pacific affected their experiences as students in the U.S. Meetings, discussion groups, and conferences served as opportunities for students to view incidents such as the Second Sino-Japanese War and the impending Second World War as international and domestic problems to be solved. As this chapter demonstrates, impending global conflict created new topics for discussion among the students that challenged their previous ideas of worldwide, Christian fellowship, but forced them to confront simmering interethnic tensions in order to continue their fight against discrimination in the U.S. and around the world.

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Christian citizenship was a concept that defined the world outlook of the students since the earliest days of their organizations. The members of the CSCA had long held the belief that just as they were citizens of their home countries, they were also Christian citizens of the Kingdom of God. As early as 1913, the CSCA explained that the political duties of a Christian citizen consisted mainly of “fearlessly us[ing] one’s political influences for social betterment of the people.”<sup>359</sup> Regardless of their nationality, students had a duty as Christians to overlook his or her national allegiance if it meant serving the greater good. A Christian citizen was also, by nature, a pacifist, another tenet adhered to by many members of the CSCA. When Wellington Liu attended the annual YMCA Indianapolis Convention in 1924, he was genuinely surprised by how many

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<sup>359</sup> CSCA, “A Christian Citizen and His Political Duties,” *Ideas and Activities of the CSCA* (1913), 20-22.

Christian students at the conference seemed to be open to the idea of war in order to solve global problems. Liu reported back to his group that while he and the other representatives of the CSCA stressed peaceful resolutions to conflicts, the YMCA's Student Volunteer representatives "are professed Christians, but they are not professed pacifists, although from a Christian point of view, the two terms should be coterminous."<sup>360</sup> Surprising to Liu, many of the other students in attendance at the convention generally professed their adherence to the notion that war was an entirely unchristian answer to diplomatic, political, or economic conflicts, but did not hesitate to argue that "in certain dire events, particularly those which result in one nation losing influence over its own affairs, war is necessary to maintain a balance in diplomacy."<sup>361</sup> Liu was shocked that Christian students would support war for any means, especially for maintaining power or control. "So if we acknowledge that war is unchristian and yet hold that in some circumstances we are obliged to take on an unchristian way," Liu pondered, "then either the church is using religion to exploit nationalistic and class ends or the church has only a weak religion upon which, in a crisis, it does not dare to depend... It is high time for us to discontinue our hypocrisy."<sup>362</sup> For Liu, the other students' opinions on the use of war were not only disturbing, but spoke to a greater need for Christian students to fully understand pacifism as essential to creating a worldwide fellowship.

Other Asian students agreed with Liu that there were serious discrepancies in the pronounced faith of Christians and their immediate support of war when deemed necessary. *The Japanese Student Bulletin* often featured articles from JSCA members

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<sup>360</sup> Wellington Liu, "The Indianapolis Convention," *CSCA: Makers of New China in College in America* (19123-1924), 22.

<sup>361</sup> Liu, "Indianapolis," 22.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

who expressed faith in a peace movement that would override warfare and global oppression. In an anonymous 1924 article “Mobilizing for Peace,” a member reported on the sixth anniversary of the Mobilization Day for World Peace (held on Armistice Day) in the U.S. and used the peace movement to argue that the “Prince of Peace is coming to the world, slowly but steadily.”<sup>363</sup> The author’s views were similar to those of the WSCF, which, as an organization devoted to creating a *federation* of Christian students around the globe, emphasized peace and the construction of a “community which transcends nationalism.”<sup>364</sup> As organizations connected to the WSCF, members of the JSCA and CSCA shared similar goals of working towards “a total allegiance to a brotherhood which the one Father of us all has created.”<sup>365</sup> The devastating results of WWI lead many JSCA and CSCA members to view an emphasis on Christian principles of equality as the best foreign policy solution for China, Japan, the United States, and other nations.<sup>366</sup> In other words, in situations of political and social unrest around the world, Christian citizenship should trump national citizenship, with nationalism being little more than “an emotional pattern” and “a burning desire to exalt one’s own nationality at all costs and by a truculent attitude toward other nations...”<sup>367</sup>

But by the late 1920s, the relationship between nationalism and Christian citizenship was becoming more complex for members of the CSCA and JSCA who followed the growth of nationalistic movements in their home countries. In Japan, the government turned towards emphasizing military prowess and expansion in all aspects of

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<sup>363</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>364</sup> WSCF, “Towards a New Community,” (circa 1928), 3-5.

<sup>365</sup> WSCF, “New Community,” 5.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid., 5; Liu, “Indianapolis,” 22.

<sup>367</sup> WSCF, “WSCF: What Place it Holds Among Other Youth Movements, How it is Tackling the Vital Issues of the Day,” *World Education News Service* (1931).

society, creating a strong and growing nationalist movement. Many members of the JSCA attempted to distance themselves from the militarization of Japan, explaining that the militarists did not represent all Japanese and certainly did not represent Japanese Christians. Ryozo Okumura warned in his article “The Plight of the Christian Students in Japan,” that “the nationalistic tendency of nations after the World War, especially the anti-Japanese movements and the exclusion legislation of the United States of America, has strongly affected the Japanese youth and they are saying today that the Christian brotherhood of yesterday was merely a kind of cheap optimism and that they must now build upon the foundation of true Japanese spirit—Japanism.”<sup>368</sup> Okumura assured his readers that despite the rise in virulent “Japanism,” many Japanese students attempted to steer clear of militant nationalism and strived “to believe that the more practical movement of ‘Love’ will rise from within Christianity.”<sup>369</sup> For Okumura, the rise of a militaristic nationalism in Japan was not far removed from any other nationalist movement, including, as he argued, the American nationalism that was bolstered by “theories of white racial superiority” in measures such as the Asian exclusion acts.<sup>370</sup>

Like JSCA members, Chinese students in America also viewed developments in their home country during the late 1920s with an anxious eye. Growing tensions between the Communist Party of China and Chiang Kai-Shek’s Kuomintang (or KMT) nationalist party came to a head in 1927, sparking a civil war between the rural supporters of the Communists and the urban strongholds of the KMT. Many CSCA members, studying safely across the Pacific on American college campuses, but concerned for the safety and

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<sup>368</sup> Ryozo Okumura, “The Plight of the Christian Students in Japan,” *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (October 1926), 6.

<sup>369</sup> Okumura, “Plight,” 6.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.



welfare of friends and family at home, wrote articles that expressed conflicted views and opinions on the civil situation in China. On one hand, some members decried the dangers in Communism, no less dangerous an “ism” and “emotional pattern” than nationalism, but were also hesitant to lend support to the KMT, which advocated a rejection of Western ideas (including Christianity) and a return to Confucian values and traditional Chinese ideas. On the other, Chiang’s insistence that China receive equal treatment with other nations of the world was an appealing idea to many students; however, his demands and idolization of Chinese culture strongly resembled the essence of nationalism which, as Christians, they were required to reject. Some students, however, argued that a sense of nationalistic pride need not be a complete violation of Christianity. “To a Chinese mind,” one member began in a Council of Christian Associations Bulletin, “nationalism and internationalism have not been considered as two opposing or mutually exclusive principles.”<sup>371</sup> For this student and others who shared similar opinions, nationalism did have a place in the Christian world, provided that a nation recognize and use its strengths to help other nations and build a sense of Christian internationalism around the world.

H.S. Lang, however, questioned the nature of the new Chinese nationalism in his 1927 article “The Chinese Church and Chinese Nationalism.” Lang admitted that “since Chinese nationalism is, at the present at least, of a purely defensive nature...a force used solely in the interest of liberating China from the political domination and economic exploitation of foreign powers,” he believed that there would not be any conflict between the Christian Church in China and rising nationalism.<sup>372</sup> However, Lang asked readers

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<sup>371</sup> “Chinese Student Shows How Nationalism and Internationalism May be Reconciled,” *Council of Christian Associations Bulletin* (May 1927), 9.

<sup>372</sup> H.S. Lang, “The Chinese Church and Chinese Nationalism,” *Chinese Christian Student* (December 1927), 41.

“will Chinese nationalism always remain a defensive force as it is today?” or “what assurance is there that Chinese nationalism will not someday too be used to exploit and plunder the weaker countries and races,” drawing comparisons to French, British, German, Spanish, and American nationalism.<sup>373</sup> In these instances, nationalism had led to expansive and often brutal imperialism and colonization, a fate that could very well become China’s if nationalism broke from Christian principles (which, according to Lang, it was often prone to do). Lang feared that “unless aggressive nationalism can somehow be made unpopular in China and all the more so in the so-called Christian countries of the West, there is every reason to believe that the Chinese church... will be brought face-to-face with that inescapable alternative: the alternative of being a traitor to its own country or a renegade to its own religion.”<sup>374</sup>

Other students from both the CSCA and JSCA viewed the rise of KMT nationalism in China as a result of Western imperialism and oppression in Asia. By turning their attention to a general critique of the nationalisms which had inspired centuries of imperialistic projects on behalf of Americans and Europeans, Chinese and Japanese students were able to criticize the global atmosphere which inspired overly-nationalistic movements rather than the individual movements themselves. CSCA member Tingfu F. Tsiang (a student at the University of California at Berkeley) penned an article for the *Chinese Christian Student* titled “Christianity and Imperialism” and discussed the historic connection between imperialism and Western missionaries in Asia. Tingfu began by explaining that “imperialism aims at either one or both of these things: political and economic domination” and continued by arguing that “it must be admitted,

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<sup>373</sup> Lang, “Chinese Church,” 41.

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

then, that Christianity is imperialistic, exclusive, and tends to be world-dominating.”<sup>375</sup> Tingfu was quick to explain that although it may appear imperialistic on the surface, this was simply a “biological necessity” for the health and growth of a Christian world; however, Christian missionaries who were linked to Western imperial projects in China were a different case.<sup>376</sup> Tingfu provided his readers with examples of “clear instances of imperialism,” such as foreign control of Chinese tariffs and extra-territoriality, which British and American Protestant missionaries in China did not protest.<sup>377</sup> Tingfu saw the passiveness of the missionaries on these issues as proof of their intent to work with their respective Western powers to dominate and oppress the Chinese people, warning that “missionaries should inform their governments and the world that they condemn the present tariff regime in China and...any alliance between missionaries and imperialism, conscious or unconscious is prostituting Christianity.”<sup>378</sup> For Tingfu, if anyone questioned the rise of a nationalist movement in China or the motives of the KMT, he or she should first question the years of Western nationalist and imperial projects that created the current situations in the Pacific.

JSCA member Suichi Harada agreed with students like Tingfu in his 1927 *Japanese Student Bulletin* article “Japanese Students See Chinese Affairs.” Rather than focusing on the conflict between the CCP and the KMT, Harada placed the conflict in the larger context of Western design to economically control the trade resources of China. “Japanese students are whole-heartedly in sympathy with Chinese aspiration for seeking

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<sup>375</sup> Tingfu F. Tsiang, “Christianity and Imperialism,” *Chinese Christian Student* (May 1927), 25.

<sup>376</sup> Tingfu, “Christianity,” 28.

<sup>377</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

equality and justice in her relationship with the nations of the world,” Harada began.<sup>379</sup> “We may pray for ‘Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth,’” Harada continued, “but as long as there exists nations oppressed and exploited by other powers, there will be no international peace and no basis of co-operation can be found.”<sup>380</sup> Harada accused peoples of Asian nations of “stooping down too long to count the number of stones at our feet,” and urged others, as the Chinese had done, “to look up and widen the horizon to see the facts in the world and to face them squarely.”<sup>381</sup> These “facts” included “racial color and national boundaries,” “intoxication by the glorious name of patriotism,” and the “exploitation of the weaker by the stronger,” all inspired by nationalist and imperialistic movements.<sup>382</sup> Fortunately, Harada explained, students were “less bound by creed...or patriotism” and were able to see that “what appears to be unrest in agitation in China...is no better than preparations for the dance of life before the dawn of the new era.”<sup>383</sup> By drawing on his status as a foreign student in America, Harada highlighted the main difference between students and those Japanese immigrants in America who may have had a less Christian or enlightened attitude towards international conflicts. Harada connected the civil war and rise of nationalism in China with general independence and nationalist movements in India, Mexico, and Nicaragua and argued that these were all products of a gross misinterpretation of Christian values by Western nations which clung to exploitation and expansion rather than the Kingdom of God.<sup>384</sup>

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<sup>379</sup> Suichi Harada, “Japanese Students See Chinese Affairs,” *Japanese Student Bulletin* (April 1927), 4.

<sup>380</sup> Harada, “Japanese Students,” 4.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

Tingfu and Harada's advocacy of joint and open discussions of imperialism and nationalism became more challenging after Japan's 1931 invasion of Manchuria in northern China.<sup>385</sup> Following the Mukden Incident of September 18<sup>th</sup> of 1931 (when Japanese Lieutenant Kawamoto Suemori and other military personnel secretly detonated a small amount of dynamite by Japan's South Manchuria Railway and subsequently blamed Chinese radicals for the act), the Japanese Kwantung Army under the command of Shigero Honjo defied orders from Tokyo to avoid a full-out invasion and effectively gained control of the Liaoning and Kirin provinces along the Southern Manchurian Railway.<sup>386</sup> Despite continued resistance from the Chinese armies, the Japanese secured Northern as well as Southern Manchuria by the fall of 1931. In 1932, the Japanese created *Manchukuo* from Manchuria, a puppet state lead by the last Qing emperor of China, Puyi. When the rest of the world learned that the Mukden Incident was a sham attack engineered by the Japanese military and that *Manchukuo* essentially existed to isolate Manchuria from the rest of China, many leaders (including Herbert Hoover and later Franklin Delano Roosevelt) denounced Japanese actions and the League of Nations

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<sup>385</sup> In 1858, the weakened Qing Dynasty ceded the part of Manchuria that lied north of the Amur River to Russia under the Treaty of Aigun (in 1860, Russia gained another portion of northern Manchuria east of the Ussuri River as a result of the Treaty of Peiking). The Russian portion of Manchuria was referred to as "Outer Manchuria," while the Chinese portion was "Inner Manchuria," or, more simply, "Manchuria" to the Chinese and Japanese. Russian influence in Chinese-controlled Manchuria strengthened, however, when the Soviets built the Chinese Eastern Railway. Following the Japanese defeat of the Russian army during the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, Japanese influence replaced Russian in Inner Manchuria and the Japanese used the railroad as well as the natural resources of Manchuria to bolster its economy and trade relationships. Japanese military presence in Manchuria had been a hotly contested issue well before the events of 1931 leading to the complete Japanese invasion of Manchuria and, later, the beginnings of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937. While Japanese soldiers were stationed near the Southern Manchuria Railway to protect Japanese interests, reports from Chinese of military exercises as well as raids on small villages filtered back to the Chinese government. For a more in-depth discussion of the Manchurian crisis and Sino-Japanese relations prior to 1931, see Yoshihisia Tak Matsusaka, *The Making of Japanese Manchuria, 1904-1932* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press/Harvard University Asian Center, 2003) and Anthony Coogan, *Northeast China and the Origins of Anti-Japanese United Front* (New York: Sage Publications, 1994).

<sup>386</sup> Matsusaka, *Japanese Manchuria*, 127-130; 142.

refused to recognize *Manchukuo*, eventually resulting in Japan leaving the international organization.

The early replies of JSCA and CSCA members to the Manchuria incidents tended to be defensive and, regardless of their previous emphasis on the Kingdom of God, relatively nationalistic. The immediate responses from the students to the growing unrest in the Pacific represented their dilemma as Christians, but with undoubtedly strong ties to their homelands and, as many had previously expressed, the desire to see their countries free of outside control and domination. While attempting to maintain their support for Christian pacifism, both Japanese and Chinese students nevertheless rose to defend the actions of their respective homes, with each claiming that any military action stemmed from purely defensive rather than nationalistic or offensive means. Roy Akagi, former General Secretary and President of the JSCA, defended Japan's detonation in the Mukden incident (before the world has discovered it was an act engineered by the Japanese), arguing that "China's armed infringement of Japan's treaty rights in Manchuria—the wrecking of a portion of the South Manchurian Railway tracks near Mukden in September which provoked the current Manchurian situation—was a challenging climax to China's deliberate policy of violating or disregarding Japan's treaty rights in Manchuria."<sup>387</sup> Junichi Naton, the current JSCA President at the time, chose to use the Manchuria incident and subsequent Japanese attacks at Shanghai as a way to highlight some of the more favorable traits of the Japanese people for readers of the *Student Bulletin*, explaining that "there was a barbed wire entanglement which the Japanese could not break by their shell fire and machine guns" in Shanghai and that after

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<sup>387</sup> Roy Akagi, "China's Violation of Treaties and Agreements in Manchuria," *Japanese Student Bulletin* (Feb. 1931), 9. The JSCA later acknowledged that the Mukden incident had been instigated by the Japanese rather than Chinese radicals in a later issue of the *Bulletin*.

many attempts, “three Japanese soldiers wrapped themselves in dynamite and went on the entanglement and exploded themselves.”<sup>388</sup> Naton’s tale of the Japanese soldiers who were willing to sacrifice their own lives for their nation “showed the spirit of the Japanese Army,” but also demonstrated an interesting break from the peaceful resolutions to international conflicts the JSCA previously preached.<sup>389</sup>

Throughout the early years of the Manchurian incident, JSCA members encouraged readers of the *Student Bulletin* that the organ was a “Christian student publication” and was “not to be used for any other purpose of propaganda” such as reporting “unworthy news items and sensational ‘eye witness’ accounts in order to attract attention.”<sup>390</sup> Similarly, the JSCA urged its members and friends to maintain “sober thinking” in regards to the “unfortunate situation in the Far East” and hoped that “readers would see the whole thing with [a] warm heart and cool head.”<sup>391</sup> Rather than the more defensive posts from JSCA leaders and members, the articles and editorials from 1933 and 1934 such as those above encouraged Americans and other students who associated with the JSCA to maintain relations with the organization and not to come to a hasty judgment regarding the actions of the Japanese army in Manchuria.

CSCA members were also initially quick to defend the retaliation of the Chinese armies against Japanese occupation of Manchuria and the creation of *Manchukuo*. Again, despite previous calls to Christian youths to avoid warfare in the face of a crisis, the *Chinese Christian Student* often published articles from students who demanded otherwise. In a 1931 edition of the *Chinese Christian Student*, an anonymous CSCA

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<sup>388</sup> Junichi Naton, “Some Japanese Traits,” *Japanese Student Bulletin* (May-June 1934), 2.

<sup>389</sup> Naton, “Japanese Traits,” 2.

<sup>390</sup> “Just a Note,” *Japanese Student Bulletin* (April 1932), 14.

<sup>391</sup> “Just a Note,” 14.

member questioned the reality of attempting to create a Kingdom of God and a peace movement when so few nations wanted to adhere to the basic principles of Christianity. “What is the use of preaching fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man when the country which we call Christian takes no action in defense of the peace pact which she solemnly signed and guaranteed?” the author asked readers.<sup>392</sup> “Let us not be hypocritical,” the author continued, “Let us face facts. It is not God that will save China. It is not Jesus Christ, our savior, who will deliver us from our enemies, but a strong army and navy that can command the respect of this civilized world is what we need.” The author concluded by explaining that he or she would “like very much to organize a group of fellow countrymen who will subscribe to this theory and bond together as members of ‘war-for-defense’ association and start preparations for the defense of our nation...”<sup>393</sup>

The author was careful to stress that the association he or she called for would be for defense only rather than for nationalist or oppressive needs, expressing his or her disillusionment with the idea of Christian citizenship when the concept clearly failed or seemed inadequate when dealing with crises in the homeland. CSCA member K.C. Wang agreed with the anonymous student, explaining in the article “To an Anxious Student” that “for the sake of our own generation and that of our immediate offsprings [sic], justified self-defense, then, is our solemn duty.”<sup>394</sup> In case there were any objections to the idea of self-defense from fellow Christians, Wang assured his readers that “we need not feel ashamed...for we are victims of a great international crime...”<sup>395</sup>

After Japan’s invasion of Manchuria, violent retaliation in the name of protection and

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<sup>392</sup> “Chinese Student Advocates Organization for Self-Defense,” *Chinese Christian Student* (December 1931), 8.

<sup>393</sup> “Chinese Student Advocates,” 8.

<sup>394</sup> K.C. Wang, “To An Anxious Student,” *Chinese Christian Student* (February 1932), 2.

<sup>395</sup> Wang, “Anxious Student,” 2.



self-defense was a justifiable action for Chinese students, regardless of such a measure's anti-pacifist characteristics.

Even those from outside the CSCA recognized that the organization was a vital link to the problems in Manchuria and contributed pro-Chinese articles to the *Chinese Christian Student*. T. Z. Koo, a former Chinese student and current Vice President of the World Student Christian Federation, submitted his article "Manchuria Enters a New Stage" to the *Christian Student* and explained that "the Sino-Japanese relationship in Manchuria after the Russo-Japanese War was vitiated from the very outset by Japanese aggression."<sup>396</sup> The *Christian Student* also published articles outlining the general support from Americans for the Chinese, such as the petition from sixteen Harvard University professors calling for President Hoover to "end all commercial relations between this country and Japan" (based on violations of the Nine Power Treaty and the Kellogg-Briand Pact). One professor, Dr. Francis B. Sayre (son-in-law of Woodrow Wilson), pushed for the U.S. to take "definite economic and diplomatic action... wholly in harmony with the Kellogg Pact and Christian ethics" in "mitigating this conflagration" in Manchuria and "as Christian citizens," demanded that Americans take action against the Japanese "regardless of material cost or political position."<sup>397</sup> Along with the support of other Americans and Christian officials, the CSCA also reported the increasing number of Chinese students who were eager to abandon their studies in order to return to help their fellow countrymen in China.<sup>398</sup>

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<sup>396</sup> T.Z. Koo, "Manchuria Enters a New Stage," *Chinese Christian Student* (October 1932), 7.

<sup>397</sup> "College Teachers Petition-Chinese Students Eager to Return to Help China," *Chinese Christian Student* (February 1932), 16.

<sup>398</sup> "College Teachers," 16-17.

As the Manchurian conflict waged on, however, many CSCA and JSCA members grew less defensive and more open to understanding one another's viewpoints as Christians rather than Chinese or Japanese nationalists. Rather than becoming more antagonistic, the students in America chose to seek cooperation with one another. The students placed a great emphasis on their status as educated and enlightened Christians who were able to step back from the petty problems of nationalism and view the Manchurian conflict from a global and Christian point of view. Chinese American sociological researcher Pardee Lowe observed that in San Francisco's Chinatown and surrounding communities, "Chinese and Japanese college students are able to converse intelligently and without anger over the question of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria."<sup>399</sup> Similar to the students mentioned in Lowe's observations, members of the CSCA and JSCA were also open to discussions and, following a series of more conciliatory talks between the Chinese and Japanese government over Manchuria, sought to meet with each other and other students to discuss the problems of their homelands as well as steps they could take to addressing these issues as students in America.

During the Thanksgiving break of the fall semester of 1931, the YMCA sponsored a Pacific Conference in Portland, Oregon and invited delegates from Christian

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<sup>399</sup> Favorable Relations Folder, Box 127a, Pardee Lowe Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University. The only instance of ill-feeling between the two groups of students that Lowe encountered involved a group of Chinese students at the University of Berkeley refusing to cooperate with Japanese students to sponsor a dance at the campus International House, with the Chinese students explaining that it would be "unwise" to do so "in view of the older generation's antipathy towards the Japanese." In the larger Chinatown community, however, Lowe reported a number of run-ins between Chinese and Japanese non-students over the issue of Manchuria. Of particular interest to Lowe was an incident in 1932 involving a youth Chinese-Japanese basketball tournament that pitted one team of ethnic youngsters against the other. Although the children themselves eagerly looked forward to the competition, the parents and community leaders of both groups refused to allow the tournament to continue in light of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. Eventually, the boys were able to persuade their respective leaders to allow them to participate in the tournament, but, as Lowe reports, death threats and attacks persuaded a number of both Chinese and Japanese boys to drop out of the tournament. The Chinese boys who remained were reminded by the leaders of their community that "if you win, fine, but if you lose, you take upon yourself[ves] the deserving title of stinking bastards."

student associations along the West Coast to attend.<sup>400</sup> George Hayden, a YMCA council member from Washington State University who attended the conference and drafted a report of the meeting, explained that “although the Chinese-Japanese situation in Manchuria had not been scheduled for the main topic of the conference, it held first place in interest” among attendees.<sup>401</sup> Once gathered at the meeting, Chinese and Japanese students assumed the lead in cooperating to inform other students of the history of Sino-Japanese relations and concluded that the “chief trouble seems that authority in either country does not seem to be definitely placed and treaties made or steps taken by small groups who feel they have some power are not necessarily representative of the attitude of the entire country.”<sup>402</sup> Among the student delegates at the Portland conference, there was an understanding that although China and Japan were engaged in warfare and Japan’s policy of expansion was motivated by imperialistic desires, such policies did not represent the beliefs or ideas of all Chinese and Japanese, particularly the Christian students in America.

Many articles from members of both organizations were also devoted to separating the Christian Japanese students in America from the militarists in Japan. In 1932, CSCA member P.C. Hsu from Stanford University explained to fellow *Christian Student* readers that when he initially came to the U.S., he arrived with “the same nationalistic feelings towards the Japanese, thinking that all Japanese were in one way or another connected with the imperialistic designs of their government.”<sup>403</sup> After increased interaction with students from Japan while in the U.S., however, Hsu “completely altered

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<sup>400</sup> George Hayden, Minutes of the Y Council, January 6<sup>th</sup>, pg. 4, 1932, YMCA Council Reports, Box 2, Folder 5, Washington State University Archives.

<sup>401</sup> Hayden, Minutes of the Y Council, 4.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>403</sup> P.C. Hsu, “The Challenges to Sino-Japanese Liberals,” *Chinese Christian Student* (January 1932), 3-4.

his view” on the Japanese and “found them to be almost without exception peace-loving and fine Christians” and because of his new friendships decided to dedicate himself to “the cause of international cooperation between the liberal elements of these two nations.”<sup>404</sup> The leaders of the CSCA also issued an official stance on the Sino-Japanese conflict in Manchuria in March of 1932 which included recognition that Japanese students were often just as revolted by their nation’s imperialistic projects as the Chinese.<sup>405</sup> The article also ensured readers that Japanese Christians did not have the freedom to speak out against Japan’s involvement in *Manchukuo*, making the more liberal and Christian views on the conflict the less popular and less publicized when compared with government propaganda and militaristic publications.<sup>406</sup> In the same editorial, the CSCA also stated “we deplore the muzzling of Japanese liberals and Christians” by the Japanese government and vowed to cooperate with all Japanese students (Christian and non-Christian) who desired to “reach across national boundaries” and engage in open discussions about the fate of Asia and the world in an increasingly violent and nationalistic atmosphere.<sup>407</sup>

The editors of the *Chinese Christian Student* also published editorials, letters, and articles from Americans who expressed opinions on the Manchurian conflict that were based on international understanding rather than finger-pointing at the Japanese. In December of 1931, Jerome Davis, a professor at Yale University, wrote a letter to the CSCA describing his view of the Sino-Japanese conflict as well as those of his colleagues at the university. “It must be remembered,” Davis began, “that Japan in her policy has

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<sup>404</sup> Hsu, “Challenges,” 4.

<sup>405</sup> “We Deplore,” *Chinese Christian Student* (March-April 1932), 5.

<sup>406</sup> “We Deplore,” 5.

<sup>407</sup> “We Deplore,” 5.

done no more than Christian nations in the past have done before her.”<sup>408</sup> Davis reminded readers of the *Christian Student* that “we in America must blush with shame when we think of how our policy in Nicaragua and other Latin American countries has had even less justification than that of Japan in Manchuria” and that “two wrongs do not make a right.”<sup>409</sup> Similar to other students, Davis also argued that Americans should not place Japan’s invasion of Manchuria in a separate category from their nation’s own colonial and imperial projects in the Philippines and other Latin American nations.<sup>410</sup> By providing more balanced interpretations of the situation in Manchuria from authors such as Davis, the CSCA attempted to become a valid source of information in the U.S. on the affair and, as a result, members were often invited to deliver talks and lectures at clubs, meetings, and universities across the country.

The leaders of the JSCA also sought to separate themselves and their organization from the Japanese militarists. The main goal of the articles published in the *Japanese Student Bulletin* was to convince readers that members of the JSCA were, in fact, eager and willing as Christians to reach out to Chinese students in the U.S. and establish friendships during this time of Pacific conflict. JSCA member Masahiko Takahashi’s 1932 “Letter to the Republic of China” was published by the *Japanese Student Bulletin* as well as the WSCF’s *The Student World* and reached a wide audience. Takahashi began

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<sup>408</sup> Jerome Davis, “Letter to the Editor: Jerome Davis Hopes League Brings Peace,” *Chinese Christian Student* (December 1931), 21.

<sup>409</sup> Davis, “Letter,” 21.

<sup>410</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of America’s imperial projects in other nations during this time period, see Harvey Neptune, *Caliban and the Yankees: Trinidad and the United States Occupation* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), Mary A. Renada, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), Julie Greene, *The Canal Builders: Making America’s Empire at the Panama Canal* (New York: Penguin Press, 2009), and Gilbert Joseph, Catherine Legrand, and Ricardo Salvatore, eds., *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1998).

his letter by passionately admitting his nation's wrong-doings to the people of China, exclaiming that "if we do not reflect and repent, we shall receive God's punishment!"<sup>411</sup> Takahashi continues by assuring that Japanese Christians were "deeply ashamed" of their nation's actions and that "whatever the militarists and so-called men of intelligence say, their will is not our will, their action is not ours... we pacifists are weak yet, but we are fighting against militarism and imperialism..."<sup>412</sup> Takahashi concluded his heart-felt letter by assuring Chinese students that "we [Japanese students] hold out our hands to your country; heartily do we long for the completion of the revolution and for the union of Asia" and reminding his readers that he and other Christian Japanese were "ashamed of our country's actions."<sup>413</sup> Takahashi's admittance of feelings of shame and guilt on behalf of his country's actions in Manchuria was a powerful and moving statement of faith in the possibility for Christian friendship between the people of the two nations. While his article was only a publication in a student bulletin, Takahashi's piece represented a sincere interest on behalf of other Japanese students to put differences aside while in America and work with Chinese students in creating a better Asia and a less oppressive world.

Masatane Mitani, president of the JSCA and editor of the *Japanese Student Bulletin*, took the lead in using the Manchurian issue to build stronger relations between his organization and the CSCA. In 1936, Mitani admitted to readers of the *Student Bulletin* that "the gesture of the Japanese army in North China is creating a furious

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<sup>411</sup> Motochiro Takahashi, "Letter to the Republic of China," *The Student World* (1932), 164; *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (March 1932), 7.

<sup>412</sup> Takahashi, "Letter to the Republic of China," 7.

<sup>413</sup> Takahashi, "Letter," 7. Similar to Takahashi's stance, the National Christian Council of Japan passed a resolution in December of 1931 which outlined the organization's "heart-break" over Japan's aggression in Manchuria and its dedication to "eradicating the roots of difficulties between Japan and China...". See "The Resolution Passed by the Annual Meeting of the National Christian Council of Japan," *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (December 1931), 2.

sentiment against Japan on the part of the Chinese people” and that the Chinese people naturally had a right to look to self-defense, but also encouraged readers to look beyond hatred and warfare as the solution to the problem.<sup>414</sup> “What is wrong with us Christians,” Mitani asked, “if we say follow the way of the cross, why should we be too anxious to compromise with a political trend which fosters hatred and bitterness against others?”<sup>415</sup> In calling Japanese militarism a mere “political trend,” Mitani engaged in a bold move to help his readers understand the JSCA’s position on the conflict. In another article, Mitani urged Chinese and Japanese students in the U.S. to “keep a level head” and “pour their energy into the noble cause for building up the kingdom of God.”<sup>416</sup> By ensuring readers that JSCA members were not militarists and sought cooperation with Chinese students in the U.S., Mitani attempted to transcend the national and ethnic boundaries that separated the Chinese and Japanese by focusing on their roles as Christians in the world. In this sense, the Manchurian conflict represented a need for students to return to “bridge building” ideologies in order to promote friendly international relations with other students while in America.

Another JSCA member was more straight-forward in his explanation of the solution to the Manchurian crisis. Representing the Stanford University chapter of the JSCA, this member insisted that the JSCA “take the initiative in current problems arising from the Sino-Japanese conflict in Manchuria” (which his chapter did by organizing a Sino-Japanese banquet on campus), for “the solution depends upon none other than

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<sup>414</sup> Masatane Mitani, “Editor’s Notes—Must China Fight Japan?” *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (March 1936), 2.

<sup>415</sup> Mitani, “Editor’s Notes,” 2.

<sup>416</sup> Masatane Mitani, “Japanese Culture Vs. Christianity,” *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (February- March 1935), 3.

ourselves.”<sup>417</sup> Rather than completely separate himself from the Japanese militarists across the Pacific, this student argued that the reality of the situation was that the Japanese had struck first in Manchuria and, as such, Japanese students in the U.S. had to make the first conciliatory moves towards Chinese students.<sup>418</sup> The author was also very realistic in understanding and explaining the deep, underlying ethnic tensions that existed between the Chinese and Japanese as a result of the invasion of Manchuria and how large a responsibility the JSCA would have to shoulder by reaching out to Chinese students. “We must ask ourselves,” he continued, “if, in the very depth of pure hearts, we Japanese could, nay, have come to regard the Chinese as our true brothers and sisters.”<sup>419</sup> He warned that “if we get the answer ‘no,’ there is...no hope for the solution,” arguing that “even if Japan quits Manchuria there can be no peace until we grab the ideal of humiliation of forgiveness and spirit of mutual existence and prosperity.”<sup>420</sup> As a migrant student from a nation that was becoming increasingly imperialistic, this student was taking quite a large step in publicly pushing for the Japanese to seek forgiveness from the Chinese and admit their nation’s wrong-doings.

The next step for members and leaders of the JSCA and CSCA was to bring their organizations together in hopes of creating a dialogue on how to approach the issue of Manchuria as visiting students in America, an ocean away from their homelands. P.C. Hsu expressed the great need for Chinese and Japanese students to come together over this issue, not only for the future of Asia, but for the sake of the entire world. Hsu lamented that “many Christian Chinese students in this country who used to hold liberal

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<sup>417</sup> “Stanford Chapter, “ *Japanese Student Bulletin* (December 1931), 14.

<sup>418</sup> “Stanford,” 14.

<sup>419</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.



views are now agonizing in despair because they do not see how it is possible to apply the Christian principle of love in international relations, which is still dominated by the idea that might makes right.”<sup>421</sup> In light of students’ initial defense of military actions taken by both nations, Hsu’s observations were certainly not far-fetched. Hsu feared that the hard work that his student organizations had invested in creating multicultural and interracial groups and organizations would soon be lost due to a new breed of cynicism and pessimism created by the Manchurian conflict and other international problems. However, Hsu advised that “in order to break this vicious cycle, China must learn to forgive and Japan must learn to repent,” making “cooperation between the liberal elements of two nations...imperative.”<sup>422</sup> Hsu wanted to see groups composed of Chinese and Japanese students in the U.S. devote themselves to “transcending national sentiments and prejudices and learning to work together across national boundaries.”<sup>423</sup>

Many CSCA and JSCA members agreed with Hsu and successfully formed and sponsored a number of Sino-Japanese workshops, discussion groups, and conferences in along the West Coast and across the U.S.<sup>424</sup> The most successful and well-attended of these conferences was the “Keep Our Ocean Pacific” conference held at Mills College in Oakland, California during the summer of 1936, where JSCA and CSCA members joined with Filipino, Korean, African American, and Indian students from along the West Coast to discuss questions such as “what are the underlying reasons for conflict [in the Pacific]?” and “what part are students taking in movements for social reconstruction in

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<sup>421</sup> Hsu, “Challenges to Sin-Japanese Liberals,” 4.

<sup>422</sup> Hsu, “Challenges,” 4.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid., 4; “Propose Sino-Japanese Christian Movement,” *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (April 1931), 9; CSCA -General Secretary’s Report for the Year 1931-1932, “Manchurian Crisis,” 9.

Asian and America?”<sup>425</sup> For students at the “Keep Our Ocean Pacific” conference, the problems of “social reconstruction” in America in terms of “shelter, employment, and racial relations” were just as important as those related to reconstructing Asia following military conflict in Manchuria.<sup>426</sup> Also, the fact that American students also joined in on the discussions demonstrated that the Manchurian conflict represented world-wide problems of inequality and oppression, rather than simply an Asian or even a Pacific problem. During this conference, the JSCA and the CSCA even joined together to gather donations for the recently-formed Far Eastern Student Emergency Fund, which was an opportunity for JSCA and CSCA members to raise money for both Chinese and Japanese students and set themselves apart from the charitable organizations in America that focused on providing assistance to only Chinese students affected by violence in Asia.<sup>427</sup>

In April of 1934, representatives from the student Christian associations joined together for a three-day conference at New York’s Riverside Church to discuss the Manchurian conflict in the context of larger world problems. At the Oriental Student’s Conference, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, and Indian students discussed variants on the conference’s theme: “the place of the Christian student in world reconstruction.”<sup>428</sup> A student author for the *Filipino Student Bulletin* reported that much of the conversation focused on issues of “nationalism and its rightful place in Christianity.” Interestingly enough, several students in attendance at the conference (it is not clear from which associations) expressed their opinions to the other attendees that “there is a place for nationalism,” considering that “nature created national states” and that “these states are

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<sup>425</sup> “Pacific Calls Its Youth to Pacific Area Conference,” *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (June 1936), 5.

<sup>426</sup> “Pacific Calls Its Youth,” 5.

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid.*, 5; “JSCA and CSCA,” *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (December 1937), 4.

<sup>428</sup> “The Oriental Student Christian Conference,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (May, 1934), 5.

on stage in human evolution.”<sup>429</sup> While these Christian students’ justifications for nationalism in terms of “natural creation” and “human evolution” are both interesting and puzzling when placed in the context of a Christian conference, they qualified their statements by explaining that nationalism and the installation of national pride could help certain countries in developing and “setting their own houses in order before they...contribute towards an international society.”<sup>430</sup> Although students did tend to agree that individual nations did have a right to “set their own houses in order” (pointing towards the United States and its own issues with race relations and discrimination), they were not easily convinced that a strong sense of nationalistic pride was necessary for this and worried that such nationalism challenged Christian principles.<sup>431</sup> Several students challenged the viewpoints of their colleagues, arguing that “the preservation of cultural identity does not necessarily involve political independence; a truly Christian outlook leads to recognition of human values among peoples of other races and nations as well as in one’s own group; and Christianity involves a higher loyalty which rises above national consciousness.”<sup>432</sup> Some students also acknowledged that “national self-sufficiency was becoming increasingly impossible in an economically inter-dependent [sic] world,” referencing the recent stock market crash in 1929 which triggered a world-wide economic crisis.<sup>433</sup> Despite the disagreements, all students agreed that nationalism was a primary cause of the conflict in Asia, but also a world-wide problem that was not limited to China and Japan. Their solution (as potential future leaders themselves) was to “pursue a more active application of Christian principles to diplomatic and international affairs,”

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<sup>429</sup> “Oriental Student Conference,” 5.

<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

reversing what they believed to be a tendency for Christians “to do much talking, but little acting in accord with their ideas.”<sup>434</sup>

Despite these attempts at reconciliation, the task grew more difficult for the JSCA and CSCA as Japanese aggression in Manchuria reached new heights by late 1937. Although China had signed the He-Umeza Agreement with Japan in 1935 (effectively turning all control of northern China over to the Japanese), Chinese volunteer forces continued to resist Japanese rule. On July 7<sup>th</sup>, 1937, a skirmish between Chinese and Japanese forces at the Marco Polo Bridge near Lugo turned into a full battle between the opposing troops, with Japan eventually taking control of Beijing and the port of Tianjin. Historians have typically credited the Marco Polo Bridge Incident with the formal beginning of the Second Sino Japanese War and, while the Imperial Government in Tokyo attempted to limit the fighting, Chiang Kai-Shek led resistance forces against the Japanese, with brutal attacks from both the Chinese and Japanese continuing through the late 1930s.<sup>435</sup> As various nations joined forces with both the Chinese (assisted by the Soviet Union, and, later, the volunteer forces of the U.S.) and Japanese (aligned with Germany after 1938), the Manchurian crisis went from an isolated incident to a full war and one which people around the world watched anxiously.

In the U.S., public opinion favored the Chinese and presented the Japanese as the ultimate, nationalistic and imperial-driven aggressors. Many in the U.S. decried the actions of the Japanese and expressed sympathy for the plight of China. National groups

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<sup>434</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>435</sup> See Richard Wilson, *When Tigers Fight: The Story of the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945* (New York: Viking Press, 1982), Mark Peattie, Edward Drea, and Hans van de Ven, eds., *The Battle for China: Essays on the Military History of the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), and C.A. Bayly, *Forgotten Wars: Freedom and Revolution in South East Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

such the American Committee for Non-Participation in Japanese Aggression (headed by Henry Stimson) and the United China Relief organized “Bowl of Rice” Balls to raise funds for suffering Chinese and organized publicity campaigns for donations under the heading “To Them—A Little Means A Lot.”<sup>436</sup> Newspapers such as the *New York Daily News* encouraged full American participation on behalf of the Chinese, stating “if we must fight for pacifism, let us put everything we have got into the fight—and get back to peace as soon as possible.”<sup>437</sup> Even the International Department of the YMCA, an organization which typically attempted to avoid taking a firm stance controversial or political issues, supported a U.S. embargo against Japan, explaining in a newsletter that “in our capacity as citizens, we should bring pressure on the American government to carry out the will of the American people as indicated in the Gallup poll and bring about the cessation of the flow of war materials from this country to Japan.”<sup>438</sup>

The Committee on Friendly Relations among Foreign Students also worried about the impact of the Second Sino-Japanese War on relations between the JSCA and the CSCA, questioning whether or not two Christian organizations organized along national ties was appropriate or even necessary in the current international climate. “For many years,” Charles Hurrey began in a report to the Intercollegiate Christian Council of America (a student organization), “nationality groups were fundamental units in the work of the Committee,” but wondered “is a racially or nationally separate group now a sound

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<sup>436</sup> United China Relief, “What Others Say,” UCLA Chancellor Files, Charles E. Young Special Collections Department.

<sup>437</sup> Reprinted in the *Chinese Christian Student* .

<sup>438</sup> YMCA, “International Department Favors Embargo Against Japan,” (1939), YMCA Collection, University of Washington Archives. The Y did, however, believe in “continu[ing] to participate in any efforts to keep open the channels of genuine fellowship between the Student Christian Movements” of America, China, and Japan.

basis for the work of the CFR?”<sup>439</sup> If the purpose of Christian citizenship was to promote international fellowship beyond national ties, then why should the CFR (which existed generally to support foreign students in the U.S., not play into national conflicts) continue to offer financial and administrative assistance to ethnic student associations that represented two nations deeply involved in conflict?

The members of the CSCA and JSCA, however, viewed their organizations as necessary now more than ever during the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War. During the summer of 1938, the conflict was an area of key focus during the agenda planning meeting of the CSCA. When the Central Executive Board met in New York City, questions such as “what is our attitude toward the Sino-Japanese conflict...?” and “how can our Christians end the war in China made in Japan?” dominated discussions that had previously been centered on issues of the second generation along the West Coast.<sup>440</sup> While reports of the meeting reveal that “individual opinions were express by all present” including “more writing and talking on Chinese things by Chinese students,” preparedness for “self-defense, though not for an aggressive war,” and the encouragement of “the growth of the spirit of nationalism within the bounds of Christian principles,” overall, the leaders of the CSCA agreed that, while in America, it was they and their members’ duty to demonstrate to Americans that an open fellowship with Japanese students was the best course of action.<sup>441</sup>

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<sup>439</sup> Report to the National Intercollegiate Christian Council of Student Work, Charles Hurrey Papers, Kautz Family YMCA Archives.

<sup>440</sup> CSCA, “Tentative Agenda for the Central Executive Board Meeting of the Chinese Students Christian Association, July 5<sup>th</sup>- July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1938,” CSCA Records, Yale Divinity Special Collections.

<sup>441</sup> CSCA, “Tentative Agenda for the Central Executive Board Meeting of the Chinese Students Christian Association- The Policies of the CSCA with regard to the Sino-Japanese Conflict, Peace, and War.”

George Kao, a CSCA member from the University of Washington, expressed similar views in his 1939 *Chinese Christian Student* article “On International Living.” While Kao explained that he knew “better than to knife the first Japanese I see, even if Japanese airplanes are bombing my hometown [of] Nanking,” he also expected that “as a fellow member in an international friendship organization,” CSCA members would “face the ugly Sino-Japanese situation” with him and see how they “could stop Japan’s invasion in China.”<sup>442</sup> Kao also criticized Americans who were quick to jump on the war wagon rather than join him and other students in approaching the Second Sino-Japanese War as a conflict which involved the entire world and its nations’ wrong-doings in the past. Kao stated that he would “further deem it a lack of courage as well as wisdom on the part of our hose who—with all the facts of the world staring him in the face—denies my Japanese colleague and I the opportunity to exercise boldly our embryonic world citizenship ” by encouraging nationalism and war on behalf of China.<sup>443</sup> In the midst of a broadening international conflict, Kao expressed his views that he and other Japanese and Chinese students could use their positions as Christian ambassadors in the U.S. to view the war between their homelands from across the Pacific and decide how best to approach their reactions to national tensions based on the Christian principle of an international fellowship.<sup>444</sup>

President and editor of the *Japanese Student Bulletin* Toru Matsumoto agreed with Kao that the appropriate response of the Christian associations to the war was not nationalism or aggression, but an emphasis on internationalism and Christian citizenship. “The longer the conflict with China continues,” Matsumoto began in a 1939 editorial,

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<sup>442</sup> George Kao, “On International Living,” *The Chinese Christian Student* (October-November 1939), 2.

<sup>443</sup> Kao, “On International,” 2.

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

“the greater the suffering of the peoples involved would be,” emphasizing that “nothing would be better than peace in which two peoples share the opportunities and responsibilities of life together.”<sup>445</sup> Matsumoto called for members of his organization as well as others to come together “for a serious realization of their duty to restore the lost and losing faith of themselves and others in the real Master of mankind” and to recognize that “man’s struggle for domination among nations, classes, or individuals cannot be accepted within the creed of the Universal Church.”<sup>446</sup> Like Kao, Matsumoto encouraged other students in the U.S. to realize that the Second Sino-Japanese War was representative of a larger problem in the world with nations adhering to imperialism, expansion, and oppression of other nations, races, and classes. A large problem indeed, but one in which Christian association leaders and members such as Matsumoto placed great faith in their fellow students to address as best as they could while in the U.S. Matsumoto admitted that such abstract goals were not a solution to the “immediate problems” at hand, but could serve as “motives for our thinking this year.”<sup>447</sup>

But for other Christian association members, such as those of the Filipino Students Christian Movement, issues of imperialism and nationalism were not so abstract. FSCM members often viewed the Second Sino-Japanese War within the larger context of their own experiences with American imperialism. With the passing of the Tydings-McDuffie Act in 1934, the Philippines entered into a period of commonwealth status, with the U.S. guaranteeing independence within ten years.<sup>448</sup> Large questions

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<sup>445</sup> Toru Matsumoto, “Editorial Notes,” *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (November 1939), 2; see also Alfred Akamatsu, “Beyond the Clouds,” *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (October 1937), 2.

<sup>446</sup> Matsumoto, “Editorial,” 2.

<sup>447</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>448</sup> The Tydings-McDuffie Act also reclassified all Filipinos in the U.S. and those wishing to migrate to the U.S. as “aliens” rather than nationals for the sake of immigration restriction based on quotas.



loomed for Filipinos in the U.S. about the actual status of a commonwealth, the political place of Filipino migrants in the U.S., and the future of an independent Philippines. As a result of many Filipino students' negative views of expansion and imperialism, they attempted to create a nuanced view of the proper role of the Philippines in the Second Sino-Japanese War. In his 1936 article "Moderation Beckons Us," Juan Dahilig attempted to set the record straight concerning which "side" the Filipinos favored in the conflict and also to demonstrate that Filipino students were just as committed as the CSCA and JSCA in reaching beyond national boundaries. "To favor an alliance with Japan simply because of the similarity of color between the two nationalities and because of being prejudiced by the white people is deplorable," Dahilig explained, but continued that "...to oppose a diplomatic act with Japan because of an alleged difference between Japanese and Filipino ideas is to be short of the genuine series of fairness and Christian intelligence."<sup>449</sup> As far as the Philippines' ability to defend itself, Dahilig assured readers that "...we [Filipinos] would not be presumptuous as to think that we can possibly be self-sufficient in isolation. How can we? But we must never forget that international questions are far more inflammable explosives than any chemical product and they need to be handled with the utmost care."<sup>450</sup>

Dahilig also called on fellow Filipino students in the U.S. to help others in understanding that the war represented an opportunity for those from all nations (not just the Chinese and Japanese students) to carefully consider how their own countries approached international conflicts. "We need to show the world that we Filipinos can be bigger than prejudice and arrogance," Dahilig continued and noted that "we will gain

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<sup>449</sup> Juan Dahilig, "Moderation Beckons Us," *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (March 1936), 3.

<sup>450</sup> Dahilig, "Moderation," 3.

nothing by taking a partial or revengeful attitude.” Dahilig claimed, however, that “we will lose nothing by way of friendship and amity toward all peoples” and that “very likely, this will be to us a favorable and fruitful strategy.” After witnessing Americans attempting to place the Philippines in the larger context of the Sino-Japanese War, students like Dahilig wanted to express their own opinions, as Filipinos, on where his people stood on the issue and, consequently, where they *should* stand (as members of world fellowship rather than an emerging nation). “Why can we not be Christian statesmen in the sincere and honest sense of the word?” Dahilig asked his readers and concluded by warning that “we owe it to humanity, to God, and no less to our own people” to be open and objective when dealing with international conflicts.<sup>451</sup>

The Second Sino-Japanese War and the controversies surrounding Japan’s aggressive expansionist and imperialistic projects also encouraged more Filipino students to speak out against the American legacy of colonization in the Philippines. Although there were still Filipino students who feared being viewed as independence “propagandists” by Americans, others felt more comfortable providing critiques of America’s involvement in the Philippines by cloaking it in a larger discussion of imperialism and nationalism. While one FSCM student described the “general feeling among our students...that there is an invisible power that will hoodoo he who dares to speak ill of our politics” as a “strange mental condition...the result of the system of thought that has its origin way back in our early history when the infant Philippines was nourishing from the milk bottle of the Spanish civilization,” others attacked American hypocrisy in denouncing the Japanese for their imperial projects while fostering a sense

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<sup>451</sup> Ibid., 3.

of nationalist pride for “uplift” in Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Nicaragua.<sup>452</sup> FSCM member D.H. Ambrosio wrote a passionate article, “Kicking Against the Pricks,” for the *Filipino Student Bulletin*, outlining his identification of an imbalanced American appraisal of the Second Sino-Japanese War. Ambrosio stated that:

it is necessary and imperative that we kick against things hateful, abominable, and hypocritical; we should and we must kick against race prejudice born out of the superiority complex of the Nordic myth; against the hypocritical and sanctimonious declarations for peace by imperialistic nations armed to the teeth;...against those who with one hand hold...the Declaration of Independence...and with the other hand hold on tightly to the treasures of Porto Rico, the wealth of Haiti, and the sugar-centrals and rubber plantation possibilities of the Philippines.<sup>453</sup>

Other, more subtle expressions of frustration with U.S. involvement in the Philippines after the Tydings-McDuffie Act, such as writing poems eulogizing the bravery of Andres Bonifacio (the Filipino rebel who advocated the use of physical force in over-throwing the Spanish government) rather than the gentle encouragement of Jose Rizal, also began to appear in the *Filipino Student Bulletin*.

The problem of imperialism brought CSCA, FSCM, and JSCA leaders and members together in meetings and conferences to discuss exactly what the Second Sino-Japanese War meant for them, their friends and families at home, and the goal of building a world-wide Christian fellowship. By speaking largely of imperialism and its negative effects on the world, Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino students all had a large stake in understanding and analyzing the Second Sino-Japanese War. It was during these meetings that the “abstract” ideas of peace, love, and brotherhood became more concrete in lectures and talks outlining how students in America should best respond to the

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<sup>452</sup> “Philippine Politics and Filipino Students,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (January 1926), 5.

<sup>453</sup> D. H. Ambrosio, “Kicking Against the Pricks,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (November 1928), 7.

underlying causes of the conflicts in Asia. Since most Americans and students identified the problems of Asia as a larger problem in the Pacific basin, many of the meetings (apart from two successful ones in Buffalo and New York City) were held at colleges and universities along the West Coast, drawing Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students from various institutions to the Stanford and University of California campuses (to name a few).<sup>454</sup> The annual YMCA-sponsored Asilomar Conference in California also became an opportunity for Asian delegates to form working groups to join together and discuss problems and issues that were pertinent to them, primarily concerning the conflict in the Pacific. During the 1938 Asilomar Conference, the main subjects of social change and action were still a top priority for all attendees, but the Asian students attending the conference formed break-away groups to devote specific time to discussing issues pertaining to the Second Sino-Japanese War.<sup>455</sup> George Savage, an attendee at the conference, also commented on the way in which the Asian student delegates blended the problems of the Pacific with the problems of racial equality in America, explaining that “the large number of Japanese, Chinese, Hindu, Philippine, and Hawaiian students helped focus attention on angles of problems, especially the coast racial problem, that created a new interest and understanding among other delegates.”<sup>456</sup> Savage reported that the Asian and Hawaiian students in attendance at the conference drew a strong connection between “the horrors of war abroad and the horrors of prejudice in America” that was manifest in “un-Christian ideas of white superiority...racial superiority, and injustice in the Western

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<sup>454</sup> “Data Bearing on Policy and Program Decisions,” Committee on Friendly Relations Among Foreign Students, Record Group 13, box 17, folder 1, Yale Divinity School Special Collections Department

<sup>455</sup> George Savage, “The Asilomar Convention,” *Intercollegian* (February 1938), 157-158.

<sup>456</sup> Savage, “Asilomar Convention,” 158.

cities and states.”<sup>457</sup> The report from the conference also included references to the Japanese students’ “insistence on fighting against imperialistic motives and designs as a means to greater acceptance of all of God’s peoples in the United States and around the world,” a statement which represented the concern among Christian students for the dangerous connections between imperialism and racism.<sup>458</sup> In the midst of the Second Sino-Japanese War, meetings of Christian students such as the Asilomar Conference brought international and domestic concerns regarding oppression together.

Often, the discussions at student conferences turned to connections between imperialism, nationalism, and civil rights. Because many conferences and meetings on the Second Sino-Japanese War took place along the Pacific Coast at sponsoring colleges and universities, West Coast students were the mostly likely to be able to afford to attend. As a result, most students connected the oppression of peoples around the world to the racial injustice in the United States (particularly along the West Coast), arguing that the two battles were not disconnected. At a time when racial discrimination against Filipinos was rampant in agricultural centers of California, Oregon, and Washington, and sociologists and psychologists were still analyzing the “second-generation problem,” it was not shocking to many CSCA, FSCM, and JSCA members that these events were occurring within the larger context of political and military crises in Asia and Europe. JSCA member Shuichi Harada argued that it should come as no surprise to Americans that the Japanese, after being faced with the “immigration problem” of the U.S. (meaning the immigration restrictions based on racial categories which excluded Asians from

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<sup>457</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid., 158.

migrating to America), would wish to demonstrate its own strength on the world scene.<sup>459</sup> For Harada, the rise in Japanese aggression was a direct result of America's discriminatory immigration and naturalization policies as well as Americans' anti-Asian sentiments and racist actions. CSCA member David Toong also argued that his organization should work more closely with the East Bay Youth Work group in San Francisco so that "we can best further our program of soliciting moral and material aid for China in her present struggle and to educate the public on racial tolerance."<sup>460</sup> It is interesting that Toong connected the two problems, one across the Pacific and one at home among Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans in California. By drawing out those Chinese immigrants who were concerned for friends and family at home as well as the direction of China in the future, the CSCA could connect them with second-generation Chinese Americans who were concerned about racial inequality in the United States, bridging a generational gap as well as using transnational ties to foster support for Asian equality in America. For the CSCA, JSCA, and FSCM, the Second Sino-Japanese War and international conflicts were not distractions from the problems of racial injustice in the U.S.; the two problems existed on the same plane and reinforced one another.

The larger student conferences inspired Asian students to utilize their connections with students of other minority groups in various Christian organizations and other campus groups in designing their own conferences to address racial problems on the Pacific Coast. The CSCA, FSCM, and JSCA formed conferences and meetings in Los Angeles, Seattle, and other communities along the Pacific Coast and invited all students

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<sup>459</sup> Suichi Harada, "War Between Japan and America-An Illusion," *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (May-June 1926), 3.

<sup>460</sup> David Toong, "How Pacific Coast Organizations Keep Busy," *The Chinese Christian Student* (January 1940), 7.

of Asian descent to attend, regardless of their religion. At these conferences, students discussed issues of world peace, imperialism, and poverty, but much of their attention was focused on the international problem of race discrimination and access to human and civil rights. In the spring of 1938, Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese student Christian groups at the University of Washington held a popular conference on campus that attracted students from all ethnic and racial backgrounds, including African American students.

While in attendance at the conference, the students formed what would come to be one of the most influential groups at the University of Washington, the Committee on Interracial Relations (largely made up of Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, and African-American students). After the meeting, the Committee devoted itself to addressing, in a multicultural and interracial manner, what it saw as the most pressing concerns for students of color in Washington and along the West Coast: the racial discrimination against one the largest minority groups on campus, the Japanese and African American students, and the problems of anti-miscegenation and anti-alien land laws. The Committee members went on to approve the drafting of a petition against anti-miscegenation and anti-alien land laws as well as state their official stance on discrimination in fraternities on campus, vowing to “call attention to those student groups guilty of denying equality for Asian and Negro students” and “lead boycotts against any fraternity or academic group which practices un-Christian behavior and discriminates against Negro and Asian students.”<sup>461</sup> Filipino students also had the opportunity to

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<sup>461</sup> “Important Historical Dates for the University of Washington YMCA and YWCA,” in the University of Washington Special Collections Department, Record Group 1930-001, box 1, folder 1; “YW Cabinet Will Hold Discussion,” (April, 1938), University of Washington Special Collections, Record Group 1930-001, folder 1.

discuss with attendees the problems of imperialism and colonialism, inviting opinions on how American imperialism compared with Japanese expansion and other “forms of empire” that challenged the “Christian fellowship and the Kingdom of God” that Christian students around the world were attempting to create.<sup>462</sup> The University of Washington YMCA was so inspired by the action of the students that leaders provided financial backing and administrative support to the Committee and allowed the group to meet in the Y building. After the initial interracial meeting in 1938, the Committee and the Y sponsored joint programs and discussions on creating relationships among races for fighting discrimination along the West Coast and across America.<sup>463</sup>

The University of Washington Interracial Conferences exemplify the ways that the Sino-Japanese War and unrest in the Pacific brought various student groups together along the West Coast to discuss international and domestic U.S. problems with oppression and racism. As the Second Sino-Japanese War continued, more foreign and American-born Asian Christian students convened to discuss military and political problems in Asia, but they also analyzed how these problems affected their lives in America. By discussing problems they faced on campus and in the larger community with racism and discrimination in combination with the problems their homelands faced in the midst of rising aggressive expansion in Asia, Asian Christian students were able to create a transnational identity that spoke to pan-Pacific issues at the time. In placing American racism and discrimination within a context of Asian and world-wide experiences with oppression, they were able to raise awareness among other attendees of the problems on both sides of the Pacific and call attention to the ways in which the faults

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<sup>462</sup> “Important Historical Dates,” 1-2.

<sup>463</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.



of all nations involved in oppression and imperialism added to unchristian ideas around the world. It is not surprising that a conference such as the one that convened at the University of Washington occurred during the late 1930s when conflicts in Asia were becoming increasingly worse. Along the West Coast, where there was a large number of Asian students and the problems of the Pacific appeared more pertinent, anti-Asian sentiment was no longer simply a domestic problem; it was an international problem that helped in producing an anti-American climate in Japan and aggressive expansion.

The underlying issues of nationalism and imperialism in the Second Sino-Japanese War also brought Christian Korean students in America into closer contact with Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students at conferences and meetings. Although the number of Korean students in America was small in comparison to Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students, the formation of the Korean Students Christian Association in 1938 presented the organization with the opportunity to send delegates to the Oriental Student Conferences which were hosted by the Asian Christian student associations. In Korea, which had become a colony of Japan in 1910 after Japanese victories in the Russo-Japanese War, Christians (particularly Korean Presbyterians) were at the forefront of a Korean liberation movement, struggling against Japanese control of Korean independence. As a result, Christian Korean students often attended conferences to exchange ideas and opinions on the topics of imperialism and nationalism with Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students.<sup>464</sup> At the Seventh Spring Oriental Student Christian Federation Conference in New York City in April of 1938, five Korean delegates joined

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<sup>464</sup> "Koreans Participate in Protest Against Japanese Invasion of China," *The Korean Student Bulletin* (October-November 1937), 7. A large portion of *The Korean Student Bulletin* volumes have been excellently preserved and are available online from the University of Southern California's Korean Heritage Library Subject Files at <<http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/search/controller/view/kada-m23327.html?x=1342625887067>>.

with other Asian students to discuss the Second Sino-Japanese War and pay special attention to the precarious position of Japanese Christians in a militaristic and imperialistic Japan.<sup>465</sup> Members of the Korean Students Christian Association particularly looked forward to attending such conferences and being able to “enjoy the freedom” of discussing controversial topics with other students, knowing that their “freedom of speech would be denied” when they returned home to Japanese-occupied Korea.<sup>466</sup>

Korean students, however, had a slightly different view on nationalism than other Christian student association members. Since their homeland had struggled for independence for centuries, Korean students were not as apt to denounce nationalism as other students. Tai Sum Lim explained in an editorial titled “Is Nationalism a Menace?” that “there are dangers inherent in a society...when nationalism becomes a mania,” but also reminded readers that “there is nothing evil in national feeling which reveals love of language, of customs and traditions, of sentiment intrinsic to its cultural origins.”<sup>467</sup> Many articles in *The Korean Student Bulletin* were celebrations of traditional Korean culture, featuring classic folk tales, interviews with performing artists who specialized in Korean dances and music, and Korean recipes, all pieces which emphasized Korea’s unique traditions and culture in the midst of a struggle for a national identity, independence, and recognition. Members of the Korean Student Christian Association emphasized that there was nothing wrong or unchristian about *cultural* nationalism or maintaining a sense of pride in national customs, particularly if this was the only way a

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<sup>465</sup> “Koreans Active in Oriental Students Meeting in New York,” *The Korean Student Bulletin* (April 1938), 3.

<sup>466</sup> “Korean Student Federation Notes,” *The Korean Student Bulletin* (March 1929), 3.

<sup>467</sup> Tai Sum Lim, “Is Nationalism A Menace?” *The Korean Student Bulletin* (May-June 1937), 2.

people could cling to whatever was left of their national identity. Similarly, many Korean students openly supported China's question for a national identity in the midst of civil unrest and the war with Japan. Seung Hak Cho, president of the Korean Student Federation (the precursor to the Korean Students Christian Association) also sent a letter on behalf of his organization to the Chinese ambassador C.T. Wang congratulating him on his nation's persistence in resisting Japanese aggression and serving as "the restoration of Korean independence."<sup>468</sup>

Still, Korean students praised peace over any form of aggression and shared their own views of how an end to colonialism and imperialism could help to bring about world peace.<sup>469</sup> A *Korean Student Bulletin* article from 1932 emphasized the Korean Student Christian Association's stance that the "miserable plight" of the Korean people (particularly the peasants and the poor) was a direct consequence of Japan's aggressive expansion and imperialistic policies.<sup>470</sup> The author of the article took this idea one step farther, however, by placing the Manchurian conflict in the larger context of a world-wide quest of nations for resources driven by capitalistic greed—a theory which was similar to that of CSCA, FSCM, and JSCA members and which formed the basis for a number of discussions at Oriental Student Conferences throughout the U.S.<sup>471</sup> Unlike their Asian colleagues from other nations, however, Korean students often placed Korea at the center of the Manchuria conflict and argued that the Korean fight for independence

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<sup>468</sup> "Koreans Praise Chinese Unity," *The Korean Student Bulletin* (February-March 1938), 3.

<sup>469</sup> "Korean Representatives of Oriental Students Christian Federation Conference," *The Korean Student Bulletin* (May-June 1935), 1. In 1933, Syngman Rhee, President of the Korean Republic, wrote an article especially for *The Korean Student Bulletin* in which he outlined how important Korea was for the safety and well-being of the entire East Asian region. See "Korean Independence Must Precede the Hope of Far Eastern Peace," *The Korean Student Bulletin* (February 1933), 1.

<sup>470</sup> "Lytton Commissioners Find Korean Issue Paramount to Manchurian Muddle," *The Korean Student Bulletin* (December 1932), 1.

<sup>471</sup> "Lytton Commissioners," 1.

had to be recognized by all nations in order to understand how to end the Sino-Japanese War by attacking imperialism, militarism, and aggressive expansion.<sup>472</sup>

The Second Sino-Japanese War and an increasing anti-Japanese sentiment in America forced JSCA members to recognize once again the vulnerability of the Nisei during the conflict and the continued presence of discrimination and racism. Despite their Issei parents' often strong support of the Japanese mission in Manchuria, the Nisei, as American citizens, had a more difficult time openly accepting Japan's actions.<sup>473</sup> Japanese American organizations such as the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) often supported the Issei and their dedication to maintaining ties to the homeland through donations to the Japanese and speeches to "counteract the American public's overwhelming support for the Chinese."<sup>474</sup> Nisei members of the JSCA, however, faced a different conundrum: how could they support their families while supposedly claiming to be members of a world-wide Christian kingdom that resisted imperialist and nationalist actions which led to oppression and war? Leaders of the JSCA recognized that their Nisei members, who had come to play such an important role in the organization during the late 1920s and 1930s, faced unique circumstances and encouraged them to speak out in the *Japanese Student Bulletin* about their experiences.

The opinions of Nisei JSCA members on the Second Sino-Japanese War and Japan's actions were not as unified as historians who have written on the impact of the JACL and Issei have suggested.<sup>475</sup> The majority of JSCA Nisei who expressed their

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<sup>472</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>473</sup> See Lon Kurashige, *Japanese American Celebration and Conflict: A History of Ethnic Identity and Festival in Los Angeles, 1934-1990* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 65-67 and Yoo, *Growing Up Nisei*, 87-89.

<sup>474</sup> Kurashige, *Celebration and Conflict*, 66.

<sup>475</sup> Ibid., 66-68;88.

opinions favored the more Christian or international approach to the conflict, arguing for fellow JSCA members and Nisei to remember that above all, they were Christians and had a duty to realize the negative consequences of Japan's actions. Kay Uchida wrote an article for the *Japanese Student Bulletin* in 1938 describing her position on the Second Sino-Japanese War and returned to the concept of "bridge building." "Especially today, with the conditions in the Orient as they are" she explained, "we Nisei in the midst of pro-Japanese feeling within our homes and anti-Japanese feeling in the outside society, can be an important link in fostering better understanding..."<sup>476</sup> Uchida continued by encouraging fellow Nisei to "not make excuses" for Japan, but "state the facts which induced the actions" and "help our parents, who naturally are likely to be strongly biased to see the situation in a Christian way..."<sup>477</sup> In another article, an anonymous JSCA member argued that the "average Nisei is not stirred to the quick by every report that trickles in...to most Nisei, the war in China is just so much Greek."<sup>478</sup> But the author warned that "whether the Nisei like it or not, he is looked upon by Americans as Japanese" and "people don't take the time to ask whether a Japanese is born over here or not; moreover, they don't care."<sup>479</sup> This member concluded by explaining that if a boycott of Japanese-made goods (a reaction to the Sino-Japanese War that was rapidly becoming more favorable among Americans and Chinese) became a reality, Issei and Japanese American businesses would more also more than likely see a downturn in business from Americans who refused to patronize such establishments.<sup>480</sup> Just as CSCA, FSCM, and JSCA members connected the racial inequality in America to world-

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<sup>476</sup> Kay Uchida, "Bridge Across the Pacific," *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (March-April 1934), 5.

<sup>477</sup> Uchida, "Bridge," 5.

<sup>478</sup> "The Nisei Angle in Far Eastern Situation," *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (March-April 1937), 7.

<sup>479</sup> "Nisei Angle," 7.

<sup>480</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

wide oppression, this Nisei JSCA member understood that an Asian conflict could only exacerbate existing prejudices against Japanese in the U.S.

Foreign-born members of the JSCA grew increasingly concerned over not only the possibility of a war between Japan and the United States, but also the impact such a war would have on minorities in the U.S.--particularly those who were pacifists. Many articles published in *The Japanese Student Bulletin* still maintained that as horrific as the actions of the Japanese in Manchuria and China were, Americans had no place to criticize the Japanese or any other nation until they analyzed their nation's own wrong-doings. In March of 1940, editor and JSCA president Toru Matsumoto opened his article "On America and Japan" by assuring readers of all backgrounds that foreign-born members of the JSCA, though Japanese, "speak...as Christians, because only by doing so we may be on permanent grounds," but continued by explaining that Japanese students in America had a unique vantage point of not only the Second Sino-Japanese War, but also the mounting tensions between their homeland and the United States.<sup>481</sup> "As Japanese students we are familiar with the whole recent history having to do with America and Japan in Asia," Matsumoto reminded readers and argued that "up to the present decade, one has not done anything the other has not."<sup>482</sup> He also admitted that "it is true that...for many things the Americans did, the Japanese are grateful," but "for others, frankly, they are not," alluding to the often exploitative history of trans-Pacific relations between the two nations in which America's encouragement and assistance in industrial development in Japan also included condescending lectures and advice on becoming

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<sup>481</sup> Toru Matsumoto, "On America and Japan," *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (March 1940), 2-3.

<sup>482</sup> Matsumoto, "On America and Japan," 2-3.

more civilized and, more recently, less nationalistic or imperialistic.<sup>483</sup> In May of 1940, Matsumoto wrote a more down-spirited article titled “A Lost Cause?” which, despite seeing pacifism and international cooperation as an increasingly difficult path, advised JSCA members and other readers of *The Bulletin* to continue to work amongst themselves to increase international goodwill and to “let the nations suspect and hate each other; it still cannot destroy the soul of good citizens in them.”<sup>484</sup>

Many JSCA members as well as CSCA and FSCM members also believed in Matsumoto’s words, continuing to form discussion groups and conferences to discuss the escalating Asian and international crises. Such conferences and groups were important during a time when ethnic, racial, and national tensions could have completely destroyed the pan-Christian cooperation these students had worked to create for nearly twenty years. While such groups and conferences still focused on a pan-Asian theme, there was a more concerted effort (particularly among the CSCA and JSCA) to reach out to their American colleagues. CSCA member Al-Li-Sing returned to the “cultural bridge” theme to support his belief that “we who have recently come from China can act as a bridge between the American-born Chinese and their native country...,” adding that “both parties have a great deal to contribute to each other and to the interpretation of China to our American friends.”<sup>485</sup> Similarly, JSCA members also wished to conduct outreach opportunities to American classmates by sponsoring conferences, including the University of Oregon JSCA chapter’s initiation of the International Goodwill Club, designed to help build better relations among Japanese, Chinese, and American students

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<sup>483</sup> Matsumoto, “On America,” 3.

<sup>484</sup> Matsumoto, “A Lost Cause?” *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (May 1940), 2.

<sup>485</sup> Ali-Li-Sung, “Challenge to Chinese Students,” *Chinese Christian Student* (January 1941), 5.

on campus.<sup>486</sup> Many JSCA members Michiko Yasamra (University of Washington), Kyoko Matsui (Reed College), William Ito (Oregon Medical School) and others also participated in the 1937 America-Japan Student Conference at Stanford University (sponsored by the Institute for Pacific Relations as well as the Japan Student Association), an annual meeting since 1933 that had grown in significance since the escalation of the Second Sino-Japanese War.<sup>487</sup> The six-day event brought together faculty, religious leaders, and over a hundred American, Japanese American, and foreign-born Japanese students from Japanese and West Coast universities to discuss topics such as “the strength of nationalism,” “the force of international law,” “labor and law in Japan and America,” “American expansion in the Pacific,” and “the rights and duties of liberal democracy.”<sup>488</sup>

Despite the efforts of the JSCA to build panethnic relations with Chinese students and work to disperse the views of pacifist Japanese Christians, in September 1940, Japan entered into an alliance with Germany and the Axis powers, changing the Sino-Japanese War from an Asian conflict to a looming global disaster. Suddenly, the Pacific problem over Manchuria was a world-wide event and placed Japanese students in the U.S. in a new politically uncomfortable position. It became increasingly more difficult for students such as Matsumoto to argue that Japanese militarism could be countered with Christian love and acceptance. The Axis alliance with Japan rattled Americans who

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<sup>486</sup> “Good News from Oregon,” *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (March-April 1938), 6.

<sup>487</sup> Interestingly enough, the Japan Student Association (a secular, national student organization) had just a few years earlier taken a blunt stance of the Manchurian conflict, crediting the Chinese with spreading vicious propaganda and describing China as a “state filled with malicious slander, abuse, and rash action,” plagued by communism. While the Japan Student Association did sponsor the America-Japan Student Conference, the fact that many JSCA members attended the conference helped in creating variety within the meeting in terms of approaches to and understanding the Second Sino-Japanese War.

<sup>488</sup> General Survey of the Fourth America-Japan Student Conference (August 1937), Record Group 359, Box 30, Folder 174, UCLA Chancellor Files, Charles E. Young Library Special Collections Department.



viewed the crisis in Manchuria as an affair which could be helped with donations and voluntary forces. Japan's expansion across Asia appeared to be growing larger and more threatening, causing anti-Japanese sentiments in America to begin to rapidly escalate. In light of the growing political tensions, the "bridge-building" meetings and conferences were small bastions of Christian cooperation in the midst of an international crisis. Although relations between CSCA and JSCA members did not become immediately tense or appear to deteriorate in any fashion with the announcement of Japan's entrance into the Axis forces, there appeared to be a shift in themes and issues in both the *Chinese Christian Student* and the *Japanese Student Bulletin*. There were few shared discussions on the evils of imperialism and nationalism, and joint and pan-Asian conferences also did not receive the attention they previously had in the periodicals.

At the beginning of 1940, the CSCA members focused on using their newspaper to build support among Americans and fellow colleagues for a boycott of Japanese goods in America and a Non-Recognition Doctrine of the U.S. government which would prevent America from recognizing Manchukuo.<sup>489</sup> Hanson Hwang, the new President of the CSCA and editor of the *Christian Student*, also shifted the social programs of the CSCA back to a "cultural bridge" format, using Bowl of Rice Parties to build support among American colleagues for China and focusing more on raising donations for Chinese refugees than assisting with Sino-Japanese meetings.<sup>490</sup> The Pacific Coast branch of the CSCA began an active campaign to gather signatures for a petition to show support among Chinese and Chinese American students for the a bill which opposed the U.S.

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<sup>489</sup> Ed Chin Park, "United States Sustains Non-Recognition Doctrine," *The Chinese Christian Student* (April 1940), 6.

<sup>490</sup> Hanson Hwang, "Big Doings in Boston," *The Chinese Christian Student* (January 1940), 5.

renewing an existing trade agreement with Japan.<sup>491</sup> Despite the hard work in maintaining open friendships with the JSCA and FSCM during the 1930s, the CSCA moved towards building support for China rather than necessarily urging for the construction of a Kingdom of God.<sup>492</sup> Again, there were no visible tensions between the CSCA and JSCA, but the ardent desire to reach across national boundaries and build international fellowship had cooled considerably as China continued to suffer in the midst of war.

Interactions between and among the student associations did not completely dissipate in the midst of international turmoil. In June of 1941, the FSCM invited both Toru Matsumoto and Paul Toong (JSCA and CSCA leaders) to come and speak at the annual National FSCM Conference held in Philadelphia. Matsumoto delivered a speech to attendees on the values of “inter-racial friendship” and the importance of maintaining ties with students from other backgrounds in order to promote a Christian way of life in American and around the world, while Toong discussed the impact of the 1924 Immigration Act on Chinese-Filipino relations across the Pacific.<sup>493</sup> In his speech, Toong explained that the Act “which has been applied to the Philippine Islands has been the target of much criticism and hindrance of the friendly relations between the parties concerned.”<sup>494</sup> Because the Philippines was a colony of the United States when the Immigration Act was passed in 1924, there were also restrictions placed on immigrants from other Asian nations entering the Philippine islands.<sup>495</sup> By the early 1940s, the Philippines strengthened the Act to completely bar Chinese and Japanese immigrants as a response to the growing military and political crisis between Japan and China in the

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<sup>491</sup> “How Pacific Coast Organizations Keep Busy,” *The Chinese Christian Student* (January 1940), 7.

<sup>492</sup> Tseng, “Religious Liberalism, International Politics, and Diasporic Realities,” 18-20, 22.

<sup>493</sup> “Show us A Way,” *The Filipino Student Bulletin* (August 1941), 6.

<sup>494</sup> “Show us,” 7.

<sup>495</sup> The Immigration Act of 1924 was implemented in the Philippines in 1925.

Pacific. Toong relayed to those present at the conference that “the recent restrictions by the Philippine Government on immigration have brought much protest from the Japanese as well as the Chinese people” and questioned “whether the tense international situation at present justified the passing of this law...”<sup>496</sup> Toong’s discussion of the 1924 Immigration Act as a transnational affair that affected Asians on both sides of the Pacific spoke to the concern of student Christian members in the U.S. for how American laws and policies shaped diplomatic and international relations. As a result, the FSCM Annual Conference served as an opportunity for Christian Asian students to approach the Immigration Act of 1924 as a piece of legislation that had far-reaching consequences for various nations in the Pacific World.

JSCA members, on the other hand, faced growing challenges as tensions between the U.S. and Japan grew. While China was the recipient of American sympathies and charitable donations, Japan was the ultimate aggressor, placing Japanese students in an uncomfortable position. Just as FSCM members were acutely aware of their status as colonials in the metropole, Japanese students became increasingly aware of their status as potential enemies in the U.S.; however, unlike Filipino students, many JSCA members did not hesitate to speak out against what they viewed as hostile environment in the U.S. and the larger issues and “isms” at play in the rapidly accelerating second World War. Often, Japanese students denounced American imperialism without turning that same critical eye towards Japan’s own actions, signaling an attempt to draw attention away from their homeland’s aggression in the Pacific by discussing the perils of expansion and nationalism at large. After Japan joined the Axis, JSCA president Matsumoto released a strong statement in *The Student Bulletin* in November of 1940 that connected America’s

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<sup>496</sup> Ibid., 7.

growing involvement in the European theater of the war with a dangerous brand of nationalism, not all that dissimilar to the expansionist and nationalistic policies of Japan which Americans frowned upon. “To help the underdog is a compelling temptation,” Matsumoto began, “...yet, for others, it has meant unique hysteria and an ugly resurgence of baser nationalism...and on the crest of this hysteria and fear of super-nationalism we have seen come into being a conscription bill...and an alien registration bill...”<sup>497</sup> In light of America’s increasing involvement in European affairs, Matsumoto stressed that it was fine for the U.S. to want to help other nations (for that was after all the base for a Christian form of citizenship), but he also explained that he and other JSCA members “feel that democracy can best be served only by making it work here in America, but not if we foster a sabotage of individual freedom, civil liberties, and freedoms of thought in the name of unity and patriotism.”<sup>498</sup> For a Japanese student in America during the beginning stages of World War II, such a statement (which would ultimately prove to be true with the internment of Japanese Americans) was both bold and potentially dangerous.

Matsumoto also spoke out against what he saw as America’s continued interest in imperialism and expansion in aid sent to Britain. In a January 1941 article, Matsumoto explained that England’s fight to preserve her Empire is essentially imperialistic—a war in defense of imperialism,” and that “when America endeavors to give England sustenance, she is no less innocent and is partly to blame for the blood-plunder of the Empire builders.”<sup>499</sup> “More sinister than the factor of America saving the British empire,” Matsumoto continued, “is her subtle yet ignoble intentions in South America

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<sup>497</sup> Toru Matsumoto, “First Issue,” *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (November 1940), 2.

<sup>498</sup> Matsumoto, “First Issue,” 2.

<sup>499</sup> Toru Matsumoto, “Revolution: By Choice,” *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (January 1941), 2.

and other parts of the globe,” using aid to the British in an attempt to disguise future imperial projects in the name of American liberty and democracy. While Matsumoto agreed that “non-belligerent aid” to victims of warfare was a Christian duty, he doubted that America provided aid without darker designs of imperialism and nationalism. In the same edition of the JSCA, Matsumoto also worried that HR Bill 1776, an act enabled to provide President Roosevelt with the necessary means to protect the U.S. in war, but also to provide Lend-Lease assistance to Europe, would possibly endanger the personal freedoms of Americans, expressing his concerns that there were no “restrictions which may restrain the head executive from uprooting democratic institutions as they exist in America.”<sup>500</sup> It was impossible for Matsumoto to know how right he actually was in predicting the “uprooting” of American democratic institutions in the name of self-defense during WWII, his words serving as a chilling prediction of what was to come for the Japanese population in the U.S.

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The Manchurian conflict, the Second Sino-Japanese War, and the beginning years of World War II presented a series of challenges to Asian students in America; however, there were also opportunities in joining together to address the political and military unrest in the Pacific in the global terms of Christian fellowship. As members of the World Student Christian Federation, CSCSA, FSCM, and JSCA members knew that, despite their individual issues and connections to their homelands, their commitment to creating a more Christian world relied on their ability to set their differences aside and to

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<sup>500</sup> Toru Matsumoto, “HR 1776,” *The Japanese Student Bulletin* (January 1941), 1-2.

work through international problems together. The unchristian ideas of imperialism and nationalism were, as the students identified, both precursors and products of a more insidious “ism:” racism. Once Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, and even Korean students joined together in conferences and through shared readership of their newspapers and the organs of the YMCA and WSCF, they were able to see how the discrimination of minorities in the U.S. was part of a global system of oppression and exploitation of races, ethnicities, and nationalities. By recognizing their shared status as Asians with transnational connections to the social, economic, and military problems across the Pacific, students were able to turn an event with the potential for complete polarization (the Second Sino-Japanese War) into an opportunity for unity and further analysis of racial relations in the U.S. But the War also emphasized transnational connections to political developments in Asia that during many times threatened the coalitions and networks the students had worked to build in previous years. Issues of nationalism and imperialism during wartimes were complex topics for Asian students who had previously adhered to Christian ideas of pacifism and acceptance and exposed underlying tensions between students of different nationalities studying in America. Nevertheless, Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students did attempt to come together to debate and discuss the relationship between imperialism and racism, both in the U.S. and abroad, creating more opportunities of interracial and panethnic exploration of these topics and their implications for developing future projects.



## Chapter Five

### Christian Students, Japanese Internment, and Civil Rights during World War II

In early January of 1943, Toru Matsumoto, the former President of the Japanese Student Christian Association, faced a decision that would have been difficult for most. Almost a year after President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 required military personnel to evacuate more than 110,000 Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans from the West Coast following America's declaration of war against Japan, the United States immigration service presented Matsumoto with an offer of repatriation to his homeland of Japan. This was Matsumoto's second repatriation offer, but rather than struggle with the decision to abandon his life in the U.S. as a graduate student and Christian leader or face a fate similar to those of Japanese descent in relocation centers, he travelled to Ellis Island on January 14<sup>th</sup> and signed a declaration formally denying the offer. For Matsumoto, the decision was an easy one to make, explaining in a statement to the Committee on Friendly Relations Among Foreign Students that "the first and foremost reason for my desire in thus remaining in America at the risk of never being able to become a citizen here is my conviction that in my services and life as a Christian, nationality is of secondary importance."<sup>501</sup> Matsumoto continued by explaining that in rejecting the repatriation offer, "I consider my own contribution more effective if in this warring world I deliberately remained a tangible expression to what the Christians call the ecumenical Christianity."<sup>502</sup> Unfortunately, Matsumoto's choice resulted in an extended stay at an Alien Detention Camp (sites designated specifically for Japanese,

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<sup>501</sup> Toru Matsumoto, "A Private and Confidential Statement," pg. 1, CFR- Executive Committee Minutes, Executive Center, 1942-1944, Box 58, Kautz Family YMCA Archives

<sup>502</sup> Matsumoto, "Confidential Statement," 1.



Italian, and German aliens in the U.S. as opposed to the Relocation Centers for Japanese Americans) at Fort Meade, Maryland. Following Matsumoto's detention, the remaining administration of the Japanese Students Christian Association voted to temporarily disband the organization as a result of internment and a lack of funds from the YMCA and the Committee on Friendly Relations among Foreign Students.<sup>503</sup> For Matsumoto, the bold and outspoken student who criticized American involvement in World War II and warned of the violations of civil rights that would result from overzealous patriotism in *The Japanese Student Bulletin*, World War II and the evacuation and internment of thousands of Japanese in America was a tragedy, but also a chance to continue to apply Christian principles to race relations in the U.S.

For Christian Asian students in the U.S., the internment of ethnic Japanese was dramatic violation of civil, religious, and human rights which represented a larger system of discrimination against Asian Americans. The topic of internment was controversial, with racist West Coast groups declaring the necessity of the program for protection against "enemy agents" in a time of war, and other organizations, such as the American Civil Liberties Union, arguing that internment was a mass violation of civil rights. There were also those who accepted the military necessity of temporarily relocating Japanese Americans away from the West Coast (a vulnerable area in wartime), but also questioned how "democratic" a process of internment could actually be, feeling sympathy for those who found themselves hundreds or thousands of miles away in desolate "relocation center." Christian students, however, wasted no time in pointing out the violation of individual freedoms and the negative impact of internment on the future of racial

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<sup>503</sup> Report of S.J. Mills, General Secretary of Committee on Friendly Relations Among Foreign Students, January 1<sup>st</sup>- May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1943, pg. 2, Minutes, 1928-1945, CFR History, Box 58, Kautz Family YMCA Archives.

relations in America. Although the student Christian associations lacked financial and administrative support from the YMCA during the war, Chinese, and Japanese students themselves continued to publish in the Y's newspapers and formed and attended meetings to discuss the problems of internment. Former student Christian association members also joined in larger community organizations devoted to assisting internees and raising public awareness of the severe civil rights violations of EO 9066.

This chapter argues that Christian students played an important role in exposing the hypocrisy of internment and fighting the racial discrimination that internment represented for all minorities in the United States. Historians have certainly not overlooked the importance of this dark chapter of American history, writing many books and articles explaining the nature of internment as well as the experiences of the internees themselves while in the relocation centers. Roger Daniels's *Prisoners without Trials* and Yoshiko Uchida's *Desert Exile: The Uprooting of a Japanese American Family*, for example, combined personal accounts of internment with detailed discussions of the issue of civil rights violations for evacuees.<sup>504</sup> Similarly, Scott Kurashige's work on the racial politics of Los Angeles during and after WWII also provides an analysis of the impact of internment on fostering cross-racial friendships and organizations (as well as tensions).<sup>505</sup>

However, this chapter explores the role of Christian students in protesting internment and

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<sup>504</sup> Roger Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in WWII* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004) and Yoshiko Uchida, *Desert Exile: The Uprooting of a Japanese American Family* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982). See also Matthew Brionnes, *Jim and Jap Crow: A Cultural History of 1940s America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012) and John Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front: Japanese Americans in the House of Jim Crow* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008) for a more in-depth discussion of racism and Japanese American internment. Within the past twenty to thirty years, the subject of internment has shifted from proving the fallacy of the "military necessity" of EO 9066 to exposing the racial undertones and discrimination that lay at the heart of evacuation and internment. The works mentioned above represent this shift in the literature and offer examples of new sources (oral histories, texts in Japanese, etc.) shifted the focus to understanding the Japanese experience with internment in America as well as racism and discrimination during WWII.

<sup>505</sup> Scott Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 108-117, 123-127.

demonstrates that they viewed internment as one among many unchristian aspects of American life and used their networks and organizations to continue their struggle against racism and discrimination even during the turmoil of the war years.

The interaction among Asian students in relation to internment has also been vastly overlooked by historians. These students had their own opinions on internment as well as the future of civil rights and race relations along the West Coast and across America. While historian Gary Okihiro has focused extensively on the experiences of Japanese student internees who were removed from camps and relocated to Midwest and East Coast colleges and universities with the help of the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council (a group to be discussed later in this chapter) and has argued for historians of Asian American history to focus on white-Asian cooperation rather than racial antagonisms, his work does not include interethnic cooperation in terms of civil rights outside of a white-Asian setting.<sup>506</sup> This chapter focuses on the experiences of the students with internment, but also analyzes Chinese and Filipino reactions to internment. While Chinese and Japanese students continued to push for recognition of the decades-long struggles of Asian immigrants and Asian Americans for basic rights and liberties, Filipino students tended to focus primarily on the devastation of the Philippines during WWII and Filipino contributions to the American war effort, demonstrating the complexities of internment and wartime politics for Christian students.

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<sup>506</sup> Gary Okihiro, *Storied Lives: Japanese American Students and World War II* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999).

Although EO9066 was an abrupt, yet mass violation of civil rights, the evacuation and subsequent internment of Japanese had its roots in a longer history of racism and anti-Asian sentiments along the West Coast. While Roosevelt and other state and local officials (including California Governor and Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren) supported evacuation as a “military necessity” in the days following Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor and the United States’ declaration of war against the enemy nation, historians have since re-evaluated the wartime policy as a deeply racist maneuver that rested on anti-Japanese propaganda produced by groups such as the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West, the California State Grange, the Japanese Exclusion League of California, the American Legion, and others before and during WWII.<sup>507</sup> Japan’s proximity to the West Coast during the early days of the war made those who were already suspicious of the “Little Tokios” in cities such as Los Angeles and Seattle and in more rural areas of California, Oregon, and Washington link pride among Japanese Americans in their culture to an unwavering loyalty to the Japanese emperor rather than the American flag.<sup>508</sup> Others along the West Coast, such as white farmers in California, supported evacuation not as a military necessity, but, as the Grower-Shipper Vegetable Association’s official statement on the removal of Japanese Americans explained, “because the white farmers can take over and produce everything the Jap grows.”<sup>509</sup> While the U.S. military did not suspect subversion among the approximately 150,000 Japanese in Hawaii and stated no clear danger or need to evacuate or contain

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<sup>507</sup> See John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986); David K. Yoo, *Growing Up Nisei: Race, Generation, and Culture among Japanese Americans of California, 1924-49* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000); and Lon Kurashige, *Japanese American Celebration and Conflict: Ethnic Identity and Festival in Los Angeles, 1934-1990* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002).

<sup>508</sup> Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 379-383.

<sup>509</sup> Quoted in Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (New York: 1989), 389.

them, by January of 1942 Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt of the Western Defense Command encouraged federal and state officials to view the “288,000 enemy aliens” of Japanese descent along the West Coast as disloyal and potentially dangerous agents of the enemy.<sup>510</sup> During the late winter and early spring of 1942, the War Relocation Authority circulated pamphlets and flyers in an attempt to explain the process as well as encourage voluntary evacuation from the West Coast states (as well as Arizona) to temporary relocation centers. Assisted by the United States Census Bureau (who provided background information on the occupations and activities of Japanese communities), the federal government relocated and interned approximately 110,000 Japanese, including the many Issei leaders of Japanese communities.

On college campuses along the West Coast, however, students discussed what the war would mean for them well before EO 9066 mandated evacuation from military-restricted areas in February of 1942. Although EO 9066 did not take effect until the end of February in 1942, there was push for evacuation from West Coast residents which students could not ignore, even within the relative “safety” of their college campus. While angry Los Angelenos such as Henry McLemore expressed his life-long hatred for the Japanese and called for the “immediate removal of every Japanese...to a deep part in the interior” and for military officials to “herd ‘em up, pack ‘em off, and give ‘em the inside room in the Badlands,” Ed Davis, a student at the University of Washington, also supported evacuation and urged Japanese to “realize that the continuing survival of the U.S. is a greater importance than the freedom of action of a minority, no matter how

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<sup>510</sup> Takaki, *Strangers*, 387.

innocent...” in a *Daily* editorial in February 1942.<sup>511</sup> As early as December 16th of 1941, a group of over 200 Japanese students at the University of Washington met with university officials to discuss their best course of action in the wake of Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor. Japanese students joined together with Dean and Japanese Club advisor Robert O’Brien to “discuss pertinent problems” such as possible actions against Japanese in America and the ideal amount of money that Japanese nationals should withdraw from their bank accounts in case of emergency or the need to return home.<sup>512</sup> On February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1942, the University of Washington YMCA and YWCA hosted a discussion group and invited Tom Bodine, a local member of the American Friends Service Committee (a Quaker organization that assisted foreign students in the past in communities across the U.S.), to speak on how Japanese aliens would be evacuated from the West Coast.<sup>513</sup>

Once news arrived on campus in early March of 1942 that the federal government and the War Relocation Authority (WRA) required Japanese American and foreign-born Japanese to evacuate and temporarily abandon their studies, Japanese students wasted little time in using campus newspapers to express their own opinions on EO 9066. In many cases, Japanese students responded with a stoic certainty that their situations, though unfair, were not a complete surprise and would improve in time. “Don’t feel sorry for us,” a University of Washington Japanese Club member explained in the *Daily*, “we have expected this for some time and are taking the whole thing calmly,” demonstrating the student’s careful analysis of the events that both precipitated and

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<sup>511</sup> Henry McLemore, “This is War! Stop Worrying About Hurting Jap Feelings,” *Los Angeles Times* (January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1942), in Mary Farquarharson Papers, Folder 1-Outgoing Correspondence, 1937-43, University of Washington Special Collections; Ed Davis, “Picking a Bone,” *The University of Washington Daily* (February 25<sup>th</sup>, 1942), 4.

<sup>512</sup> “Japanese Students Club Discusses War Problems,” *The University of Washington Daily* (Dec. 16, 1941), 7.

<sup>513</sup> “Alien Removal YM-YW Topic,” *University of Washington Daily* (February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1942), 3.

resulted from EO 9066.<sup>514</sup> Berkeley student and JSCA member Tom Shibutani also expressed quiet acceptance of evacuation in a 1942 *Daily Cal* editorial, “We Hope to Come Back,” acknowledging that “true, we are being uprooted from the lives that we have always lived, but if the security of the nation rests upon our leaving, then we will gladly do our part.”<sup>515</sup> Although the students appeared defeatist in their acceptance of evacuation, they professed faith in the U.S. government that the process would be fair and, more importantly, they would return to their campus and West Coast homes when it was once again safe to do so. The statements from both students were ones which UW’s Ed Davis would have approved.

Other students, however, voiced their own opinions which were far from quiet acceptance. In the April 1942 edition of the YMCA’s *Intercollegian*, JSCA member and Vice-President of the student YMCA at the University of Washington Kingi Okuda began his article ‘We Must Go’ by describing Christian students’ responsibility in “lead[ing] the way in putting at ease” Japanese students who will have to leave college for a camp, but ended with a grave warning that “this mass movement” of Japanese students to camps and, hopefully, to other colleges and universities outside of the military zones “may arouse racial antagonism and unfortunate situations are almost inevitable.” “We must settle somewhere,” Okuda concluded, “but will the resettlement process be accompanied by tyrannical expressions of Hitleristic mob action, or will the Christian principles which we members of the Student Christian Movement endeavor to practice prevail?”<sup>516</sup> Daiki Miyagawa, another University of Washington student, could not answer Okuda’s haunting question, but insisted that “the evacuee has rights” that could

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<sup>514</sup> “Campus Japanese Face Evacuation,” *University of Washington Daily* (March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1942), 6.

<sup>515</sup> Tom Shibutani, “We Hope to Come Back,” *Daily Cal* (March 1942), 12.

<sup>516</sup> Okuda, “We Must Go,” 12.

not be lost even in the midst of wartime hysteria in his March 1942 guest editorial for the *Washington Daily*.<sup>517</sup> Similar to Toru Matsumoto's 1940 *Japanese Student Bulletin* article which warned of the violation of rights that would accompany the impending world war, Miyagawa expressed concern for the underlying racial motives for internment and the ripening of decades-long anti-Japanese sentiments along the West Coast under EO 9066. "Some of the clamor for a mass exodus comes from those who hope to gain from the evacuees losses, others are impelled by racial reasons," Miyagawa explained in his article and argued that "this business-and-prejudice as usual set up has no place in our war effort...whether their family trees reach back to Benedict Arnold or the Tokugawas [of Japan], fifth columnists must be weeded out...that they are in Congress from Texas should not mean immunity."<sup>518</sup>

Other Japanese students, such as University of Washington sociology major Gordon Hirabayashi, openly defied evacuation during its earliest stages. A Christian, YMCA member, and pacifist, Hirabayashi was openly against warfare, but, during a life-altering decision in early May of 1942, became a civil rights advocate when he first refused to follow a curfew imposed on all Japanese remaining along the West Coast after evacuation earlier in April, choosing instead to remain in the library to finish his studies. In addition to defying the curfew, he later refused to board the last of the buses transporting Japanese out of Seattle and to the temporary camp at Pullayup Fair Grounds in Washington. Hirabayashi then reported to the local U.S. District Attorney in the fall of 1942, stating his refusal to comply with evacuation orders. Hirabayashi submitted a written statement with his act of civil disobedience, explaining that if he "were to register

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<sup>517</sup> Daiki Miyagawa, "Guest Editorial," *University of Washington Daily* (March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1942), 7.

<sup>518</sup> Miyagawa, "Guest Editorial," 7.



and cooperate” with evacuation, he would be “giving helpless consent to the denial of practically all the things which had given [him] the incentive to live.”<sup>519</sup> He continued by stating that it was necessary during wartime to maintain his “Christian principles” and considered it his “duty to maintain the democratic standards for which this nation lives,” concluding with his refusal to abide by the evacuation orders.<sup>520</sup> Hirabayashi’s surrender to the District Attorney resulted in multiple court cases and appeals until Hirabayashi’s defense team (with assistance from the American Friends Service Committee, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the YMCA among others) presented the case to the Supreme Court, where judges ruled in 1943 that both curfew and evacuation/internment were Constitutionally-sound war-time measures.

Did Japanese students who rejected or disapproved of evacuation receive support from their fellow classmates on campus? In many cases, students rallied with their Japanese classmates and decried the tragedy and un-democratic nature of internment. In editorials submitted to campus newspapers such as the University of Washington and the Berkeley’s dailies, students were quick to defend Japanese students against those on campus who failed to see the racist undertones in evacuation. In early March of 1942, two University of Washington students, Oleg Kur and *Daily* editor Russ Braley exchanged heated words over the topic of evacuation. Kur accused Braley of being oblivious to the necessity of internment for Japanese and Japanese Americans, claiming that “in defending the ‘defenseless Japs,’ our honorable Mr. Bradley [sic] forgot his own brothers and sisters. What would the great humanitarian Mr. Bradley say had he seen his

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<sup>519</sup> Pamphlet published by the Gordon Hirabayashi Defense Committee, “The Case of Gordon Hirabayashi-The Case of the American People,” (Seattle, University of Washington 1942), Folder 3, Subject-Series, National Japanese Student Relocation Council Records, University of Washington Special Collections.

<sup>520</sup> “Case of Gordon Hirabayashi,” 2.

fellow schoolmates and neighbors oppressed by the Japs?”<sup>521</sup> Kur warned Braley that “this is WAR...we must crush both the enemy on the outside and the potential enemy on the inside,” emphasizing the cautionary position that other West Coast Americans held on evacuation.<sup>522</sup> In response, Braley informed Kur that his letter was alarming and that he “phoned immediately to see what the Japanese American[s]...had done to my little brothers and sisters. But the little tykes were alright, so I settled down to write you.”<sup>523</sup> “Look chum,” Braley continued, “what conceivable good is it going to do to persecute loyal American citizens because their ancestors were born in a country which we are at war? What do you think they are going to do, burn down the school house?”<sup>524</sup>

Although the back-and-forth newspaper debate between Kur and Braley ended with this question, students voiced their disagreements with evacuation in other venues. Two University of Washington students and YMCA/YWCA members Hildur Coon and Curtiss Adler (along with two faculty members) testified before the Tolan Committee at a series of hearings on the nature and purpose of evacuation lead by House representatives in Seattle in February of 1942. Headed by Oakland, California Democratic Representative John Tolan, the Tolan Committee (formally known as the House Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration) headed a series of meetings in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, and Portland in February and March following the issuance of EO 9066. These hearings featured testimonies from local and state officials as well as members of the public on the potential impact of mass evacuation on Japanese as well as other Americans. At the Seattle hearings, Coon and Adler offered their

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<sup>521</sup> Oleg Kur, “Letter to the Editor,” *University of Washington Daily* (March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1942), 8.

<sup>522</sup> Kur, “Letter,” 8.

<sup>523</sup> Russell Braley, “Reply,” *University of Washington Daily* (March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1942), 10.

<sup>524</sup> Braley, “Reply,” 10.

interpretations of evacuation as well as their opinions on the forced migration of American citizens. The students “urged that evacuation be used only as a last resort” and, if necessary, to be done so in a manner that lives would be interrupted as little as possible (by, for example, making time in relocation centers as brief as possible and finding similar occupations for evacuees in other towns and cities).<sup>525</sup> Coon and Adler also requested that “Nisei students now at the university be excepted[sic] from any evacuations,” arguing that “these students would be able to help Americanize their parents and would be useful in peace work following the war...”<sup>526</sup> A few months later in May of 1942, another UW student Carl J. Romig was enraged when Governor Chase A. Clark of Idaho refused to admit a group of UW Japanese students who had been accepted at the University of Idaho. Romig wrote a letter to the Governor (published in the *Daily*) detailing his anger over the “typical, Nazi-like welcome” that the students received from the townspeople and college administration in Moscow, Idaho.<sup>527</sup>

Surprisingly, given how supportive many of the students were of their Japanese classmates, there was no mass moral or political outrage against the blatant violation of civil liberties on West Coast campuses. While individual students wrote editorials and other articles expressing their views on EO 9066, the evacuation and internment of hundreds of foreign and American-born Japanese failed to garner front-page attention or any in-depth coverage apart from personal opinions. EO 9066 did not even make the “Top Ten” list of events from 1942 at the end of the year edition of the *UW Daily*. Just as students such as Russ Braley believed that internment was unjust and would only

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<sup>525</sup> “U Students Urge Nisei Be Retained,” *University of Washington Daily* (March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1942), 9.

<sup>526</sup> “U Students,” 9.

<sup>527</sup> Carl J. Romig, “What People Think- Letter to Governor Chase A Clark of Boise, Idaho,” *The University of Washington Daily* (May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1942), 7.

create more problems in the future, other students admitted that evacuation was a tragedy, but, ultimately, a necessity during wartime. Apart from testifying at the Tolan committee, there was little group action or organization protesting against internment. A representative of the Berkeley administration explained the university's position on internment when he assured readers in a 1942 *Daily Californian* article that "as far as the manner in which it is carried out, I am confident that the utmost humanity will prevail."<sup>528</sup> So long as the military could be entrusted to carry out the evacuation process as "humanely" as possible, there was little left for Berkeley to do besides "wish all [Japanese students] well..." and maintain that regardless of where the students might find themselves, Americans "will regard them as the sons and daughters" of California and the United States.<sup>529</sup>

Many religious groups, however, did not have the same level of faith in the federal government or other Americans as the administrators at Berkeley. In fact, organizations such as the YMCA/YWCA and the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) were among the most vocal of groups to speak out against the racial and constitutional injustices of evacuation and internment. In a report in 1944 on the University of Washington's YWCA's earliest reactions to internment, the Executive Secretary of the organization explained that "because many Nisei were YMCA members and because, as a Christian organization we were 'professionally' concerned, it became a dominant factor in the Association," and, based on the articles published and actions taken by the organization, this was certainly true.<sup>530</sup> As the report indicated, because

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<sup>528</sup> "Japanese Students Living in Berkeley."

<sup>529</sup> Ibid.

<sup>530</sup> History of YWCA from 1939-1941- Report of the Executive Secretary, March 1944, pg. 2, folder 1, YWCA (UW) Records, University of Washington Records. It is unclear exactly what the author of the

many Japanese Americans were Christians, leaders of the YMCA/YWCA expressed a responsibility to address the injustices of internment as well as to assist evacuees in need. In a July, 1942 article titled ‘The Church and Japanese Evacuation,’ YMCA regional secretary Gordon Chapman cited a statement from a “certain Congressman” which “said that the Japanese in America ‘are pagan in their philosophy, atheistic in their beliefs, alien in their allegiance, and antagonistic to everything for which we stand.’”<sup>531</sup> Chapman vehemently disagreed with the Congressman, arguing that “fully half of the Japanese Americans and a quarter of the non-citizens are Christians or pro-Christianity...this constitutes their claim to our Christian sympathy and interest and support.”<sup>532</sup> While the YMCA tended to see its connection to the problems of evacuation and internment was one of a duty to help protect Japanese and Japanese-American Christians, members also expressed their concern over what EO 9066 meant for the rest of the nation. In April of 1942, the Los Angeles YMCA held a conference and issued a report on “The Japanese Evacuation Situation,” which highlighted the organization’s concern that “we may see the day when our own citizens will be taken from their enforced idleness to do forced labor of a ‘patriotic nature’” now that the federal government had evacuated Japanese Americans from the West Coast.<sup>533</sup> Similar to the Los Angeles YMCA, Edna Morris of the American Friends Service Committee also issued a memo in which she explained that “all constitutional guarantees during war time are threatened by Evacuation Orders” and

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report meant by “professionally” concerned, although the word appears to imply that the YWCA was a devoted to reacting against internment from a religious/personal level as much as an organizational level (based on the mission of the YWCA).

<sup>531</sup> Gordon Chapman, “The Church and Japanese Evacuation,” (July 21<sup>st</sup>, 1942), Kautz Family YMCA Archives, 5.

<sup>532</sup> Chapman, “The Church,” 5.

<sup>533</sup> “Third Report on the Japanese Evacuation Situation-Prepared by the Committee on Student Relocation and Distributed by the Regional Office of the Student YMCA and YWCA, Los Angeles,” April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1942, Folder 3, Japanese Student Relocation records, University of Washington Special Collections.

warned that “if Japanese can be deprived of both property and law without judicial procedure...and established a dangerous precedent.”<sup>534</sup>

After the first initial phase of evacuation in early March, the YMCA and American Friends Service Committee also expressed disappointment in themselves and in Americans more generally for not speaking out effectively against evacuation. In a March 1942 letter to Galen Fisher (a long-time YMCA leader in student affairs who became active with the Committee on National Security and Fair Play—an organization devoted to the protection of constitutional rights for evacuees---after the group’s founding in 1942), YMCA national administrator Arthur Jorgensen explained that “ while it was proper and necessary for the Christian forces to collaborate with the Government in this evacuation...it would have been more to the point to have declared the fundamental question of the constitutional rights of the Nisei” more vocally and from the very beginning of evacuation.<sup>535</sup> Similarly, Edna Morris (of the American Friends Service Committee) also argued that “another serious phase of the situation [of evacuation] from the standpoint of democracy is that these Evacuation Orders were issued and executed with almost no protest or opposition from responsible people, the general public, the church or the press.”<sup>536</sup> Both the YMCA and AFSC lamented that neither they nor many Americans voiced any serious opposition to evacuation or internment and waited too long to begin outlining the constitutional violations and racist underpinnings of EO 9066.

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<sup>534</sup> Edna W. Morris, “Memo on Problems Caused by Evacuation Orders Affecting Japanese and Problems of Organization of the AFSC Work on the Pacific Coast,” July, 1942, Folder 1, American Friends Service Committee Forms and Procedure (July 1942-October 1942), University of Washington Special Collections.

<sup>535</sup> Letter from Arthur Jorgensen to Galen Fisher, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1942, Box 66, YMCA Armed Services Records, Kautz Family YMCA Archives.

<sup>536</sup> Morris, “Memo on Problems,” 10-11.

As opposed to the administrators of the YMCA and AFSC, the student branches of these and various other Christian organizations were more vocal in their opposition to evacuation and generally more concerned with what EO 9066 meant for the future of American race relations. The National Intercollegiate Christian Council (a student organization associated with the World Student Christian Federation and the Student Christian Movement associations in the United States) had one of the strongest policies in regards to evacuation, particularly in terms of Japanese students. Edmonia White Grant, the program secretary for the National Intercollegiate Christian Council (NICC) as well as a member of the NAACP, wrote an article in 1942 titled “Fair Play for American Fellow Students of Japanese Descent” and asked readers a series of direct questions in relation to evacuation.<sup>537</sup> “Are Japanese Americans guaranteed the Four Freedoms?” Grant asked, replying that “religious freedom seems to be guarantee these citizens in as much as they are allowed to worship to their choice in both assembly and relocation centers, but they have been uprooted from the churches which they helped build in their local communities,” recasting evacuation and subsequently internment as a violation of the basic constitutional right of freedom of religion.<sup>538</sup> Grant also asked fellow NICC members if evacuation was “a racial problem” and informed readers that, indeed, it was, explaining that “inasmuch as Japanese Americans and alien Japanese have been treated

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<sup>537</sup> Grant was an African American woman, NAACP member, and research assistant in sociology at Fisk University who worked with various civil rights and racial equality organizations in the South during the 1930s and through the post-WWII period. Grant was also heavily involved with Christian organizations such as the YM/YWCA and, during internment, spoke out against the discrimination of Japanese and Japanese Americans. More importantly, however, Grant linked the racism prevalent in internment to the discrimination of all minority groups in the United States. Her book *American Minority People during World War II* (published in 1942) is one of her better known works which outlines her analysis of the wartime experience for various racial and ethnic groups.

<sup>538</sup> Edmonia Grant, “Fair Play for American Fellow Students of Japanese Descent,” 1942, 3.

differently from German and Italian-Americans and aliens who are white, this in part becomes a racial issue.”<sup>539</sup>

Grant concluded by reinstating the connection between evacuation and the NICC’s devotion to ending racial prejudice and promoting Christian brotherhood in the U.S. and around the world. “If our conception of a genuinely Christian brotherhood society is a true concept,” Grant informed readers, “we must direct ourselves toward the furthering of a world order which provides every individual, regardless of race, creed, or national origin, the opportunity to participate in and share alike all the relationships of life” and also argued that “the unjust treatment of minorities within the U.S. not only contributes to national but international division and must be corrected if the U.S. is to lead the struggle for freedom.”<sup>540</sup> Grant also explained that evacuation highlighted not only America’s racial problems, but also those racial problems that operated outside of a white-black binary. “Too often in the past,” Grant lamented, “our attention has been directed only to minority problems as they relate to Negroes and we have not faced the total problem of minority groups within our country.”<sup>541</sup> Grant continued by providing a brief overview of the history of race relations in the U.S., arguing that “the crux of our present minority problem lies in the attitude of the majority not only to Negroes, but to all colored peoples: mixed blood, Indian, Chinese, Hindu, Japanese, African and others” and urging readers to understand that “we must see our constitutional amendments which made racial bars to citizenship illegal have failed to achieve political democracy in the United States...”<sup>542</sup> Grant concluded with a powerful statement that tied internment in

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<sup>539</sup> Grant, “Fair Play,” 3.

<sup>540</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>541</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>542</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.



with previous civil rights violations in America: “Negroes have continued to be confronted with the color bar...but they have not been alone—this bar has been extended to other groups.”<sup>543</sup>

The *Intercollegian* (the YMCA’s student publication) also featured articles and editorials similar to those written by Grant. A particularly powerful piece was the April 1942 article titled “American War Victims,” which placed Japanese and Japanese American evacuees in the category of tragedies brought about by WWII. But, as the author pointed out to readers,” the human tragedy of tearing 112,000 human beings from lifetime homes, associates, and occupations is only part of it; it means more than gigantic problems in human readjustment and more than is implied in calling it a national defense measure.”<sup>544</sup> More importantly, internment meant that “the processes and ideals of American democracy have suffered a major set-back under pressure of war...on the basis of racial origin.”<sup>545</sup> The author explained that “as a Student Christian Movement, it is not our place to sit in judgment on the imperatives of national defense...but when we see clear violation of the fundamental principles of human brotherhood and individual justice, we feel qualified to speak for such principles are at the heart of our movement and such imperatives, not luxuries, to a democracy at war...we believe we are seeing such a violation.”<sup>546</sup> As a result of America’s violations of basic human rights, the Student Christian Movement protested the “mass evacuation order and the principles of racial discrimination and denial of human rights on which it is based.”<sup>547</sup> The author also

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<sup>543</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>544</sup> “American War Victims,” *Intercollegian* (April 1942), 123.

<sup>545</sup> “War Victims,” 123.

<sup>546</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>547</sup> Ibid., 123.

recognized that “blind fear and inflamed hatred” unfortunately “reduc[ed] these thousands of uprooted peoples to the status of refugees and peons.”<sup>548</sup>

Christian student groups also sought ways to combat the racism and discrimination that they believed supported internment (if they could not directly stop the military orders themselves). One *Intercollegian* article from April of 1942 outlined the Student Christian Movement’s “demands” in relation to evacuation and internment, which included “supporting the Committee on National Security and Fair Play in demanding fair boards of review in army reception centers to consider the case of each Japanese individually” and educating others on the “vital importance of government subsidy or provision for continuing higher education and secondary education for the American born Japanese torn from West Coast schools and colleges.”<sup>549</sup> Similarly, Dean Leeper, a graduate student at the University of Washington as well as a director of the campus International House and staff member at the YMCA, “spoke on the need for a world out-look and world and racial fellowships” to help understand and navigate evacuation and internment.<sup>550</sup> While evacuation was indeed a civil rights violation for thousands of Japanese American citizens, Leeper also stressed that internment “may lose us the war because China, India, and all the darker-skinned people are watching our treatment of colored folk in this country” and urged “that every effort be made to relocate the Japanese American college students so that this leadership may be saved for Christianity and democracy.”<sup>551</sup> While organizations such as the American Civil

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<sup>548</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>549</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>550</sup> Minutes of YMCA Regional Council Meeting (Barton, OR), October 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>, 1942, Student Regional Council, Pacific Northwest, 1941, 1944, 1949 Folder, Student Work Records, Kautz Family YMCA Archives.

<sup>551</sup> Minutes.

Liberties Union and the AFSC focused on the violation of civil rights in internment, student Christian organizations such as the NICC and student branch of the YM/YWCA argued that racism and discrimination were at the heart of injustices caused by EO 9066.

While denouncing evacuation and internment in the name of racial equality was an important goal for student Christian groups, assisting interned Japanese students in returning to college was also a primary task. As early as May of 1942, the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council (NJASRC--founded by a variety of Christian groups including the American Friends Service Committee, Committee on Friendly Relations Among Foreign Students, and the YMCA and assisted by the War Relocation Authority) began to assist Japanese students in leaving the camps in order to continue and complete their high school and post-secondary studies.<sup>552</sup> Since West Coast schools were located in the military defense zone, colleges and universities in the mid-west and along the East Coast were the main choices for those students wishing to continue their education. In order to relocate, the WRA required that students (with the help of the NJASRC) first be qualified for admission at an approved institution and also be able to financially support their education (either through savings, scholarships, work, or aid from an organization such as the YMCA). Letters of recommendation, good grades, and excellent character (as described in worksheets provided to universities by the NJASRC describing religious background, “friendliness,” “obedience,” and other favored qualities) were the usual requirements for leaving the camps and beginning studies at another institution.<sup>553</sup> By the spring of 1943, the WRA had cleared over two

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<sup>552</sup> Charles Iglehart, Foreign Missions Conference, New York, Committee on Asia-Japanese American Resettlement (May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1943), Folder 2:5, AFSC Records, University of Washington Special Collections.

<sup>553</sup> The list of characteristics on forms used in placing Japanese students in colleges and universities speaks to the rise of the model minority myth which most historians describe as a post-WWII phenomenon.

hundred colleges and universities as “reception schools” and 550 students had left camps and resettled in institutions mainly in the mid-west, the South, and along the East Coast.<sup>554</sup>

In many cases, the work of the Relocation Council appeared to be a necessity as well as a humanitarian effort. Reports on camp conditions often revealed less than encouraging descriptions of life for young Japanese Americans. In September of 1943, a field director for the Relocation Council warned that “when a person visits a project for just a few days or so, he can easily fail to realize that he is seeing only the people who are sympathetic to the cause of the Japanese,” speaking to the number of TIME and LIFE magazine articles that displayed glossy photos of Japanese American families at home in the modest, yet comfortable furnishings of the camps or young Nisei playing games and socializing at dances.<sup>555</sup> The field director went on to explain that “there are many people...among the high school personnel who are not sympathetic to the Japanese and who are specifically hostile to the idea of Japanese Americans getting a college education,” crediting these ideas to a mixture of racism and “realism” in that “it is a mistake for a Japanese American to think in terms of a college education since he is

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However, as historians Gary Okihiro have explained, in many cases, the argument can be made that the myth of the model minority was born in the internment camps and evacuation centers: in order to relocate to an outside job or college, internees had to prove that they were both loyal to the U.S. and model, well-behaved citizens. In his work *From Concentration Camp to Campus: Japanese American Students and WWII* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2007), historian Austin Allen examined the work of the Relocation Council as well as the students’ experiences in camp and, later, in college and concluded that as a result of internment, Japanese American students were able to “reintegrate” themselves into American society without “sacrificing their connections to their Japanese cultural heritage.” While Allen’s work is useful for its extensive research into the Council’s records, he does not provide an in-depth analysis of the particular form of assimilation that he ascribes to Japanese American students. Based on his argument, it would appear as though students fully embraced assimilation in order to become better Americans rather than using it as a strategy to leave the internment camps.

<sup>554</sup> Iglehart, Foreign Missions; Information Bulletin No. 8 (December 5<sup>th</sup>, 1942), folder 25-2, AFSC Records, University of Washington Special Collections.

<sup>555</sup> Report of the Field Director, delivered at the Council Meeting, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1943, pg. 4, folder 3, National Japanese American Student Relocation Council Records, University of Washington Special Collections.

destined to be only a manual laborer anyway.”<sup>556</sup> A newsletter from the AFSC told the camp story “of the Caucasian history teacher who told her class ‘Today we will study the Constitution’ and the class laughed and tittered so that they never did” as well as the accusations from one camp internee that “the Caucasians on the WRA staff [were] setting up a whole Jim Crow system of their own” in the relocation centers.<sup>557</sup> In general, reports indicated that racism and discrimination were facts of daily life in the camps and even the WRA admitted that the “Nisei as a group [were] dissatisfied with the treatment they have received from the government” and “disillusioned...frustrated...and bitter.”<sup>558</sup> Conditions in the camps had the potential to turn a loyal, successful Japanese American student into a resentful and bitter individual, disillusioned with American democracy and, as the WRA indicated, a possible political and social danger while in camp and later in the larger society after release.<sup>559</sup>

University presidents and administrators such as Robert Sproul of the University of California also supported the relocation and resettlement of students in camps for the sake of their futures and the future of the nation. “As a university administrator,” Sproul (who was also on the Relocation Council) began in a 1942 letter to the Tolan Committee, “I am particularly interested in the fate of those young citizens of Japanese ancestry who are being forced to leave colleges and universities in the restricted areas...they, above all

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<sup>556</sup> Report, 4.

<sup>557</sup> Fellowship of Reconciliation, “Colonists in Wyoming-What about Japanese Americans?” (November 1942), 2-3.

<sup>558</sup> WRA Quarterly Report (July 1-Sept. 30, 1942), pg. 2, folder 2-6, AFSC Records, Bancroft Library.

<sup>559</sup> WRA Quarterly, 2. The threat of revolt in the camps was a constant concern for both the WRA as well as the military. Centers such as Tule Lake in California were primarily for those internees suspected of insurgency or disloyalty to the U.S.

others, will provide the leadership for their racial minority group in the future years.”<sup>560</sup>

Like other West Coast Americans, Sproul expressed his belief that the Nisei would serve as the leaders for the Japanese community (an idea which had its roots in the solution to the “Japanese problem” mentioned in Chapter Two) as well as his concern that the internment centers would damage young Japanese Americans and their worldview. “It is essential to the welfare of the nation,” Sproul pleaded to the Tolan Committee, “that these leaders be given every opportunity to complete their preparation for responsibility in a way which will insure wholehearted loyalty to this country.”<sup>561</sup> For Sproul, resettlement would not only benefit Japanese American students and the Japanese community, but would also ensure a generation of loyal American citizens who were at risk of becoming disillusioned and bitter while in camp.

Many university administrators agreed with Sproul and opened up their campuses to those Japanese American students desiring to leave camp to continue their studies.<sup>562</sup> Some institutions such as the University of Tennessee, the University of the South, the University of San Francisco, and Susquehanna University in Pennsylvania were either hesitant to accept students or refused to have Japanese American internees in their institutions for fear of the local community criticizing the decision to enroll the students or, in the case of the University of Tennessee, a belief that “this war has given evidence of character in the Japanese” that made interned students an uninvited group on

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<sup>560</sup> Letter to Honorable John H. Tolan, Chairman Selection Committee of Investigation National Defense Migration from Robert Sproul, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1942, AFSC Records, University of Washington Special Collections.

<sup>561</sup> Letter to John H. Tolan.

<sup>562</sup> While many Japanese American students were eager to leave the camps for college, others were more hesitant to leave their families behind and chose to petition the WRA to find work near the relocation center they were stationed at or chose to remain in camp with their families. Many students who were approved to relocate to an institution to continue their education never left camp because their parents encouraged them to remain until the entire family unit could relocate.

campus.<sup>563</sup> Others, including those West Coast schools which the Army eventually cleared for accepting relocated Japanese students, were eager to welcome returning and new Japanese students to campus. James E. Edminston, a member of the Relocation Council who assisted students with resettlement and re-enrollment in college, was happy to report to the council in April of 1945 that Stanford University, San Jose State College, and the high schools of Santa Clara County in California were “warm and enthusiastic” in their acceptance of Japanese students, despite still lingering feelings of anti-Japanese sentiment in the larger communities.<sup>564</sup> Although the President of the Compton Junior College was “cordial, though by no means enthusiastic” towards the idea of welcoming Japanese students, La Verne College in California was “open and anxious to have students” and also went as far as to provide scholarships and other forms of financial aid to students who were cleared for relocation from the Manzanar center in California.<sup>565</sup> Similarly, Robert Galbraith, president of Westminster College in New Wilmington, Pennsylvania, was eager to accept Japanese students and hoped that even a small number of resettled students would erode the “pride in the fact that there are no ‘foreigners’ in the neighborhood” in New Westminster and that “the presence of these boys will help break

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<sup>563</sup> Letter from University of Tennessee, Knoxville to the Relocation Council, Box 691, Relocation Council Records, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University; Letter from Susquehanna University to Relocation Council, Box 691, Relocation Council Records; Letter from University of the South to Reverend George Wieland (August 4<sup>th</sup> 1942), Box 270, Relocation Council Records; Mary Jean Kennedy, Report from the University of San Francisco (undated), Box 679, Relocation Council Records. While the military prohibited most colleges and universities along the West Coast from admitting Japanese and Japanese American students, any institution that was deemed a site of potential military vulnerability because of its proximity to a military base, a plant or factory which made materials necessary for the war, or any organization associated with the military could be prevented from admitting students. For example, Northwestern University in Chicago, IL was not able to admit Japanese or Japanese American students by orders from the army because approximately eighty percent of the research conducted on campus related to military defense investigation. See “Northwestern University will Bar American Japs from Courses,” *Chicago Sun* (April 30<sup>th</sup> 1942), 4.

<sup>564</sup> Letter from James E. Edminston to Relocation Council (April 1945), San Jose State College Folder, Relocation Council Records, Bancroft Library Special Collections.

<sup>565</sup> Letter from Pop Whitten to Betty Emlen, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1945, Relocation Council Records, Bancroft Library Special Collections.

down a definitely un-American tradition and...do us all good.”<sup>566</sup> Universities across the country recognized that admitting Japanese students might bring a worldlier atmosphere to their campuses as well as assist relocated students in finishing their educations.

Relocated students themselves often expressed their opinions on their experiences as newcomers at schools hundreds and thousands of miles away from home and as racial minorities on campus. During a Christian student conference in 1944, JSCA member Tek Sakurai (a student originally from California who relocated to Wooster College in rural Massachusetts with the assistance of the Relocation Council) recalled how his “long hibernation in the [internment] center” had allowed him to forget “much of the problems of other races and groups—the Negro, the sharecroppers, the migratory workers, the Mexicans, the Indians, and the Jews,” an unfortunate fact he realized once he left camp and began to interact with other student groups as he once had in California before evacuation.<sup>567</sup> Earlier, in 1943, student internee Kenji Okuda wrote a letter to Mary Farquardson, a member of the AFSC in Washington who assisted with the resettlement of Japanese, in which he explained that he and fellow interned students felt that “more interracial understanding” was needed in the camps.<sup>568</sup> Okuda requested “more Negro speakers...and also other minority speakers” and demanded “more action and less talk” from the organizers of the camps.<sup>569</sup> For students such as Sakurai and Okuda who were engaged in campus organizations and familiarized with social issues before E.O. 9066 forced them from their homes, the camps were a dehumanizing place in the sense that an

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<sup>566</sup> Letter from Robert Galbraith to Relocation Council, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 1944, Relocation Council Records, Bancroft Library Special Collections.

<sup>567</sup> In Robert O’Brien, “Selective Dispersion as a Factor in the Solution of the Nisei Problem Folder,” *Social Forces*, Vol. 23, 2 (December 1944), 146-147.

<sup>568</sup> Letter from Kenji Okuda to Mary Farquardson, Mary Farquardson Papers, Folder 1, University of Washington Special Collections.

<sup>569</sup> Letter from Okuda.



internee was cut off from the social problems of other groups and the rest of humanity (a terrible fate for Christian students devoted to world-wide fellowship).

Other resettled students continued their missions of interracial friendship and Christian understanding at their new schools. Although the JSCA itself ceased operations during WWII, Christian Japanese and Japanese American students still had the opportunity to form their own associations and groups while in the relocation camps. In March of 1943, the Pacific Southwest branch of the World Student Christian Federation assisted interned students in forming a Student Christian Association at the Tule Lake center, while later that same year, the Tule Lake Christian Japanese students invited students from California colleges and universities to camp to attend a “Little Asilomar” conference a few weeks prior to the YMCA-sponsored main Asilomar event in Berkeley.<sup>570</sup> Problems of racism, discrimination, poverty, and the role of Christianity in social problems in the U.S. and around the world were topics of conversation at the Little Asilomar at Tule Lake, just as they were at conferences and discussion groups Japanese students had attended before.<sup>571</sup> With many of the same activities that Christian students had engage in prior to coming to the camps continuing during internment, resettled students were eager to return to their pre-internment lives which included outreach, Christian discussion groups and conferences, and promoting interracial harmony.

On campuses in the east and mid-west, Japanese students often found that reaching out to other students was as much a strategy for survival on campus as a minority as it was for building interracial friendships. In many cases, a relocated student would find that he or she was the only Japanese student on campus or one of a small

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<sup>570</sup> Wilmina Rowland, “Realism about Relocation- A New SCA,” *Intercollegian* (March 1943), 36; “Little Asilomars,” *Intercollegian* (January 1944), 136.

<sup>571</sup> “Little Asilomars,” 136.

group of resettled internees (unlike at the larger state universities along the West Coast where Asian students were concentrated in higher numbers). Also, the Relocation Council as well as other student groups often advised relocated students to resist the urge to seek out other Japanese students and form cliques; such actions were sure to draw attention to a minority group that, in many communities, may already appear suspicious during wartime.<sup>572</sup> Reaching out to students from a variety of racial and/or ethnic backgrounds may have been the only way that students could socialize while at their new institution if they were the only Japanese student on campus. These experiences often shaped the ways in which Japanese students conducted themselves while on campus and attempted to build contacts.

The ways in which Japanese students described their attempts at interracial friendship and understanding echoed early missions of cultural-bridge building in student Christian groups. In a letter from March of 1945 to the Relocation Council, student Sumiko Fujii (a transplant to Vermont from Washington) explained “I realize[d] that since I will be the first Japanese to ever attend Bennington or to ever be seen by most of the people in Vermont, my job will not only be one of studying hard, but also one of creating good public relations with the Caucasians who I will be in contact with, so that I may pave the way for more Japanese Americans who might be interested in attending

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<sup>572</sup> This was a common piece of advice for any group resettled internees, including laborers and families who were eventually cleared for relocation by the WRA towards the end of the war. The AFSC of the Midwest played an important role in helping relocate Japanese families to Chicago, but warned that they should not congregate in Japanese communities and prevent the recreation of Little Tokios that had raised so much suspicion in West Coast communities during the early twentieth century. The reasoning of the AFSC and the Relocation Council for advising Japanese to not resettle or socialize in groups was twofold: 1) there was a general concern that communities which were not familiar with Japanese or Japanese Americans may not be welcoming to resettled internees in the midst of anti-Japanese war hysteria and 2) there was also a belief that resettlement was an opportunity to help both Nisei and Issei fully assimilate into American society and culture, something that was not possible along the West Coast as a result of the ethnic enclaves in cities such as Seattle and Los Angeles.

schools in Vermont.”<sup>573</sup> Fujii continued by describing his mission as an “ambassador of goodwill” while at Bennington College, which involved “trying very hard so that I do not commit any blunders which will be detrimental to . . . attitudes toward other Japanese Americans.”<sup>574</sup> Tamio Kitano, a former JSCA member who received his undergraduate degree from Harvard University and was attending graduate school on the West Coast when evacuation began in 1942, advised other Japanese students who had resettled at Brigham Young University in Utah to be sure to attend religious assemblies on campus every Tuesday and Thursday “to make the Caucasians think that we are at least loyal to the assemblies, although it may be dry, which it usually is.”<sup>575</sup> Readjusting to campus life meant trying to form friendships with white students and, when necessary, attending dull church services in the name of ambassadorship. Other resettled students viewed their time on campus as a way to erase misunderstandings about the Japanese and create cultural understanding. Campus organizations and local religious groups from the nearby community would often invite Japanese students to speak on Japanese culture, racial discrimination, and the internment experience at discussion groups and gatherings. Masaye Nagao recounted in a letter to the Relocation Council that “many of the organizations in Kansas City have asked the Park College Nisei to speak about evacuation and their experience” and that “it has been interesting to me to know how much of the misunderstandings and prejudice had arisen because of lack of information and knowledge.”<sup>576</sup> Nagao’s remarks were particularly potent considering the rash of racial intimidation and harassment that other students encountered in the Kansas City

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<sup>573</sup> Letter from Sumiko Fujii to Relocation Council (March 3, 1945), Bancroft Library Special Collections.

<sup>574</sup> Letter from Sumiko Fujii.

<sup>575</sup> Letter from Tamio Kitano to Relocation Council (April 5<sup>th</sup>, 1943), Bancroft Library Special Collections.

<sup>576</sup> Letter from Masaye Nagao from College Park, MO to Relocation Council (March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1943), Bancroft Library Special Collections.

area and surrounding communities. One student at Park College (located in Parkville, MO near Kansas City) described having no problems while on campus with other students, but being harassed and taunted one night by a group of men while returning back to her dorm after dinner in town.<sup>577</sup> Despite the racial problems near Park College, Nagao was determined that “our little bit will help in clearing up some of the misunderstandings in this community and elsewhere.”<sup>578</sup>

Other students had similar goals as Nagao while resettled on campus. By 1943, approximately 600 students had been “resettled” at colleges and universities with the help of the Relocation Council, presenting more students with the opportunity to leave the internment camps and travel to campuses across the U.S.<sup>579</sup> Yutaka Kobayoshi, a student who relocated to Alfred University in New York, excitedly wrote in a letter to the Relocation Council that the university chaplain “tells me that the Hi-Y<sup>580</sup> group in Cornell would like to hear something about the YMCA on the West Coast, so I may have a chance to speak there,” but also described his surprise by “the ignorance of people on the East Coast. Most of the students know nothing about evacuation...one of them actually asked me whether the rest of the Nisei spoke English and another history teacher asked me why the Isseis were not citizens!”<sup>581</sup> For Kobayoshi, the opportunity to speak to a student group at Cornell on the history of the YMCA along the West Coast was also an opportunity to educate East Coast Americans on the realities of life as a Japanese American. Similarly, Grayce Kaneda, a Japanese student attending college near

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<sup>577</sup> Letter from Mary Ono to Council (May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1943), Bancroft Library Special Collections.

<sup>578</sup> Letter from Masay Nagao.

<sup>579</sup> Okihiro, *Storied Lives*, 100-101.

<sup>580</sup> “Hi-Y” was an informal name for the Cornell University branch of the YMCA.

<sup>581</sup> Emphasis in the original. Letter from Yutaka Kobayoshi from Alfred, NY to the Relocation Council, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1943, Bancroft Library Special Collections.

Richmond Virginia, described an encounter she had with the mother of a prisoner of war in Shikoku, Japan in a letter to the Relocation Council. While the encounter had the potential to disintegrate into a troubling affair, Kaneda explained that “the mother, after meeting me and talking with me, felt much more secure about her son as she saw that all Japanese are not cruel pagans” and also enjoyed “this opportunity to say the things that need to be said, which makes up for whatever loneliness I feel due to the scarcity of Japanese in this community.”<sup>582</sup> While Kaneda expressed her belief that “much hatred is based on ignorance and not realizing what true democracy means,” she also explained that by speaking with other students and members of the community, she was “trying to make people understand what practicing Christianity is and what it can mean for our post-war world.”<sup>583</sup> “I think many of us do not realize that what we want in our post-war world, must be started today within our own hearts,” Kaneda poignantly concluded, “to respond to the needs of people...in other words, ‘Dare to be Christians.’”<sup>584</sup>

Other relocated students had a more difficult time in building cultural bridges at their new schools. In April of 1943, a relocated student at a university in Chicago with the last name Yamato describe in a transcribed letter his initial encounter with a Chinese student on campus. Upon arriving at the school, Yamato was able to secure a room at a boarding house in town not far from campus, but had a difficult time adjusting to life there and making friends. Not only was Yamato not able to easily make friends on campus for the “feeling there was...greater against him,” but a Chinese student also

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<sup>582</sup> Letter from Grace Kaneda to Relocation Council, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 1944, Bancroft Library Special Collections.

<sup>583</sup> Letter from Grace Kaneda.

<sup>584</sup> Ibid.

living at the boarding house refused to continue his stay as soon as Yamato arrived.<sup>585</sup>

The student moved out of the house “because [Yamato] was allowed to room there.”<sup>586</sup>

However, once this Chinese student became ill later in the semester, Yamato, “learning of his illness, went to see him, took him gifts and fruit from his home, and was so kind to him that he won his friendship” in the end.<sup>587</sup> Incidents similar to those that Yamato and the students at Park College in Missouri reported once arriving at their new homes are few and far between. This does not imply that such unreported issues did not happen, but, judging from hundreds of letters written by relocated students, campus was a relatively welcoming and safe place to be for Japanese students during WWII.<sup>588</sup>

For many Christian Asian students across the U.S., relocation and internment were troubling affairs involving both civil and human rights violations. Statements from individual students on internment are rare, but when other Asian students joined together in groups to speak out against the injustices confronted by the Japanese, they made a lasting impression. In October of 1942, the Japanese American Evacuation Resettlement on the West Coast Committee held its second meeting on “The Fight for the Civil Rights of Evacuees” and discussed, among other things, the “international repercussions” of

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<sup>585</sup> Letter from J.A. Nail (written on behalf of a student named Yamato) to Relocation Council, April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1943, Bancroft Library Special Collections.

<sup>586</sup> Letter from J.A. Nail.

<sup>587</sup> Ibid.

<sup>588</sup> Incidents off campus between newly relocated students and other community members were more common and less pleasant than those on campus. For instance, a relocated student to a college in the South wrote to the council explaining that not only did the school make it very difficult for him to attend classes (despite agreeing on his acceptance the year before), but he was forced to try and find employment in the local community while attempting to finish his education. As a racial outsider in the South and a member of the “enemy race” during WWII, the student settled for a low-paying manual job at a local factory and experienced the biracial racism of the South first-hand. See Gary Okihiro, *Storied Lives* and Leslie Bow, *Partly Colored: Asian Americans and Racial Anomaly in the Segregate South* (New York: New York University Press, 2010) for a more in-depth discussion of the encounters and interactions between Japanese and Asian Americans in the South, both on and off campus.

evacuation.<sup>589</sup> During this meeting members debated “the effect of mass evacuation of the Japanese and their detention on our relations with China? India?” as well as the “the effect on other colored races.”<sup>590</sup> These were questions which the Christian students addressed earlier, but for different reasons than this group. Another member followed up this question with an explanation that “the reaction of racial minorities in this country is shown in the Negro paper *The Crisis* which says, ‘If they can do this to the Japanese, they can try it on us,’” but also added that “a student at Mills College told me that the Chinese aren’t saying anything publicly, but among themselves, they are leaning, right now, in being on the right side politically but they can’t tell how long it will last.”<sup>591</sup> “The Chinese feel,” another member argued,” that if there is any shift in the war in China, the Chinese here might be evacuate in the same way as the Japanese have been” and that “the experience of the Chinese after the completion of the Southern Pacific Railroad here in the West they are welcome only to a certain point while they are useful, and that they are in danger of the mobs.”<sup>592</sup> This particular discussion portrays an underlying concern among the committee members for the effects of internment on race relations in the U.S. and international relations rather than issues of civil or human rights. The Chinese student from Mills College who managed to make his or her anonymous way into the member’s report did so only to reinforce the member’s opinion that internment was poor practice for the U.S. in the midst of a war and while trying to rebuild international relations when the war was over. The voices of the Chinese are mingled with the ideas

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<sup>589</sup> Japanese American Evacuation Resettlement on the West Coast, Second Meeting Minutes, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1942, pg. 24, Section IV-The Fight for the Civil Rights of Evacuees, folder 2, AFSC records, Bancroft Library Special Collections.

<sup>590</sup> Second Meeting Minutes, 25.

<sup>591</sup> Ibid., 25-28.

<sup>592</sup> Ibid., 27-28.

and beliefs of the committee members, creating a complex picture of what the Chinese and other Asian groups expressed about internment and civil rights.<sup>593</sup>

But resolutions passed by Asian student Christian groups in regards to internment present a clearer image of how and why these students protested against the violation of civil rights for thousands of Americans of Japanese descent. The protests of Asian students against internment were more than just an expression of fear that the same thing could happen to any Asian or minority group in the U.S. as did the Japanese. These students recognized that while internment was part of large-scale, government-endorsed violation of civil rights for minorities of all backgrounds, they had a special role to play as Asians in speaking out against internment. Despite the ethnic tensions from the Second Sino-Japanese War as well as the Pacific atrocities during WWII, Christian Chinese students identified the inherent problems of racial discrimination present in EO 9066. The students' protests against internment were even more unique when considering the ways in which WWII created a certain degree of Chinese acceptance among Americans. As a result of China's alliance with the U.S. during the War, not only did the federal government lift the ban on Chinese migration to America, but also granted some naturalization rights to Chinese already residing in the U.S. under the 1943 Magunson Act.<sup>594</sup> While many Chinese Americans benefitted from China's alliance with the U.S. in terms of granting of naturalization rights and the lifting of immigration exclusion under the 1943 Magunson Act, many Americans, as historian K. Scott Wong

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<sup>593</sup> Materials relating to the reactions of the Chinese to internment could be available in a language other than English, but since this dissertation focuses on English-speaking students and their publications, the use of these sources (if they exist) remain a potentially fascinating case study for historians pursuing future projects relating to interethnic discussions of internment. Kurashige's work on the relations between Japanese Americans and African Americans during and after World War II is an example of how internment brought together groups over the issue of housing and rights in Los Angeles, but does not explicitly address Chinese or other Asian groups' reactions to evacuation and internment.

<sup>594</sup> Takaki, *Strangers*, 323-325.



explains, associated the Chinese and China with a heroic struggle against the danger and ruthlessness of the Japanese.<sup>595</sup> As many Chinese joined the war effort through patriotic campaigns, jobs, and varying levels of military service, there was motivation for Chinese Americans to continue to define themselves against the Japanese in order to build relations with other Americans that could prove to be beneficial during and after the war. This wartime climate which allowed many Chinese Americans to gain a greater level of acceptance in the U.S. (although by no means completely shedding their “orientalness” or doing away with racial discrimination) made the activism of Christian Chinese students all the more radical and surprising.

Rather than insist on differentiating themselves from the Japanese or remaining silent on internment, many Christian Chinese students spoke out against what they saw as a dramatic limitation on the rights of Americans. In August of 1943, CSCA member and University of Colorado student Beula Ong helped in leading a Christian Chinese student retreat at Lake Tahoe, where the topic of internment was vital for attendees of the event. After discussing the problems of internment for Christians, the students passed a resolution “asking for fair play for loyal American citizens of Japanese descent.”<sup>596</sup> Although the resolution from the 1943 Lake Tahoe conference emphasized fair play for those of American descent (speaking little of the experiences of Issei as non-citizens with internment), at the same conference two years later, the tone of the resolution the students passed had changed considerably.

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<sup>595</sup> K. Scott Wong, *Americans First: Chinese Americans and the Second World War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 72-81.

<sup>596</sup> Newsletter from August 18<sup>th</sup>, 1943, Counselor Letters #5, Folder 25, Asian American Pacific Islander Collection, Asian Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

The reason for the change of tone at the June 1945 conference was largely a result of the foreseeable end of internment. By the summer of 1945, with many of the former Japanese internees resettled in either schools or communities far away from the West Coast and the threat of subversion from both Nisei and Issei agents in the U.S. believed to be controlled, the WRA announced that the organization would be closing the internment and relocation centers by the late fall of 1945.<sup>597</sup> The 1945 Lake Tahoe Meeting was larger than the 1943 conference and focused more on integrating the problems of the Japanese into the problems of Chinese and Chinese Americans in the U.S. Along with Beulah Ong and other former CSCA members, Wilbur Choy (a student and chairman of the College of the Pacific Nisei Relocation Committee of the Student Christian Association there) focused on making the conference a place where Chinese students from the West Coast could convene and discuss problems relating to “interracial relations, churches in our community, post-war employment, housing for our people, and social agencies,” among others.<sup>598</sup> In the resolution passed by the 194 attendees of the conference, Choy emphasized that “whereas the world has been ravaged by war and persecution and dominated by hatred and suspicion and whereas, this state of the world is contrary to the principles of humanity and the teachings of our Master, Jesus Christ, be it resolved that we...dedicate ourselves to work for the elimination of war and militarism

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<sup>597</sup> Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial*, 43-45. For a more in-depth discussion of the role of the WRA in both operating and closing the internment centers as well as assisting Japanese internees with resettlement, see Dillon S. Myer’s *Uprooted Americans: The Japanese Americans and the War Relocation Authority during World War II* (Phoenix: University of Arizona Press, 1971). Myer was the director of the WRA and his account serves as a first-hand account of the day-to-day operations of the organization during and after internment.

<sup>598</sup> News sheets, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1945, folder January 1945, WRA, Relocation Council Records, Bancroft Library Special Collections.

and for the building of Christian democracy in this world.”<sup>599</sup> From this basic premise of the world’s violation of Christian principles during WWII, the conference attendees turned their attention to the issue of Japanese internment, explaining that:

Whereas all persons of Japanese ancestry have been authorized by the Supreme Court and the Army to return to the West Coast and whereas, the government plans to close the Relocation Center on December 31<sup>st</sup> 1945, we urge that returning evacuees be given full protection both by State and Federal Agencies and that the War Relocation Authority extend the operation of the centers beyond the contemplated closing date in order to provide security and housing for those evacuees not yet prepared to return.<sup>600</sup>

The students’ insistence that the WRA centers remain open until all evacuees have a home to return to and that the military and federal government take an active role in ensuring the safety and basic needs of the former internees were not entirely new ideas; other groups such as the CFCU also protested against a potential haphazard redistribution of internees with limited resources.<sup>601</sup> However, the students’ connection of the problem of internee relocation and resettlement to their larger of problems facing their own Chinatown communities was unique.

For the attendees at the conference, internment and resettlement were excellent opportunities to address long-standing issues for Chinese immigrants and Chinese-Americans along the West Coast. Students saw their own experiences with a lack of understanding between white social workers and social service leaders and the Chinese

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<sup>599</sup> Nineteenth Annual Chinese Christian Youth Conference, Zephyr Point, Lake Tahoe Nevada, July 22-29 1945, Betty Lee Sung Collection, Folder 25, Asian American Pacific Islander Collection, Asian Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 38. At the meeting, the attendees were students from colleges and universities along the West Coast and the conference organized attendees into four areas: the Bay Area (where the majority of students hailed from), the Central Valley of California, Southern California, and the Pacific Northwest. See Nineteenth Annual, 50. This particular pamphlet provided the names of all attendees (as well as the schools they attended and their addresses for future correspondence), making cross-referencing between attendees at the conference and members of the CSCA relatively easy.

<sup>600</sup> Nineteenth Annual, 38.

<sup>601</sup> Brilliant, *The Color of America*, 30.

communities they were meant to serve echoed in the potential problems of returning Japanese, explaining that “this lack of understanding causes unresponsiveness and suspicion,” but also interrupted the growth of “inter-racial relationships.”<sup>602</sup> During the meeting, students called attention to the problems that returning evacuees would have in “re-entering neighborhoods and communities...and building fellowships with other races who had moved into their homes and businesses” and “learning to work with white agents who were not fully capable or wanting to understand the problems the evacuees and the Japanese had experienced both before and during the war.”<sup>603</sup> One student did not hesitate to draw a connection between the potential problems that returning Japanese might have in working with mainly white government and welfare agents and the problems that “all of Oriental lineage have encountered and will continue to encounter from an American government which does not care to examine its own politics[sic] towards other races and peoples.”<sup>604</sup> “With all these problems in mind,” the student attendees asked themselves “what can we as youths do to lessen or eliminate them” and formed discussion groups to brainstorm ways in which they could approach social problems in Asian communities highlighted by the return of Japanese evacuees to the West Coast.<sup>605</sup> At the most abstract level was the suggestion that students “look beneath the surface and attack the entrenched[sic] social problems with a view toward long-range improvement,” but students also offered more concrete suggestions such as joining in “with other minority groups and by cooperative efforts and actions [to] achieve better racial relations,” promoting “closer relations with Interracial churches,” and encouraging

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<sup>602</sup> Ibid, 24, 26.

<sup>603</sup> Nineteenth Annual, 38

<sup>604</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>605</sup> Ibid., 26.

more Chinese and Chinese American students to enter professions such as “social work, medicine, and ministry to address community problems for all minorities.”<sup>606</sup> While the students at the conference were clearly devoted to understanding how they could better their own communities, they expressed devotion in a way that addressed the underlying problems of minority communities along the West Coast in general. For these students, the topics of internment and Japanese resettlement brought to the forefront racial problems and the need for Christian, interracial cooperation in order to combat inequality and poor social conditions for minorities.

During the conference, students exchanged ideas relating to Christian notions of what a post-war West Coast and United States would look like and approached the problems of internment as a problem for all minority groups. The students offered suggestions on using the Church as a means of promoting interracial cooperation and equality and, indeed, a number of the students in attendance at the conference went on to become community activists (as will be discussed in Chapter Six). More importantly, the topics the students discussed in relation to internment were topics which they had discussed for years in Oriental Student Conferences, Asilomar meetings, and group get-togethers. The Christian roots of the Lake Tahoe conference served to bring the students together as well as inspire them to think broadly about how they could use Christianity to continue to fight for racial equality and build a more inclusive social movement after WWII.

While Christian Chinese students were eager to speak out against the problems of internment, there are few written sources that indicate the same for Filipino students. During WWII the FSCM, like the other Christian student associations, suffered from a

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<sup>606</sup> Ibid., 24.

lack of funds and ceased publication of *The Filipino Student Bulletin*, leaving Filipino students without one of their main venues for expression. As a result, it is difficult to ascertain exactly what Filipino students and particularly those who identified as Christians thought of internment. At the larger level of Filipino American communities, the attitudes towards evacuation and Japanese Americans in general were not always pleasant or favorable. Off campus and outside of the Oriental Student Conferences attended by like-minded Christian students devoted to peace and equality, Japanese and Filipinos did not always have positive or cooperative relationships, as evidenced in interethnic conflicts and negative views towards Filipino-Japanese marriages and relationships in these groups.<sup>607</sup>

In October of 1944, leaders of West Coast Filipino organizations met in Fresno, California during the Fourth Filipino Inter-Community Conference where, according to an article from the *Stockton Pacific Citizen*, the attendees discussed a pre-circulated and advertised resolution that “advocated the permanent exclusion of American citizens of Japanese ancestry and their parents from California, noting that some Filipinos have made substantial economic gains in taking over production of certain farm crops previously produced by farmers of Japanese ancestry.”<sup>608</sup> While the resolution was a popular idea among the attendees, they eventually tabled the resolution after Reverend Garcia of Stockton pleaded with attendees to strike down the motion because it would “raise a race issue that may react unfavorable against Filipinos.”<sup>609</sup> Although the attendees eventually struck down the resolution and did not even offer the motion a vote, ultimately it was the Reverend’s plea to avoid supporting exclusion not because it was

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<sup>607</sup> Azuma, *Between Two Empires*, 187-195.

<sup>608</sup> “Filipinos Meet; Tables Proposal to Exclude Coast Evacuees,” *Pacific Citizen* (October 1944), 8.

<sup>609</sup> “Filipinos Meet,” 8.

necessarily wrong to prevent the Japanese from returning to their previous homes, but because such a motion might backfire and place the Filipinos at the center of an unwanted racial situation.

WWII was also an opportunity for Filipinos to prove their loyalty to the U.S. as well as their ability to defend and protect themselves. As early as January of 1942, a Filipino student, Aquileo Leander Dongallao of Washington State University published an article in *The Evergreen* (the student daily) outlining both his appreciation for American governance of the Philippines as well as his nation's duty and honor in defending American democracy at war. "The Philippines are a democracy acquiring her teachings from the United States," Dongallao began, "...we owe America our government, our education, our economic system, our commerce, and all elements necessary for democracy..."<sup>610</sup> Dongallao continued by explaining that "as a payment of our indebtedness, we offer to America all the armed forces of the islands and her vast resources..." for "we are loyal to America and we bow to the Stars and Stripes, which are a symbol of democracy and justice."<sup>611</sup> Dongallao informed readers that "in this present war, we Filipinos will have our chance to show our loyalty and help America defeat the evils of barbarism and Paganism, which are trying to engulf us."<sup>612</sup> Dongallao's article was a different from those that had previously appeared in *The Filipino Student Bulletin*, in which authors decried American imperialism and discrimination against Filipinos in America and in the Philippines. Also, Dongallao's classification of the Japanese as harbingers of "barbarism and Paganism" was a far cry

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<sup>610</sup> Aquileo Leander Dongallao, "'Pearl of Orient' is Contemporary with U.S. in Defense of Democracy," *The Daily Evergreen* (January 14, 1942), 1.

<sup>611</sup> Dongallao, "Pearl," 4.

<sup>612</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

from the messages of tolerance and cooperation that brought Christian Asian students together in America at the height of the Sino-Japanese conflict. While incidents such as the Bataan Death March and the attacks on the Philippines overshadowed any hope of international friendship for students like Dongallao, other Filipinos identified WWII as an opportunity to prove loyalty and hopefully promote the needs of Filipinos, not attempt to create a pan-Asian identity which included their homeland's aggressors.

While Filipino Christian students remained for the most part removed from internment, a former JSCA leader created an important organization to assist Japanese Americans with resettlement. After spending time in an alien detention center, Toru Matsumoto was released in late 1943 and went on to form the New York-based Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans (CRJA) while waiting to return to his own home along the West Coast. The CRJA was an organization that brought together various church leaders and volunteers to help resettle internees efficiently, but activists associated with the group also worked to ensure the safety of those who returned to their homes along the West Coast and elsewhere across the United States and to prevent racial discrimination against the Japanese. Matsumoto also enlisted the help of Chinese, African American, and white students in assisting resettled Japanese students with making themselves at home at new college campuses, encouraging students to create groups at universities to encourage acceptance of the Japanese in mostly white communities. Overall, the CRJA was not solely a Christian student group, Matsumoto made student involvement in creating interethnic and interracial relationships on campuses and in larger communities an important goal for the organization.



Matsumoto also used the CRJA to disseminate information on internment, resettlement, and larger problems with racism and discrimination in America. In 1944, the CRJA issued a pamphlet titled “The Concern of the Church for Christian and Democratic Treatment of Japanese Americans” which not only provided tips for those interested in helping the Japanese find a home and employment after leaving the camps, but also called attention to the larger problems with racism and discrimination along the West Coast and across the U.S.<sup>613</sup>



Toru Matsumoto speaking at a CRJA meeting in New York City in 1944. Photo courtesy of the Bancroft Library, the University of California at Berkeley.

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<sup>613</sup> Committee on the Resettlement of Japanese Americans, “The Concern of the Church for Christian and Democratic Treatment of Japanese Americans,” April, 1944, pp. 2-3, 7 AFSC records, folder 25-13, Ephemera, Miscellaneous (1943-45), Bancroft Library Special Collections.

The CRJA also used questions and concerns surrounding internment and resettlement to initiate a larger discussion of anti-Asian immigration and naturalization acts. In terms of immigration restriction, the CRJA urged “the repeal of the Oriental Exclusion Act of 1924, directed at immigration from China and India, as well as Japan.”<sup>614</sup> Just as Matsumoto and other members of the Christian student associations had pointed out decades before, the Exclusion Acts and other restrictions of Asian immigration represented a “denial of freedom and democracy to Asian immigrants.”<sup>615</sup> Matsumoto explained in the pamphlet that although concern over the plight of internees and resettled Japanese was “admirable” and indicated a general “feeling of sympathy for those who had been ripped from their homes...with their rights violated,” there were still “large issues concerning the rights of Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, and Hindus in America” and the “prejudiced laws that prevent these people of God from becoming true participants in American democracy and citizenship.”<sup>616</sup> As the CRJA pamphlet indicates, Matsumoto and other members of the organization connected internment with larger problems of citizenship and rights for Asian Americans.

The CRJA also expressed concern in the pamphlet over proposed laws along the West Coast that would further curtail the rights and liberties of Japanese Americans. Attempts from nativist and anti-Asian groups in California to make the Alien Land Law of 1920 a permanent part of the state constitution (which ultimately resulted in the defeat of Proposition 15 in November of 1946) in order to prevent internees from reclaiming

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<sup>614</sup> CRJA, “Concern of the Church,” 15.

<sup>615</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>616</sup> Ibid., 15-16.

land that had been illegally obtained under the land laws also alarmed the CRJA.<sup>617</sup> Despite a lack of proof for a wide-spread and systematic plan for subversion and betrayal among Japanese internees, organizations such as the American Legion and the Native Sons of the Golden West called for the stripping of rights of both Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans. In reaction, the CRJA formed special committees (staffed largely by resettled Christian Japanese students in the New York City area) to research and petition any proposed laws that would create racial tensions by denying civil rights to Japanese internees. The CRJA also urged “that every effort be made to prevent the passage of pending federal legislation which has for its purposes disenfranchisement of Japanese American citizens.”<sup>618</sup> For the CRJA, laws that prevented the naturalization of Japanese immigrants based on racial bias were not only discriminatory, but a form of disenfranchisement for people who otherwise contributed to American society culturally, socially, and economically. Although the WRA had cleared most Japanese in the camps for resettlement, state and local governments attempted to pass laws and ordinances that would prevent Japanese Americans from returning to their previous homes. As a result, the CRJA denounced such proposed actions as both discriminatory and a means of disenfranchisement for “American citizens who were born in the U.S. and entitled to basic civil rights and liberties, such as the right to vote and help initiate and govern where

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<sup>617</sup> “Excerpts from recent statement by Ernest Besig, Director of the Northern California Branch of the American Civil Liberties Union on Proposition 15,” Kingman Papers, Box 154, Folder 10, Japanese American Research Project, Charles E. Young Library Special Collections Department, University of California-Los Angeles. In 1944, Governor Vivian of Colorado (with pressure from anti-Japanese groups in the state) called a special session to consider placing on the November ballot an amendment that would deny to aliens ineligible to citizenship the right to own property in the state. This was a reaction against the previous Governor’s welcoming of evacuated Japanese to the state. The Colorado Council of Churches along with other Christian groups in the state fought against the amendment and, despite heavy support from the Italian population in the state, the amendment was voted down by the people of Colorado.

<sup>618</sup> *Ibid.*, 15-16.

they lived.”<sup>619</sup> Rather than just advocate on behalf of Japanese Americans (as many organizations and associations did), the CRJA, headed by Matsumoto who was a former foreign student himself, combined concerns for both immigrants (in the form of discriminatory immigration and naturalization laws) as well as American-born Japanese. For Matsumoto and the members of the CRJA, evacuation, internment, and the problems of resettlement represented larger issues with Asian discrimination in the U.S. as well as an on-going pattern of racism along the West Coast.

In April of 1945, the CRJA also co-sponsored a joint conference on “The Future of Japanese Church Work and Returning Japanese” with the Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service. The Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service consisted of Japanese and Japanese American leaders and representatives from church communities across the U.S. who assisted former internees who were interested in returning to the West Coast and resettling in their former communities. Along with the racism that many Japanese Americans faced from racist groups and organizations upon their return, it was also often difficult for former internees to find jobs, reclaim their property and possessions, and basically begin their lives from scratch, seeing as how many internees had lost their family businesses and life-long investments while in the camps.<sup>620</sup> While organizations such as the YMCA and the AFSC in particular provided financial and community support to those who left the campus, they not only encouraged former internees not return to the West Coast, but also did not address the larger issues of racial equality or civil rights that played an important role in resettlement.<sup>621</sup> The

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<sup>619</sup> Ibid., 15-16.

<sup>620</sup> Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial*, 84-86.

<sup>621</sup> Joint Conference on Future of Japanese Church Work Resettlement, Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, April 24-26, 1945, Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, pg. 2, Carton 3,

Protestant Church Commission (along with the CRJA) served an important role in discussing the civil rights issues that accompanied resettlement as well as the logistics of assisting recent internees in attempting to restart their lives after having lost nearly everything.<sup>622</sup> At the 1945 conference, representatives from the Presbyterian Church, the YMCA, the Congregational Church, the Episcopal Church, and the Disciples of Christ (among other denominations) attended and offered their suggestions on how best to address resettlement and civil rights issues for Japanese and Asian Americans. Many of the representatives, including Sohei Kowta, Isamu Nakamura, Masao Satow, and Kojior Unoura were former student members of the JSCA and paid particular attention to how the church in the U.S. could facilitate better interracial relations among returning Japanese and other minority groups along the West Coast.<sup>623</sup> For example, members suggested “special services devoted to the discussion of interracial problems...” on Sundays at church as well as using rooms in a church as community space for social functions which aimed to increase cross-racial and cross-cultural contact.<sup>624</sup> Rather than emphasize that resettled Japanese see their new starts as an opportunity to completely assimilate (as organizations such as the AFSC did), the attendees at the conference viewed resettlement as a second chance at addressing the problems of both the Japanese communities as well as other minority groups with racial conflict. As former JSCA members and Christians, the representatives mentioned above all recognized the importance of using Christian organizations to build interracial networks as well as raise awareness of civil rights violations.

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folder 6, 1945, AFSC Records, Japanese American Research Project collection, Charles E. Young Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

<sup>622</sup> Joint Conference, 3.

<sup>623</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>624</sup> Ibid., 13.

Matsumoto's work on resettlement with the CRJA and other organizations caught the attention of the editors of *The Journal of Social Issues* (a quarterly publication established in 1945 by The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues to discuss topics such as poverty, rights, and violence), which issued a special edition on "Race and Prejudice in Everyday Living" in May of 1945. Among topics related to race relations including the plight of African Americans following WWII and the image of the U.S. as a democratic nation in the midst of a history of racism, Japanese resettlement received special attention in the periodical and featured a number of brief articles and responses by different individuals who argued both for and against the resettlement of the Japanese along the West Coast. While most arguments against resettlement focused on the better living and working conditions for the Japanese east of the Rocky Mountains, others argued that a mass return of Japanese would only exacerbate racial tensions among whites, African Americans, and Asian communities.<sup>625</sup> Matsumoto issued a response to one of the articles included in the special edition, "Japs Not Wanted Here," which outlined why the problems of Japanese and Japanese Americans in the U.S. were part of the larger structure of racism and discrimination in America. "The problem of Japanese-Americans must be solved as part of the total problem of social justice for all minorities," Matsumoto began his in article.<sup>626</sup> Matsumoto continued by explaining that "a thing like fair employment for Negroes applies to all other minorities. Segregation of housing against Negroes applies to all other minorities. Segregated churches for Negroes applied to Japanese as well. Any of these discriminatory practices against any minorities affect

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<sup>625</sup> Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial*, 81-83.

<sup>626</sup> Toru Matsumoto, "Comments on 'Japs Not Wanted Here,'" *Journal of Social Issues: Race and Prejudice in Everyday Living* (May 1945), 26.

the Japanese...”<sup>627</sup> Like many other civil rights advocates and groups, Matsumoto connected the plight of Japanese Americans to other minority groups within the U.S., but, in this article, did so in a bold and clear manner which argued that there was no separating the minority racial groups in the U.S. when it came to discrimination and civil rights. However, Matsumoto also urged fellow Japanese and Japanese Americans to recognize that their plight was intertwined with those of African Americans and other racial and ethnic groups. He explained that “Japanese Americans ought to do their full share in solving interracial problems in America, by not identifying themselves with the prejudice pattern of majority segregation as the line of resistance, but rather cooperating with all liberal elements, within both majority and minority groups, for a total solution of the problem.”<sup>628</sup> In his suggestion on how Japanese Americans could best approach the problems of racism and discrimination, Matsumoto urged them not to consider themselves as better than any other racial group or strive too hard to identify with those Americans who were the oppressors. In a way, one could see Matsumoto’s analysis of the downfalls of the ways in which some Japanese chose to break out of the cycle of racism by attempting to associate with those who embraced discriminatory actions as a reaction to the rising “model minority myth” which would become a prevalent way of stereotyping Japanese Americans during the late 1960s, but had its origins following Japanese internment.<sup>629</sup>

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<sup>627</sup> Matsumoto, “Comments,” 26.

<sup>628</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>629</sup> See Robert G. Lee, *Orientalism: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999) and Rosalind S. Chou and Joe R. Feagin, *The Myth of the Model Minority: Asian Americans Facing Racism* (New York: Paradigm Publishers, 2008) for a more in-depth discussion of the model minority myth.

When the editors of the *Journal of Social Issues* invited Matsumoto to respond to criticisms against the return of the Japanese to the West Coast following internment, they may not have realized they called upon a man who had been part of a drive for racial equality and democracy in the West for years before internment. Matsumoto, along with other JSCA members and leaders who found themselves first as racial minorities in the U.S. and later as political prisoners in barren camps during the war, decried the potential turmoil for minorities in the U.S. that would result from America's involvement in WWII. Although these members could not have foreseen during the 1930s and into the first years of the following decade that Japan would attack Pearl Harbor and force America into the Pacific theater of the war, they still warned of the suffering that the Japanese and Japanese Americans as well as other minorities might face in the midst of overzealous patriotism and a long-standing history of discrimination. Matsumoto's article in the journal, while a timely piece considering the problems with Japanese resettlement at the time, was the culmination of a career of Christian organization and activism against racism against Asians and Asian Americans. For many Christian students and former students affected by internment, EO 9066 and the ensuing challenges of resettlement were points of crystallization that drew national (and international) attention to a decades-old problem with racial relations along the West Coast. They had gained experience through the years in discussing and dealing with racism and discrimination; internment and resettlement were the opportunities needed to widen the existing circle of interracial and multicultural cooperation in the name of Christian fellowship and democratic equality.



Despite urging from organizations to remain far away from the West Coast, many students and other Japanese and Japanese American internees such as Matsumoto chose to return to their former communities. Not only were cities and towns in California, Oregon, and Washington their homes, these places also represented areas that desperately needed those who were dedicated to interracial and multicultural work and cooperation to promote civil rights and equality. Following the end of WWII, race relations appeared to be particularly volatile as various ethnic and racial groups competed for jobs and housing with each other as well as returning veterans. Rather than remain away from such problems, former students such as Yori Wada, a JSCA member who graduated from the University of California-Berkeley in 1940 and returned to northern California following his time in a camp, enthusiastically chose to return to the West Coast. Wada, who would eventually become a leader in the San Francisco YMCA and devote years to creating programs and opportunities for Asian and African American youths from disadvantaged backgrounds in the Bay Area, explained in a 1943 article that "...I return gratefully to 'my California life' ...I must go back, for my home is in California."<sup>630</sup>

Those Japanese and Japanese American students and former students who chose to return to the West Coast joined fellow Christian Filipino and Chinese students who would continue the fight for racial equality after WWII. Although the three groups did not work together as often as they did prior to the war (with many Filipino students remaining silent on the issue of internment), the activities of the students and former students such as Matsumoto in protesting EO 9066 demonstrate the importance of internment as a catalyst for future activism. Matsumoto, Chinese students, and others used evacuation and internment to call attention to larger issues of racism and

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<sup>630</sup> Yori Wada, "Beyond the Horizon," *California Monthly* (December 1943), 1.

discrimination against Asians and other minorities along the West Coast, using the vast violations of internment to highlight other common denial of rights and justice to Asian Americans. Overall, internment served as a complex and volatile issue that reminded Asian students and former students of a traditional system of discrimination along the West Coast while creating new interests among Americans in issues pertaining to both Asian immigrants and Asian Americans. Using established Christian networks and groups, students were able to join together to question the nature of internment as well as discuss the future of race relations in America following the war and the resettlement of the Japanese. For many Christian Asian students, speaking out against internment was not a choice; it was a necessity to ensure that a violation of civil as well as God-given human rights on any level would never happen again.

## Chapter Six

### Post-War Civil Rights and Christian Activists along the West Coast, 1944-1968

In his 1946 book *Beyond Prejudice* (an account of the role of the church in assisting interned Japanese and Christianity's responsibilities in the post-war era), past Japanese Student Christian Association president Toru Matsumoto observed that many civil rights groups appeared to be focusing on using the courts rather than interracial solidarity and understanding to achieve equality.<sup>631</sup> With civil rights groups along the West Coast working to promote equal employment bills in cities such as Los Angeles and Seattle and abolish the alien land laws in California, new ways of defining what constituted "civil rights" and the best ways to secure them for ethnic and racial minorities. There was a general "shift away from antidiscrimination initiatives that emphasized 'understanding, proper education, co-operation, and good will.'"<sup>632</sup> Racial discrimination along the West Coast required swift and direct action in the guise of legislative reform rather than the cumbersome and time-consuming task of creating cultural exchange and racial understanding. It was more efficient to change laws than to change the hearts and minds of racist Americans. And with so many different ethnic and

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<sup>631</sup> Toru Matsumoto, *Beyond Prejudice*. (New York: John Day Company, 1946). This work will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. See also Mark Brilliant, *The Color of America Has Changed: How Racial Diversity Shaped Civil Rights in California, 1941-1978* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 18-19

<sup>632</sup> Brilliant, *Color of America*, 19. Citing a 1951 report from John Burma, a sociologist at Fisk University's Social Science Institute, Brilliant explains that there was a "proliferation of antidiscrimination bills in state legislatures" following the war, but the word "prejudice" "infrequently appeared" in these bills. Burma argued that this represented a shift in civil rights organizations from focusing on "prejudiced" thinking and attempting to change how individuals "thought" and "felt" about other racial groups to concrete "action" that could be achieved through changing laws to promote equality. Although "only a small percentage of these bills managed to pass into laws, and though those laws were overshadowed by existing laws sanctioning discrimination," Burma "nevertheless viewed the 1940s as a watershed" in civil rights action. See Brilliant, 19-22 for a more in-depth discussion of the changing nature of civil rights activism post-WWII.

racial groups calling the West Coast home, building bridges among these groups before launching legislative campaigns appeared to be a time-consuming and inefficient task. Similar to other regions of the U.S., those who were devoted to racial justice along the West Coast recognized that the war had brought mass influxes of job-seeking African Americans to urban centers in the North and West, making racism and discrimination a national, rather than “Southern” problem which required state and federal intervention rather than solely community-based activism. The immediate push for legal change during and after WWII would continue to shape civil rights movements during the 1950s and 1960s, as well.

But where did this shift in strategy leave student Christian association members and former-members who viewed education and interracial understanding as critical forerunners to promoting racial equality? Was a focus on building better race relations through interaction, Christian fellowship, and social activism too “outdated” following the changes in the racial composition of cities such as Los Angeles and Seattle as a result of returning Japanese and African-American migrations west during the war? These were questions that concerned current and former members of the student Christian associations. More importantly, eradicating racial stereotypes and other forms of misunderstanding produced by imperialism, nationalism, and racism was at the core of the students’ Christian, “world-wide fellowship” approach to racial and political issues. Following the war, current and former student association members carefully considered how useful a “cultural bridge” would be in the legislative atmosphere of civil rights activism.

This chapter analyzes the changing, post-war ideas and activities of Christian student association members and former members in the context of the shift from “education” to “legislation” in civil rights strategies. While historians have defined the history of civil rights along the West Coast following WWII in terms of legal action and “racial liberalism,” the actions of Christian students and former students complicate this narrative.<sup>633</sup> Historian Shana Bernstein’s emphasis on the role of the Cold War in pushing former left-leaning activists away from radical civil rights reform and towards anticommunism overshadows the ideas and goals of Christian-oriented activists (such as former Asian student association members) who continued to see civil rights violations in the U.S. as part of a larger problem with human rights.<sup>634</sup> Similarly, Scott Kurashige’s study of coalition-building (and its limitations) among Japanese and African Americans in Los Angeles both during and after the war focuses on the “pragmatic” or often “forced” multiethnic and interracial programs between the two groups undertaken to bring about legal change in housing and employment discrimination and segregation.<sup>635</sup> What Kurashige’s work overlooks is the importance of “organic” interracial and multicultural cooperation (through education and fellowship) that Christian activists advocated as precursors to legal change. In other words, the focus on interracial solidarity of many recent works on post-WWII civil rights organization along the West Coast emphasizes the necessity of interracial cooperation in order to achieve legal victories, while Christian activists, such as Matsumoto and others, continued to embrace

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<sup>633</sup> Brilliant, 19-20. See also Shana Bernstein, *Bridges of Reform: Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 89-105.

<sup>634</sup> Bernstein, *Bridges of Reform*, 101-103.

<sup>635</sup> Kurashige, *Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 158-159.

interracial relationships brought about through education as a *lasting* means to support Christian ideas of equality.

Attempting to change prejudiced beliefs and thoughts through cultural exchange, education, and interracial interaction was still an important goal for religious-based civil rights groups following the war, with legal action dependent upon social change. Racial equality was not an automatic result of “legal” equality: promoting interracial relations and ending prejudice were necessary goals of the civil rights movement for Matsumoto and other religious-oriented groups. For Matsumoto, achieving legislative victories for minorities would not necessarily promote better race relations, which was a top priority for Christian activists who placed great value in world-wide equality and fellowship. By including the importance of Christian-based, racial rights activism in the larger narrative of West Coast civil rights, I argue that the pre-war ideas of students and former students continued to shape racial rights battles and, in turn, complicated discussions concerning the roles of legislation, education, and cultural exchange in the rise of post-WWII movements for racial justice. Although the student associations underwent a crisis following the war in terms of purpose and mission in a post-war world and some former students became active in promoting new, anti-discrimination legislation, others justified the importance of “education” and interracial solidarity (or more integrationist approaches to race relations) as a precursor to legal change.

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The discussion of post-war race relations along the West Coast actually began before the war ended. The problems of returning Japanese evacuees with finding housing and jobs along the West Coast prompted a need for racial cooperation as well as racist outcries from nativist organizations.<sup>636</sup> The 1945 Conference on Interracial Relations sponsored by the Pacific Coast Committee on American Principles and Fair Play (an organization comprised of white, mainly Christian leaders who were active in arguing for the constitutional rights of Japanese internees and served as an unofficial liaisons between the War Relocation Authority, the Justice Department, the State Department, and other associations devoted to the rights of internees ) served as an opportunity for participants to weigh in on the importance of promoting education and interracial relations with regards to the resettlement of Japanese evacuees.<sup>637</sup> Held in early January near the University of California-Berkeley campus, the conference represented the Committee's growing concerns with the post-war racial atmosphere in California and other regions of the West Coast. The Committee members decided to address potential problems with race relations in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and other cities as a result of returning evacuees during the war rather than waiting until its end. Initially, the Committee (composed largely of white, middle-class West Coast leaders from organizations such as the YMCA and educational administrators such as Robert Sproul of the University of California system) urged against Japanese resettlement in communities such as Los Angeles and San Francisco. A 1944 meeting of the Committee revealed that many members agreed that "some<sup>638</sup> of the Japanese-Americans should come back to the West Coast—but their only hope for survival in this country is in dispersal" and also

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<sup>636</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>638</sup> Emphasis in original.

refused to make a “pugnacious attack to demand full citizenship rights for the Japanese.”<sup>639</sup> The Committee continued its stance on encouraging Japanese to resettle elsewhere away from the West Coast , but, by the fall of 1944, members and leaders were faced with the reality that many Japanese (such as students who wished to come back to their campuses after relocation) wanted to return home.

At a 1944 planning meeting for the interracial conference, Committee members discussed tactics for tackling the large problems of racial discrimination and racial tensions after the war. A few members explained that the best possible way to ensure peaceful relations between Japanese and whites in West Coast communities was to persuade those Japanese who did intend to move back to the Pacific Coast to avoid communities that were blatantly anti-Japanese. A member by the name of Mr. Montgomery, for example, suggested that the Committee could best be of help in easing racial tensions by encouraging returning Japanese to avoid Humboldt County and the Salinas-Watsonville region in California, two areas with strong anti-Japanese feelings. Encouraging settlements in these communities, Montgomery advised, would “stir things up” and “arouse fresh suspicion” against the Japanese as well as other “Orientals.”<sup>640</sup> Other members, such as Mr. Landrum, were more concerned with the possible less-than-welcoming receptions that returning Japanese would receive from African American members of West Coast communities such as San Francisco or Los Angeles. Landrum feared that in “urban centers, where the immigrating Negroes had taken over the previous

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<sup>639</sup> “Comments at Luncheon, January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1944,” folder 1:5- Committee Records-General Membership Minutes, 1942-1944, Pacific Coast Committee on American Principles and Fair Play Records, Bancroft Library Special Collections.

<sup>640</sup> “Notes taken at a meeting called by Galen Fisher on August 11 at 12:30pm at the Institute of Pacific Relations in San Francisco to discuss the Fall program of the Committee on American Principles and Fair Play-Comments section,” pg. 1, folder 1:5- Committee Records-General Membership Minutes, 1942-1944, Pacific Coast Committee on American Principles and Fair Play Records, Bancroft Library Special Collections.



Japtown dwellings,” African Americans would resist returning property to the previous Japanese owners and “show no disposition to welcome any return.”<sup>641</sup> Likewise, Mrs. Ruth Kingman and Mr. Price worried about the reactions from Filipino, Korean, and Chinese communities to returning Japanese while Miss Watson suggested that the Committee contact the Manpower Commission and the Wartime Foods Administration to help in subduing any negative reactions from Mexican *bracero* workers, a group which held “potential danger” in disrupting the resettlement of Japanese along the West Coast.<sup>642</sup> For the Committee, the return of thousands of Japanese to the Pacific Coast represented potential problems in race relations, mainly in the form of negative reactions from other minority groups.

In order to address these potential issues, Committee leaders set to work planning a Conference on Interracial Cooperation in late 1944 and invited community leaders from various minority groups and organizations to attend. The Committee also contacted representatives from religious groups, labor unions, and state and federal government bureaus and agencies to join the conference and offer their own views and suggestions on the impending racial problems following WWII. The main focus of the conference was to “study housing, employment, farm, legal, and other problems facing the Japanese Americans who would return to the Coast communities,” with Dillon Myer of the War Relocation Authority, A.J. McFadden (chairman of the California State Board of Agriculture) and representatives from California, Washington, and Oregon chapters of the AFL and CIO to elaborate on the specific work-related problems of Japanese

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<sup>641</sup> “Notes taken at a meeting called by Galen Fisher,” 1.

<sup>642</sup> Ibid.1. Miss Watson was especially concerned about *braceros* who might possibly fear that returning Japanese would create unwelcome competition for agricultural jobs along the interior of the West Coast.

returnees.<sup>643</sup> McFadden explained in a news release announcing the Conference that “it is evident that Japanese Americans are needed for war essential work in Pacific Coast industries and farms...” and that “practical steps need to be taken now to give the Japanese-Americans full opportunity for useful citizenship.”<sup>644</sup> Accounts of discrimination against Japanese Americans seeking employment in wartime industries created concerns among Committee members as well as labor and government representatives who worried that not only were employers disregarding President Roosevelt’s fair employment act, but the war effort was denied valuable labor.<sup>645</sup> Framing the problems of Japanese returnees in these terms allowed the Committee to recruit more government agencies and representatives for the conference.

But the Committee also emphasized that the conference would address issues of all minority and racial groups, seeking to draw a variety of racial and ethnic leaders to the Berkley meeting. Dr. Monroe Deutsch, president of the Pacific Coast Committee, explained in another press release from early January 1945 that the conference was “an attempt to evolve a coordinated post-war race-relations program for the Pacific Coast” and “will attempt to coordinate the efforts of some 300 West Coast groups making efforts to improve race relations...and seeking to present a unified front against bigotry and intolerance.”<sup>646</sup> Referring to the West Coast as a “laboratory in which post-war models of race relations will markedly affect the whole world,” Deutsch emphasized that “the conduct of Pacific Coast residents towards returning Japanese-Americans may provide

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<sup>643</sup> “Release, AM Monday for January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945,” pg. 1, folder 1:9-Committee Records, General Membership, “Conference on Interracial Relations,” Committee Records, Bancroft Library Special Collections.

<sup>644</sup> “Release, AM Monday for January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945,” 1.

<sup>645</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>646</sup> “Release, AM Monday for January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945,” pg. 1, folder 1:9-Committee Records, General Membership, “Conference on Interracial Relations,” Committee Records, Bancroft Library Special Collections.

the clue as to the relations between the white peoples of the world and Orientals for generations to come.”<sup>647</sup> Deutsch and the other members of the Committee defined the racial problem along the West Coast as one which affected all “Orientals” including Chinese, Filipinos, and Koreans as well as Japanese and their relationships with each other and other racial groups. Deutsch and the other members of the Committee designed the Interracial Conference to address the problems of all racial and ethnic groups along the entire West Coast, seeking to draw together representatives from all organizations and “benefit [from] an interchange of facts and point of view.”<sup>648</sup>

Since the Committee sought leaders from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds, they turned to religious and civic organizations and often recruited leaders who were former student Christian association members. The Committee members were interested in addressing any race-related problems that would arise after the war through interracial cooperation and turned to individuals within West Coast communities whom they knew would understand the importance of such a conference. The Committee drew from organizations (particularly religious organizations such as the YMCA) which had reputations for tackling problems of inequality and injustice through cross-racial discussions and activities. It was no coincidence that many leaders and prominent members of such organizations were, in fact, former student Christian association members who held years of experience in interracial coordination on college campuses and in larger communities. The roster of attendees at the conference included Julio Espiritu and Juan Dulay, two former FSCM members who became leaders of the San Francisco-based Filipino Community, Inc., an organization devoted to securing Filipino

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<sup>647</sup> “Release, AM Monday for January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945,” 1.

<sup>648</sup> “Release, AM Monday for January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945,” pg. 1, folder 1:9-Committee Records, General Membership, “Conference on Interracial Relations,” Committee Records.

rights as well as promoting interracial and interethnic relationships in the city. The Committee also invited Antonio Gonzalez, another former Movement member who became a leader of the Western Filipino Communities and played a key role in promoting the 1946 Filipino Naturalization Act. Ching Wah Lee, a former CSCA member who became a leader in revitalizing San Francisco's Chinatown and, later, an actor who starred in films such as *The Good Earth*, was also invited to attend the conference and joined other former association members at the two-day event to discuss race relations and solutions to problems.<sup>649</sup> Leaders such as Lee, Espiritu, and Dulay had expertise in organizing and guiding interracial and interethnic meetings and working to build cross-racial relationships, skills which helped them to become well-known leaders of their own community organizations and catch the eye of the Committee leaders. The other fifty invited attendees of the conference were representatives from the WRA, West Coast YMCA branches, West Coast chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and Seattle and Portland committees on racial equality and interracial cooperation.<sup>650</sup>

When the Interracial Conference commenced on January 10<sup>th</sup>, however, discussions highlighted the opinions among some members that interracial cooperation and education alone could not solve all the potential post-war problems for minority and ethnic groups. Initially, conversations centered on ways in which the representative leaders of the different communities could ensure that their members would respect and assist returning Japanese evacuees. Notes from the meeting indicated that “the Negro, Filipino and Korean spokesmen all expressed eagerness to safe guard the rights and

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<sup>649</sup> See Chapter Two for a more in-depth description of Lee's earlier activities with the CSCA while a student at Berkeley.

<sup>650</sup> “Release, AM Monday for January 8<sup>th</sup>,” 1.

liberties of returning evacuees and said that any attempt to make capital for their own racial groups at the expense of the Japanese would be sawing off the limb on which they themselves sat.” They “recognized that all minorities...are in the same boat and that to deny full constitutional rights to any racial or religious group would weaken the rights of all.”<sup>651</sup> Likewise, Espiritu and Dulay “declared they would not allow indignation over atrocities by the Japanese military [in the Philippines] to betray them into taking revenge on innocent and unfortunate persons of Japanese descent here.”<sup>652</sup>

Filipino representative Antonio Gonzalez, however, challenged the Committee and other attendees’ opinions that interracial cooperation would ensure that all racial groups receive fair and equal treatment from one another. Gonzalez explained that legal action was necessary to ensure that all groups would benefit from a renewed interest in racial justice along the Coast. During the conference, Gonzalez “sought the support of the Churches and the Fair Play Committee in obtaining a ‘Square Deal’ for Filipinos in America” and delivered a powerful speech to the conference attendees outlining the injustices against Filipinos in America and their demands for the future.<sup>653</sup> Gonzalez’s requests for a “Square Deal” for the Filipino community in the U.S. rested primarily on granting Filipinos legal rights through naturalization and citizenship, arguing that although “fifteen thousand” Filipinos served in the U.S. armed forces and were “born under the American flag,” they were “denied the elementary principles of Americanism”

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<sup>651</sup> “Cooperation of Other Minorities with Evacuees,” pg. 1, folder 1:10-Committee Records-General Membership, Bancroft Library Special Collections.

<sup>652</sup> “Cooperation of Other Minorities,” 1.

<sup>653</sup> “Memo on Personal Calls Made in Washington-George Rendquist,” folder 2, Japanese-America Evacuation Resettlement, 1944-1945, Committee Records, Bancroft Library Special Collections.

and could not “lease or own land” or “become naturalized.”<sup>654</sup> Gonzalez chided that the Filipino must be either a “trained soldier or a trained dishwasher” to be treated with any semblance of respect in the U.S., which was “an awfully low standard for American citizenship!!”<sup>655</sup> To support his argument, Gonzalez pointed to a failed attempt at a Filipino naturalization bill in 1944 which was opposed by House Representative Le Roy Johnson from Stockton, CA (which was, according to Gonzalez, the “Filipino population center in America”<sup>656</sup>), who, interestingly enough, led a “fight for a naturalization bill for the Chinese” later that year.<sup>657</sup>

Because China was allied with the U.S. during WWII, many Americans advocated for naturalization of Chinese immigrants, overturning a legacy of anti-Chinese immigration laws; however, Gonzalez offered a different interpretation base on what this meant for Filipinos.<sup>658</sup> “Talk about China as the ‘ally’ of the U.S.: they are fighting for

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<sup>654</sup> “Conference called by the Committee Principles and Fair Play-Thursday morning, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1945, Question Period,” pg. 1, folder 10, Committee Records, Bancroft Library Special Collections. Trinidad Rojo, leader of the CWFLU, also became more active in issues of civil rights both during and after WWII. The issue of Filipino rights and access to citizenship became a top priority for the CWFLU under the leadership of Rojo. In 1943, the CWFLU fought on behalf of Pedro Cabang, an electrician who was denied employment by the Shipbuilding Corporation of Tacoma in Washington on the grounds that he was an alien and not a citizen of the United States (despite the fact that President Roosevelt previously signed a bill in 1942 that classified Filipinos as citizens for the purpose of pursuing defense work). Cabang was not a member of the CWFLU, but he *was* a Filipino and Trinidad Rojo (the president of the organization at the time) saw an opportunity to defend and protect the rights of Filipinos in America. In return, the CWFLU issued a letter to the Shipbuilding Corporation of Tacoma outlining the rights of Filipinos under the wartime employment orders and the ways in which the company was violating Executive Order 9346’s guarantee that racial discrimination would not prevent any American citizen from participating in federal and wartime work. Rojo also led the CWFLU to protest for naturalization rights for Filipinos in 1944, issuing a petition in support of the Sheperd Bill, arguing that the U.S. government used “force of law to compel Filipinos to share the burden of American citizenship, such as to serve in the U.S. armed forces and to pay taxes, and at the same time den[ied] them a voice in government is unjust and undemocratic.” From the earliest crusades against racial injustice to Rojo’s fight for a fellow Filipino’s rights, the CWFLU established itself as a protector of civil liberties for its members, but, more importantly, for all Filipinos along the West Coast and in the U.S.

<sup>655</sup> “Conference called by the Committee Principles and Fair Play-Thursday morning, January 11<sup>th</sup>,” 1.

<sup>656</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>657</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>658</sup> See Scott Wong, *Americans First: Chinese Americans and the Second World War* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008) and Reed Ueda, “The Changing Path to Citizenship: Ethnicity and Naturalization during World War II,” in Lewis A. Erenberg and Susan E. Hirsch, eds., *The War in*

their country!” Gonzalez decried in response, emphasizing the fact that regardless of their relationship with the U.S., they would still be fighting the Japanese in the Pacific. Gonzalez then explained that, in comparison to the Chinese, Filipinos fought “as Americans...against fascism” in the war in addition to fighting the Japanese.<sup>659</sup> The Filipinos were “not responsible for this war,” after all, and the “U.S. declared war against the Japanese, the Philippines did not.”<sup>660</sup> Filipinos were drawn into WWII in order to defend both their homeland and America, emphasizing the Filipino’s complex status as “American”, but not an American citizen before and during the war. In highlighting the inconsistencies in support from Representative Johnson for Chinese and Filipino naturalization, Gonzalez again argued for the recognition of American rights for Filipinos, arguing that “the Filipinos are being used and have always been used by the selfish interests, the economic interests, and the fascist interests to fight against other minority groups.”<sup>661</sup> Legal action granting naturalization and rights to Filipinos who had worked for the American economy for decades and fought for democracy in the Pacific was required for any real change in the racial landscape following the War.

Gonzalez’s speech to the Committee and attendees broke from conversations relating to interracial relations which previously characterized the discussions at the Conference. While interested in interracial cooperation as a possible solution to post-war racial problems, Gonzalez nevertheless pushed fellow attendees to think broadly about

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*American Culture: Society and Consciousness during World War II* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996) for more information on the changing nature of citizenship and naturalization during and after WWII as well as American perceptions of ethnic and racial minorities who had “proved” themselves during the war. Gary Gerstle’s *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002) also includes more in-depth discussions in regards to the impact of the Second World War on race relations and the “Americanization” of ethnic groups during and after the war.

<sup>659</sup> “Conference called by the Committee Principles and Fair Play-Thursday morning, January 11<sup>th</sup>,” 1

<sup>660</sup> “Conference called by the Committee Principles and Fair Play-Thursday morning, January 11<sup>th</sup>,” 1.

<sup>661</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

the underlying issues of racism and discrimination in America. By calling attention to the hypocrisy of Americans in promoting naturalization rights for some minorities and not others, Gonzalez highlighted a possible weakness in the idea of interracial solidarity. The federal government's passing of wartime laws designed to promote equality in the workplace and in other facets of life benefitted certain groups, but not all minorities. For those minorities such as Filipinos and others who were not able to naturalize and become citizens, any local, state, or national bills preventing racial discrimination lacked real or substantial change for these groups. But, as Gonzalez highlighted, even laws designed to bring about more equality in naturalization tended to benefit those who were viewed as allies to the U.S. war cause, such as the Chinese. Similarly, even the Interracial Conference was largely called by the Committee and sponsored by various government agencies in order to ensure equal opportunities for returning Japanese in wartime employment and help in guaranteeing a steady supply of manpower for the military. What would become of the Japanese and other minorities after the war, when their patriotism and loyalty were perhaps no longer a critical issue for the government? While interracial cooperation could assist with the future of race relations along the West Coast, the local, state, and federal governments played important roles in guaranteeing that the wartime measures for equality extended into the postwar years. These were issues which Gonzalez raised in his questioning of the intent of the conference.

Gonzalez's speech as well as the resolutions attendees produced serve as an interesting example of the connections between education and legislation as civil right tactics towards the end of WWII. While attendees Ching Wah Lee and Juan Dulay recommended that the Committee "ask and urge the WRA to become a clearing house



and for information on housing, employment, and all other problems relating to various communities along the West Coast,” Gonzalez and others requested that the Committee continue to work closely with the various community leaders present at the conference to create a “coast-wide coalition” devoted to analyzing and addressing issues of race, equality, and discrimination following the war.<sup>662</sup> More specific recommendations relating to this goal included that “each community be encouraged to organize an overall committee of outstanding citizens from every walk of life—labor, capital, business, religion, and so on—to study the problem of racial discrimination from two angles: investigating individual cases of discrimination that may lead to major tensions if unchecked and working out a program in adult education.”<sup>663</sup> The attendees’ resolution containing references to an adult education program proved that education was not entirely outdated as a mode of supporting interracial cooperation; however, this was the first step in a complete process that would eventually lead to civil rights legislation. Similarly, attendees and Committee members also recommended that a “coast-wide committee be set up which will collect data on the progress of the cultures of minority groups and distribute this data to people who will be qualified to make effective use of such material.”<sup>664</sup> Plans to conduct surveys and then distribute the results to groups and organizations that could then disseminate the information to communities through educational means spoke to the importance of creating better race relations, while the desire to have a government agency such as the WRA work to address problems of discrimination spoke to the growing urge among activists for government action in producing legislation to promote racial equality.

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<sup>662</sup> “Resolutions from Interracial Conference,” 1.

<sup>663</sup> “Resolutions,” 1.

<sup>664</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

The belief in the power of interracial cooperation was still present for attendees and former students, but the recognition that more legislative action and a “Square Deal” were needed represented a shift in their understanding of racial problems. There were doubts of the power of education to transform individuals as well as religious and community organizations’ abilities to tackle such large problems without the assistance of legislative change. Combined with the guarantees of West Coast labor leaders and government agencies to protect the rights of returning Japanese and all minority groups during and after the war, the resolutions and recommendations produced during the conference achieved the initial goals of the Committee. However, the conference attendees also expanded the discussion of civil rights beyond one minority group and included different strategies. The interracial conference served as a space where discussions concerning the effectiveness of education and interracial fellowship in the realm of civil rights occurred before the post-war era.

The Committee’s Interracial Conference was a forerunner of the multicultural and interracial movements which would emerge during the post-war years in California and, to a lesser extent, along the entire West Coast. Organizations such as the California Federation for Civic Unity (a state-wide coalition of Civic Unity Councils in cities such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sacramento, and San Diego founded in 1946) brought Japanese, African-American, Mexican-American, and Jewish inhabitants of California together in what historian Shanna Bernstein has called “interracial pragmatism.”<sup>665</sup> With so many ethnic and racial minority groups in California, there was a need to cooperate “through coalitions made both possible and mandatory by the war-induced influx of racially diverse populations that strained local resources and revealed a stark option:

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<sup>665</sup> Bernstein, *Bridges of Reform*, 96-97.

work together or suffer from the resultant discord.”<sup>666</sup> Outside of coalitions such as the Civic Unity Councils, labor unions such as the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing, and Allied Workers of America and the Cannery Workers and Farm Laborers Union (CWFLU) also embraced interracial and interethnic organization for the purpose of pushing for larger labor rights and reform following the war (as they had done in the past). For labor leaders such as CWFLU president and former FSCM vice-president Trinidad Rojo, pushing for racial equality for workers of various racial and ethnic backgrounds was a practical way to create a broad base for seeking civil and labor rights for the members of the CWFLU.<sup>667</sup> Among interracial civil rights groups and organizations, there was an acceptance that working with other minority groups, despite any existing tensions or problems, would lead to legal changes across the board for all races and ethnicities. Members of these organizations understood that civil rights could not be a zero-sum game: if one group was denied racial equality, then true social,

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<sup>666</sup> Bernstein, *Bridges of Reform*, 99.

<sup>667</sup> Under the guidance of Rojo, the CWFLU also became active in protesting nation-wide civil rights violations after WWII. Rojo was an avid supporter of the Federal Anti-Poll Tax (HB 7) and engaged in a letter writing and petition campaign on behalf of the CWFLU to raise awareness for the problem of poll taxes in the South and encourage others to become active in the protest as well. Between 1946 and 1949, the CWFLU also provided financial support to the Montgomery, Alabama-based Civil Rights Congress for its legal campaign on behalf of the Trenton Six, a group of African American men from Trenton, NJ were convicted of murdering a white shopkeeper by an all-white jury in 1948. Later in 1948, Rojo also wrote a powerfully-worded letter to the Governor of Georgia protesting the state’s use of the death penalty against an African-American man convicted of murder by an all-white jury in a trial that lasted only one day. “The gross miscarriage of justice,” Rojo began in his letter, “is apparent in [this] case in view of the fact that no member of the colored race was allowed to sit which condemned Mr. Ingram to the electric chair.” Rojo concluded the protest of the Ingram trial by informing the governor that the CWFLU believed “the rights of anyone whether he is white or black should be protected to the utmost” and that “we are convinced that this was not done in the case of Mr. Ingram. See Letter from Trinidad A. Rojo to Personnel Office, Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding Corporation in Tacoma, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1943, Folder 20, UCAPAWA- International Representative/Business Agent, A.E. Harding, Correspondence, RE: Racial Discrimination, 1943, Box 20, CWFLU Records; “Petition for HB 429,” folder 4, Subject Series: Resolutions on Philippine Citizenship- Correspondence, Box 15, CWFLU Records; Receipts for financial aid from the CWFLU to the Civil Rights Congress and the Trenton Six, folder 22, General Correspondence, Civil Rights Congress, 1946-1949, box 22, CWFLU records; Letter from CWFLU to Governor of Georgia, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1948, folder 22, General Correspondence, Georgia, State of, Governor’s Office, 1948, box 22, CWFLU records, University of Washington Special Collections.

political, and economic change could not become a reality. As Gonzalez's speech and the resolutions from the Interracial Conference indicate, there were practical reasons for minority groups to ease any existing racial or ethnic tensions and band together in order to work for broad civil rights legislation and changes at the local, state, and national level. Interracial cooperation was certainly needed in the post-war era, but for legislative, not educational or Christian, purposes.

In fact, some councils affiliated with the California Federation for Civic Unity advocated moving beyond education for improving racial relations and promoting civil rights. In a 1948 newsletter, the President of the Council for Civic Unity of San Francisco issued a statement on the role of "education" in the push for civil rights along the West Coast. "Is education the answer?" the President began, "I get skeptical about those who say the race problem has to be solved through education...we can't wait that long," arguing that education and exchange were not "fast or effective enough, or universal."<sup>668</sup> The president concluded by warning readers and members of the Council that "the old methods, we find, are not enough if we are to save ourselves and maintain our integrity as a democratic people."<sup>669</sup> For the San Francisco Council, the "old methods" of promoting better race relations through education, discussions, and cultural exchange were ill-adapted to the post-war era, where the push for desegregation and an end to discriminatory measures required legal action that would have as wide an effect as possible on the American people and, as a result, then bring about a change in racial relationships. It appeared as though education was an outdated mode of social activism in the realm of racial rights. Legislative change spoke to the recognition of certain civil

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<sup>668</sup> "Among These Rights—Newsletter for the Council for Civic Unity of San Francisco," pg. 2, September 1948, California Federation for Civic Unity, Bancroft Library Special Collections.

<sup>669</sup> "Among These Rights," 2.

rights groups that perhaps there were racist Americans who could not change, making education a futile tool in the post-war battle for racial equality. Also, America's devotion to democracy and freedom abroad during WWII led many to call for the application of such principles in the form of legal change guaranteeing rights to minority groups in the United States in order to promote the vision of America as a bastion of justice and equality. While members of the California Federation for Civic Unity strove to devote themselves to "the improvement of understanding and relations" among the various peoples of California, the goals of this devotion were not to create brotherhood or build cultural bridges, but to "enact legal change and action on behalf of the state and Federal government."<sup>670</sup>

The general move away from an emphasis on cultural exchange, fellowship, and education also reduced the popularity of the Asian Christian associations on campus. Leaders of organizations like the YMCA and the Committee on Friendly Relations among Foreign Students engaged in serious discussions concerning the role of the student Christian associations, particularly the FSCM and the JSCA. A general decline in the number of Filipino and Japanese students coming to America to study resulted in a decline in membership for the student associations, which originally began as primarily foreign-student groups. Many American-born students were not interested in joining ethnic organizations and chose to join emerging national and intercollegiate Christian groups such as the NICC and the American Students Association. A general decline in membership of the FSCM encouraged the YMCA and the Committee to direct funds to

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<sup>670</sup> "Proceedings of Fourth Annual Convention—Directors for Action," California Federation for Civic Unity, 1949, Bancroft Library Special Collections.

other programs, such as the growing Student Work Association (a civil rights initiative focusing on African American student members of the Y).<sup>671</sup>

More generally, ethnic student associations (secular and non) came under attack from both students and outside observers off campus. Following World War II, a group of Japanese-American students from California joined together to create the California Intercollegiate Nisei Order (CINO). Inspired by the JSCA and the earlier student associations, CINO was designed to serve as a California-wide organization to bring Nisei college students together to achieve the goal of “furtherance of racial tolerance towards Japanese-Americans.”<sup>672</sup> Although CINO was more socially-oriented than the JSCA, for example organizing beauty pageants and dances, the group provided Japanese and Japanese-American students a way to regain a sense of community and belonging following evacuation and internment after WWII.<sup>673</sup> Despite the popularity of the group in the immediate post-war years, by 1955, many members of CINO doubted the necessity of the organization and by 1959, the leaders of the group voted to disband during its annual meeting in Fresno, CA. Citing “negligible” intolerance against Japanese following the war, the leaders and members of the CINO believed that the “serious work” of the organization was complete since few students encountered racism or discrimination on and off campus.<sup>674</sup>

The perception among Asians that racism and discrimination had rapidly decreased following WWII also played a large role in the decline of ethnic-student

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<sup>671</sup> Mjagkij, *Light in the Darkness*, 115-118; 122-123.

<sup>672</sup> “CA Intercollegiate Nisei Organization Disbands,” *San Francisco County Examiner* (January 1959). See also Daryl Maeda, *Chains of Babylon: The Rise of Asian America* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 49.

<sup>673</sup> Maeda, *Chains*, 49-50.

<sup>674</sup> “CA Intercollegiate Nisei;” Maeda, *Chains*, 50.

organization such as the Asian student groups. Samuel I. Hayakawa, a semantics scholar and later president of San Francisco State University in the late 1960s, was one of the leading proponents of the move to end ethnic-organizations among Asian Americans during the post-war era.<sup>675</sup> In 1958, a year before CINO disbanded, Hayakawa officially declined an invitation to come speak at the group's annual meeting, explaining that such ethnic-based organizations only served as "social crutches" for Nisei and prevented them from intermingling with other students.<sup>676</sup> Hayakawa's belief that "the Nisei and Sansei should give up their organizations and cultural patterns and try to assimilate with the general public" resonated with young Asian and Asian American students who emerged from WWII with an optimistic outlook on race relations in the United States.<sup>677</sup> Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino Americans had all served in WWII, demonstrating the patriotism, loyalty, and general "American-ness" of these racial and ethnic groups. Despite a long history of discrimination in the U.S., many Asian Americans genuinely expressed their beliefs that they had overcome such prejudice by supporting the American military campaigns both abroad and on the home-front.<sup>678</sup> As a result, ethnic-based student organizations no longer seemed necessary.

A series of post-war "victories" for Asians and Asian Americans in terms of the struggle for rights and equality also created a feeling of optimism among many students.

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<sup>675</sup> Maeda, *Chains*, 49-50. Hayakawa would later play an important role in the Asian American rights movement of the late 1960s by serving as a common villain for Asian student groups at San Francisco State when he pulled the plug on speakers at a student-led rally for ethnic studies in 1968. Although students retaliated by referring to Hayakawa as a "banana" (yellow on the outside, but white on the inside), he gained a favorable reputation among conservatives for taking a strong stand against unruly student protests. Despite his notoriety, Hayakawa eventually agreed to approve an ethnic studies program at San Francisco State in 1969.

<sup>676</sup> "CA Intercollegiate Nisei Organization Disbands."

<sup>677</sup> "Saturday Evening Post Featuring Article by Hayakawa," (1955), Samuel Hayakawa Papers, Box 445, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.

<sup>678</sup> Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 406-407.

The most important advance in Asian rights was the repeal of many of the discriminatory and restrictive immigration laws against migrants from Asian nations during and immediately following WWII. The U.S. repealed the Chinese exclusion act during WWII with the 1943 Magnuson Act (the same year that China became an ally of the U.S. in the war) in order to court favor with the Chinese allies. Following the war, Congress lifted bans on naturalization for Asian immigrants.<sup>679</sup> A series of legal victories for Asian American lawyers who fought against state and local seizures of land “illegally” purchased by interned Japanese immigrants resulted in the overturning of the alien land laws themselves, with the Supreme Court rendering such measures unconstitutional in 1952 in the *Oyama v. United States* decision.<sup>680</sup> Asian American communities themselves also underwent changes, with many of the younger, America-born members rising to social and economic leadership positions in various businesses and organizations as a result of internment and a general push towards modernization and Americanization in Chinatowns, Little Tokios, and Little Manilas.<sup>681</sup> In turn, the student Christian associations’ political and social agendas in terms of fighting for civil rights and racial justice appeared outdated and unnecessary among Asian students after the war. Students now focused on integrating with larger groups on campus, undermining the necessity of ethnic, Christian-based associations on campus. Whereas African American youth organizations (such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and committees associated with the YMCA/YWCA in the South) blossomed in the era of

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<sup>679</sup> Reforms in immigration laws which allowed U.S. service men to bring brides from Asia into the U.S. were some of the earliest changes in restrictive immigration measures during WWII. Despite the official repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act, the Magnuson Act still maintained a restriction on the number of Chinese (150) allowed to enter the U.S. in a given year.

<sup>680</sup> Brilliant, *Color of America*, 41-48.

<sup>681</sup> Takaki, *Strangers*, 412-415.



civil disobedience and protest during the post-war years, Asian American students celebrated a perceived acceptance among white Americans, a complete assimilation to American cultural, social, and political life that had been out of reach prior to WWII.<sup>682</sup>

Although the JSCA and FSCM declined following the war, the Chinese Students Christian Association continued to operate following the war, but members and administrators raised important questions concerning the role of the association in the post-war world. While the migration of Japanese and Filipino students to the U.S. declined immediately after the war, the numbers of Chinese students coming to American colleges and universities actually increased, with a higher number coming for graduate education than during the pre-war years with the assistance of “cultural ambassadorship” programs such as the Fulbright Exchange (initiated with China in 1947).<sup>683</sup> As a result, whereas there were more American-born than foreign-born members of the CSCA in the years before the war, the balance shifted once again after 1945, with foreign students forming the core of the organization. The issues and discussions among CSCA members and leaders reflected this change. As historian Timothy Tseng argues, the politics of the CSCA post-WWII took a decidedly transnational turn, with members focusing on “rebuilding” China after the war and working to “better the nation” in the post-war world.<sup>684</sup> Post-war Chinese nationalism and the role of Protestantism in rebuilding China

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<sup>682</sup> Kurashige, *Japanese American Celebration*, 148-149.

<sup>683</sup> See Madeline Y. Hsu, “Befriending the Yellow Peril: Chinese Students and Intellectuals and the Liberalization of U.S. Immigration Laws, 1950-1965,” *Journal of American East Asian Relations* 16 (2009), 139-162 and “Domesticating the Yellow Peril: Students and Changing Perceptions of the Indigestibility of Chinese immigrants, 1905-1950,” in Vanessa Kuennemann and Ruth Mayer (eds.), *Transpacific Interactions: The United States and China, 1880-1950* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) for a more in-depth discussion of Chinese students in America and “cultural ambassadorship” through post-war programs such as the Fulbright educational exchange system.

<sup>684</sup> Timothy Tseng, “Religious Liberalism, International Politics, and Diasporic Realities: The Chinese Student Christian Association of North America, 1909-1951,” *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* (Fall-Winter 1996), 36-37.

became popular topics of conversation for CSCA members at conferences and in *The Chinese Christian Student*. At the 1948 Western Conference, panels on “the propaganda programs of the U.S. and Russian,” “what factors contribute to the popularity of Communists in China?,” and “in what ways will Americans aid further Sino-American relations?” were the primary focus of the meeting. Similarly, a CSCA conference in New Hampshire in 1948 featured discussions on how Chinese students in America could help “those Chinese students at home” who were attempting to rebuild China after the war amidst a civil war between the nationalist Kuomintang (KMT) and the Communist Party of China.<sup>685</sup> After World War II, it appeared as though the increase in foreign-born members returned the CSCA to the nationalist organization it had been during its formative years in the early twentieth century.

The CSCA’s post-war focus on China did not, however, completely overshadow the group’s concerns for race relations and civil rights. In fact, the organization’s 1948 Western Conference combined both international and domestic concerns, with an entire panel devoted to “education” and “racial justice.”<sup>686</sup> While CSCA members continued to discuss issues of race relations in their meetings and conferences after the war, the ways in which they discussed these topics were quite different than during the pre-war get-togethers, where members connected the racial problems in the U.S. to transnational

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<sup>685</sup> “CSCA Western Conference,” 6. While the CSCA’s focus on Chinese affairs gained prominence following WWII, student were still interested in “international” issues such as “how can the various ideological systems work together for world peace?” and “what can we as students do to further international understanding?” See also “CSCA Eastern Conference Bulletin,” No. 2 (June, 1948), 1-2, Yale Divinity School Special Collections. In terms of the Chinese Civil War, the CSCA supported the programs of the Communist Party of China, particularly the redistribution of land to the peasantry. Members also spoke out against the Chinese government’s suppression of student protests following WWII and American intervention on behalf of the KMT. In 1948, the CSCA officially proclaimed that, as an organization, it was “firmly against any foreign intervention and any foreign aid during the civil war period except those which can surely benefit the people.”

<sup>686</sup> “CSCA Western Conference,” 6.

issues such as imperialism and aggressive nationalism. Instead, during the 1948 conference, members appeared to question exactly what their roles in post-war race relations in the U.S. should be and, more importantly, how much they could do as students and how far “education” could go in the quest for civil rights and racial equality.<sup>687</sup> Following a panel on “inter-exchange of American and Chinese influence on both cultures—advantageous or not?”, conference attendees discussed whether or not “education should be their answer” to “community problems, racial justice, political effectiveness, and economic justice,” raising questions relating to how central educating a public on the virtues of fellowship and equality actually was in post-war society.<sup>688</sup> Questions relating to the usefulness of education were far cries from the large, Christian student conferences of the pre-war days, where issues of race, education, and exchange were passionately discussed.

There were also questions relating to the necessity of the CSCA from YMCA administrators following the war. In 1948, Tom Moore, co-chairman of the Pacific Southwest branch of the Student YMCA, published an announcement in the *Chinese Press* which outlined his desire to see the CSCA merge with the Y and the NICC. Moore began his announcement by explaining that “because Christ taught that all men are brothers and because this teaching is basic to the American political creed of equality of men...and the members of the Student YMCA and YWCA have many times affirmed their clearness of purpose that the barriers which at present separate persons because of color, national origin, and religion...should be removed,” “it is the hope of the Student YMCA and YWCA that the CSCA shall move toward the position of being chiefly a

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<sup>687</sup> “CSCA Western Conference,” 6.

<sup>688</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

**Student** Christian Association rather than a predominantly **Chinese** SCA...<sup>689</sup> Similar to Samuel Hayakawa's arguments that ethnically-oriented student groups prevented the Nisei from fully assimilating to American culture, Moore hoped that the CSCA could abandon the "Chinese" component of its organization and become either a general student Christian association by welcoming members of all racial and ethnic backgrounds or simply become another branch of the YMCA/YWCA. Moore also wanted "Chinese students studying in this country to enter American life rather than Chinese-American student life" and worried that the CSCA would prevent foreign student from adapting to American culture and life.<sup>690</sup> In an era when all races were supposed to be working together to make legislative progress towards equality, ethnic student groups appeared to lack a clear purpose in terms of solving race relations. Despite the CSCA's history of pan-ethnic and interracial cooperation with other student Christian associations, Moore argued that the organization's emphasis on "Chinese" students not only deterred the post-war image of America as racially inclusive, but also went against the Christian principle that "all men are brothers."<sup>691</sup>

Moore's questioning of the purpose of an ethnic-focused students' association echoed larger concerns in the U.S. of "Americanness" and belonging during the Cold War era. Growing international tensions with the Soviet Union and Communist Mao Zedong's rise to power in China created a frenzy of paranoia in the U.S. over the possibility of communist infiltration. When Congress passed the McCarran Internal Security Act in 1950 which authorized the federal government to detain anyone suspected

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<sup>689</sup> Tom Moore, "National Intercollegiate Council Message," *The Chinese Press* (August 1948), 7. Bold print emphasis in the original text.

<sup>690</sup> Moore, "National Intercollegiate," 7.

<sup>691</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

of espionage or sabotage, many Asian Americans and particularly the Chinese wondered if internment would again become a possibility.<sup>692</sup> In response, many Chinese and other Asian American groups defined their loyalty to the U.S. through public displays of patriotism and support for American ideals and democracy. For example, in larger Chinese American communities, many leaders and organizations (including the Six Companies in San Francisco and the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association based in New York City) responded to the rise of Communism in China with anti-Communist rallies and benefits during the early 1950s.<sup>693</sup> This post-war climate of Cold War loyalty to also affected the CSCA. Eventually, the organization disbanded by 1951 amidst chaos created by accusations of Communist infiltration after Mao Zedong gained control in China and the CSCA's post-war emphasis on Chinese affairs raised eyebrows and provoked federal investigations.<sup>694</sup> With the CSCA, JSCA, and FSCM gone by the early 1950s and the national student religious groups such as the YMCA, National

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<sup>692</sup> Takaki, *Strangers*, 415.

<sup>693</sup> Takaki, *Strangers*, 414-416.

<sup>694</sup> The organization became a point of concern for the U.S. government, with the CIA and FBI keeping track of activities and publications and the CSCA's own general secretary Paul Lin fleeing to Canada after communist accusations in 1948. In the Committee for Friendly Relations among Foreign Students Records at the YMCA Archives, Charles Hurrey describes a sense of fear among Chinese students in the U.S. after the war, particularly at a 1947 CSCA conference in Chicago where, according to Hurrey, there appeared to be "two conferences: one that was 'open' [to CSCA members and non-members] and another [just for members] with a deep natural concern of what was ahead for the Chinese students in the United States..with unscheduled sessions that lasted far into the night." Hurrey also described "instances of persecution [of Chinese students] on campuses and in some communities," "expulsion," and, in some instances, "students who simply dropped out of existence with no record of their return to China" after being expelled from college for Communist activities. See J. B. Schmoker, "Committee on Friendly Relations among Foreign Students," Box 4, Committee on Friendly Relations Records, Kautz Family YMCA Archives. At the College Park branch of the National Archives, there are copies of *The Chinese Student Bulletin* from the late 1940s obtained by the FBI and investigated for potential evidence of communist infiltration (See Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State- Office of the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs- Subject Files, 1949-1953, box 1, National Archives and Records Administration II, College Park, MD).

Intercollegiate Christian Council, and American Student Association gaining prominence, the era of the ethnic student Christian association was over.<sup>695</sup>

But not all civil rights advocates abandoned the Christian goals of the earlier students during the post-war era. Toru Matsumoto, the one-time President of the JSCA, also became active in nation-wide interracial groups and organizations. After completing his graduate education at the Union Theological School in New York, Matsumoto became an ordained minister and devoted the rest of his life to religious causes that centered on racial equality. While Matsumoto assisted Japanese and Japanese Americans with relocation during the war, he also became interested in civil rights issues pertaining to all minority groups during the post-war era.<sup>696</sup> Following WWII, Matsumoto published two books which focused on various issues of race, citizenship, and belonging. The first, *A Stranger is a Brother* (1946), was a largely autobiographical account of his life under imperial Japanese rule prior to coming to America to study in 1934.<sup>697</sup> Filled with snapshots of his past, including time spent in prison for speaking out against Japan's militarization policies, a beating from Japanese soldiers which left him permanently deaf in one ear, and his accounts of converting from a Buddhist to a Christian as a teenager, *Stranger* became a popular read for Americans interested in understanding the mind of a "Japanese democrat" and how one Japanese man was able to defy Japanese fascism and become a democratic and Christian supporter of America.<sup>698</sup> His book *Beyond Prejudice* (1948) became even more popular and directly related his thoughts on the value of

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<sup>695</sup> See Eugene G. Schwartz, *American Students Organize*, Part 1, 55-76, for a more in-depth discussion of the establishment of the American Student Association following WWII.

<sup>696</sup> See Chapter Five for a more in-depth discussion of Matsumoto's role in Japanese resettlement during WWII.

<sup>697</sup> Toru Matsumoto, *A Brother is a Stranger* (New York: John Day Company, 1946). Matsumoto also penned a novel, the 1949 *Seven Stars*, which was a fictional account of seven Japanese brothers' lives before and after WWII. This work was not as popular as Matsumoto's other two books.

<sup>698</sup> Robert Peel, "One Japanese and His Family," *The Christian Science Monitor* (December 2, 1946), 18.

education in building interracial networks before working for legislative to the growing post-war rights movement.

*Beyond Prejudice* (published jointly by the Federal Council of Missions and other Christian organizations) recounted the history of early Japanese settlement along the West Coast and the reaction and involvement of the Church in assisting Japanese during internment. Like *A Brother is Stranger*, Matsumoto's second book was met with much praise from Americans and newspapers, with reviewers noting the book's detailed accounts of Japanese history along the West Coast as well as a unique focus on the ways in which Pacific Coast churches assisted Japanese in leaving the camps and resettling into life. As one of the first in-depth accounts of internment and relocation from a Japanese American, *Beyond Prejudice* became a popular book for those seeking to learn not only about internment, but also about the history of Japanese in California, Oregon, and Washington as well as the roles of religious organizations during WWII. Reviewer Mark A. Dawber described *Beyond Prejudice* in the foreword to the 1948 edition of the book as "a story of sorrow and suffering," but also a story of "triumph—the triumph of the gospel of Jesus Christ over injustice, persecution, and prejudice."<sup>699</sup>

Matsumoto, however, did not write his book as merely a story of the triumph of Christianity over the injustices of internment in America. Similar to *A Brother is a Stranger*, *Beyond Prejudice* also contained Matsumoto's opinions on how Christianity could continue to be involved in issues of racial equality and civil rights for all minorities in the post-war U.S. and particularly along the West Coast. The last chapter of *Beyond Prejudice* received scant attention from reviewers who were more focused on the book's contributions to Americans' understanding of internment; however, this portion of

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<sup>699</sup> Mark A. Dawber, "Foreword," in Matsumoto, *Beyond Prejudice*, vi.

Matsumoto's work spoke to his strong belief that the battle for civil rights did not end or necessarily begin with legislative victories. In the introduction to *Beyond Prejudice*, Matsumoto informed readers that "with the return of peace, the Christian churches in the United States face a rare opportunity and a heavy responsibility for healing the wounds of mankind," which created the context for his final and powerful chapter on post-war race relations in the West.<sup>700</sup> In the midst of the formation of post-war civil rights organizations such as California's State Council of Civic Unity and the heightened awareness of groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union of legal violations along the West Coast, Matsumoto conceded that these groups were making progress in the struggle for equality, but argued for the renewed role of the church in supporting a civil rights movement.<sup>701</sup> "Thanks to the painful experiences in race relations during the war," Matsumoto explained, "the larger community is now more conscious of its responsibility to its different smaller ethnic communities within itself," calling attention to the fact that "on the Pacific Coast, the focal point of the evacuation controversy, communities are organizing for civic unity...made conscious of their responsibility by the evacuation and being desirous of curing causes of interracial tension."<sup>702</sup> While Matsumoto admired the fact that the "membership in these groups [ACLU, Civic Unity Councils] is splendidly representative of all kinds of people" including "liberals and 'reactionaries,' church people and non-church people, workers and industrialists, and Negroes, Mexicans, Orientals, and Caucasians" and was grateful that "we may express our...legal concern" through agencies such as civic unity groups and the ACLU, Matsumoto wondered: "what

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<sup>700</sup> Matsumoto, *Beyond Prejudice*, xiii.

<sup>701</sup> Matsumoto, *Beyond Prejudice*, 136-137.

<sup>702</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-137.



remains for the churches?”<sup>703</sup> While church groups participated in events and organizations such as the Berkeley Interracial Conference, did the focus on legal action in achieving civil rights post-WWII indicate that Christianity’s role in the battle for racial justice along the West Coast was being supplemented by groups such as the ACLU?

For Matsumoto, the post-war years and the potential problems for race relations along the Pacific Coast were more than enough proof that Americans needed Christianity and the churches to help with civil rights struggles in realms beyond legal battles.

Matsumoto agreed that “Japanese Americans are interested in, as others of racial and religious minorities are, and the churches are in favor of fair employment practice law, minimum wage law, full employment law, housing acts, the removal of discrimination in immigration laws, international cooperation through the United Nations Organization, and the guarantee of civil liberties everywhere,” explaining that civic unity groups had the potential to work so well because there were issues such as equal access to housing and jobs which all minority groups along the West Coast could agree on and work together to achieve.<sup>704</sup> Joining together in interracial solidarity to achieve legislative victories in the name of civil rights was an important step in securing liberties for all minorities, but Matsumoto argued that “legislation is essential, but education is basic.”<sup>705</sup>

Although legislation was needed to ensure equal access to basic rights for minorities, if true interracial and interethnic cooperation was desired amongst the peoples of the West Coast, “the general and pressing problem of race relations in the country...require[ed] Christian social action.”<sup>706</sup> In addition to legislative change, Matsumoto (drawing on

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<sup>703</sup> Ibid., 137-138.

<sup>704</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>705</sup> Ibid., 139-140.

<sup>706</sup> Ibid., 139-140.

both his Christian faith and his experiences with student Christian associations in the past) also called for a deeper understanding of “shared experiences and goals through personal connections” among minority groups, an important task for the former student leader and one which the Church could help in achieving.<sup>707</sup>

For Matsumoto, “Christian social action” consisted of interracial cooperation and education. In his final chapter, Matsumoto began his description of the role of Christian social action in promoting interracial solidarity along the West Coast by outlining the various projects that the churches and religious organizations had undertaken in order to better approach the problems of post-war race relations. “Special studies of race relations,” conferences, lectures, and interracial workshops were all events and activities which various denominations and religious organizations were involved with during the immediate post-war years, demonstrating a desire among religious groups to understand and analyze the problems of civil rights access and potential interracial tensions in communities such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle.<sup>708</sup> However, Matsumoto also explained that “books and lectures can hardly remove all prejudice” and that education meant more than simply learning about the experiences of various ethnic and racial groups in a formal setting.<sup>709</sup> Interaction between and among members of various race and ethnic groups was crucial for building interracial cooperation and understanding and, in the long run, raising awareness for civil rights advocacy along the West Coast.

Matsumoto also argued that “best education for better race relations” and ultimately better understanding was “personal contact.”<sup>710</sup> Once understanding was

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<sup>707</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>708</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>709</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>710</sup> Ibid., 140-141.

established through social, cultural, and political interaction, individuals from various racial and ethnic backgrounds could work together on larger projects concerning rights and racial justice. “Let us seek our own freedom from prejudice,” Matsumoto urged, “by making friends with individuals of a racial stock other than our own.”<sup>711</sup> Although civil rights organizations along the West Coast were moving towards a focus on legislative action rather than just creating social interaction among different races and ethnicities, Matsumoto argued that changing beliefs about various racial groups and breaking down prejudice and stereotypes should not be overshadowed by any civil rights victories in the way of new legislation. In a fashion similar to the “cultural bridge building” advocated by student associations decades before, Matsumoto promoted cultural and social exchange as an important step in building racial solidarity along the West Coast; however, unlike some of the early attempts by student cosmopolitan clubs, his experience as a JSCA leader during the critical period of the 1930s and into WWII force him to think broadly about the implications of social interaction for the advancement of a civil rights movement. In other words, Matsumoto returned to the cultural bridge theory, but during the post-WWII era, viewed it as a path to creating understanding that would in turn lead to more fruitful discussions and more legislative action in the future.

However, Matsumoto also warned readers that the cultural bridge should not be applied haphazardly when looking to build interracial solidarity. More specifically, he argued against using social opportunities to “create a spectacle or place on display” a member of another racial or minority group (referring to some of the earlier activities of

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<sup>711</sup> Ibid., 140.

student and church groups carried out in the name of “cosmopolitanism”).<sup>712</sup> Matsumoto explained that “making an exhibit of a person from another racial group at a church meeting and calling it a race relations program is not recommended” and called on readers to look beyond any superficial teas, fairs, or festivals that organizations sponsored for true interracial friendship and solidarity.<sup>713</sup> Matsumoto stressed that simply applying the term “racial workshop” or “racial program” to any church function with more than one member of a racial minority in attendance was not necessarily an example of an interracial activity; such attempts at interracial solidarity should “strive to continue to develop conversations among different groups and use such conversations to promote equality and long-term goals.”<sup>714</sup> Matsumoto also warned that any “paternalistic treatment must be avoided” in the church’s attempts to build interracial solidarity, arguing that members must meet each other on equal footing if any true progress was to come from the church initiating civil rights organizations.<sup>715</sup> “Enter into a genuine fellowship,” Matsumoto explained, “and you will forget that you are promoting better race relations.”<sup>716</sup>

Matsumoto’s views on promoting interracial solidarity to pursue civil rights were different from other activists along the West Coast during the post-WWII era. Organizations such as the Berkeley Interracial Committee and the California Civic Unity Councils were indeed interracial and joined together representatives from a variety of racial and ethnic groups along the West Coast; however, Matsumoto required a more

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<sup>712</sup> See Chapter One for a more in-depth discussion of the cosmopolitan activities such as ethnic fairs and plays of earlier student groups as well as the “immigrant-gifts” movement.

<sup>713</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>714</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>715</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>716</sup> Ibid., 140.

genuine commitment to racial understanding and social involvement than these groups offered. The Berkeley Interracial conference itself, for example, was not an organic coming-together of racial and ethnic groups and guaranteed no continued social interaction or attempts to build a “cultural bridge” outside of cooperation in the name of legislative action. Matsumoto’s ideas of civil rights combined legal *and* social action in an attempt to completely reshape the racial landscape of the West Coast and while building cultural and racial understanding. Once racial solidarity and understanding were established, only then would legislative action become meaningful for all racial minorities. While Matsumoto agreed that legislation was needed to protect and guarantee civil rights for all minorities, he argued that the struggle did not end with government action or that activists should strive for legal action alone. Following this line of thinking, Matsumoto placed great responsibility on churches as institutions that could assist in the fight for racial equality in the West (as Christian students had called for during the interwar period).

In fact, Matsumoto argued in the concluding chapter of *Beyond Prejudice* that in terms of civil rights issues, “the most crucial problem in the church is that of the place of the leadership of minority groups.”<sup>717</sup> In order to build interracial coalitions based on fellowship and mutual understanding, the Church was required to promote such relationships by engaging and encouraging minority leaders in religious communities to “lead the way in creating opportunities for solidarity.”<sup>718</sup> Matsumoto’s focus on the role of churches in producing leaders was similar to the ideas of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a civil rights organization formed in

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<sup>717</sup> Ibid., 140-141.

<sup>718</sup> Ibid., 141.

1957.<sup>719</sup> Matsumoto did more than simply preach the benefits of minority leaders in the church; he also rose to national recognition as a religious leader and a promoter of interracial Church youth organizations, camps, and meetings during the post-WWII years. In October of 1946, *The Afro-American* (a Brooklyn-based newspaper) reported on a Metropolitan Christian Youth Council Session held at the Riverside Church in New York and planned by the YMCA/YWCA as well as other “renowned religious leaders” including Matsumoto.<sup>720</sup> “Youth United for Christ” was the theme of the annual conference for 1946 and attendees from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and other northeast and mid-Atlantic regions gathered together to “carry out interracial fellowship in every phase of its program.”<sup>721</sup> The Metropolitan Christian Youth Council worked to increase interracial membership in New York churches as well as religious institutions across the country, with leaders calling for churches to promote interracial relations and civil rights in America.<sup>722</sup> Matsumoto worked with the Reverend Ralph Rowse (African American minister in New York and founder of the New York-based Interracial Fellowship program for Christians interested in race relations) to establish a “social action committee” and an “interracial committee” as part of the Christian Youth Council.<sup>723</sup>

During the 1946 annual conference, Matsumoto also worked with the other attendees and leaders to establish a “committee on legislation,” designed to introduce and involve Christian youth and students to the process of raising awareness of racial discrimination and gaining civil rights victories through legislative action as well as

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<sup>719</sup> Sawyer, *Black Ecumenism*, 42-43.

<sup>720</sup> “Christian Youth Council Session Planned in N.Y.,” *The Afro-American* (Oct. 1946), 14.

<sup>721</sup> “Christian Youth,” 14.

<sup>722</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>723</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

Christian fellowship.<sup>724</sup> Although the Christian Youth Council was based in New York and Matsumoto was active in church-based interracial activities in the Northeast region of the U.S., he also lectured widely along the West Coast during the post-war years, identifying the need for interracial cooperation and solidarity among Christians of a variety of racial and ethnic groups in cities such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle.<sup>725</sup> West Coast churches frequently invited Matsumoto to visit and lecture on the need for positive race relations in America and the role of the church in promoting these goals.<sup>726</sup> Matsumoto was a strong supporter of and active in the “Race Relations Sunday” program established by Christian organizations and churches across the country in 1928 as a way to encourage interracial fellowship and interaction and continued through the post-war years.<sup>727</sup> Programs such as Race Relations Sunday and the Christian Youth Council meetings in New York combined interests in civil rights activism, youth involvement, and promoting the role of churches in easing racial tensions, all goals which Matsumoto strongly supported and admired.

Although education may have been a secondary civil rights tactic in the post-war era, it was a crucial component for working with youth who would one day grow to become activists themselves. The interracial youth movements that Matsumoto organized, sponsored, and worked with placed the civil rights struggle in a long-term frame, with members and leaders looking to lay the groundwork for future leaders and legislative change. Just as student Christian association member had hope to do in the past, former students who had become active in community groups placed great value in

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<sup>724</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>725</sup> Greg Robinson, *After Camp: Portraits in Midcentury Japanese American Life and Politics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012), 258-263.

<sup>726</sup> Robinson, *After Camp*, 263, 265-271.

<sup>727</sup> Ibid., 264.

continuing to create opportunities for interracial and interethnic organization. Events such as conferences, meetings, and discussion groups continued the pre-war tradition among Asian students of using Christianity to broaden the struggle for equality and rights beyond a black-white dichotomy and make racial justice a topic for all ethnic and racial groups in the U.S. While creating these opportunities for the youth of the post-war era may not have produced immediate legislative change, for men like Matsumoto and other Christian students, legislative change also did not produce immediate change in racial relationships in America. Other organizations such as the YMCA/YWCA and the World Student Christian Federation also realized the importance of promoting understanding among students and worked to create youth organizations devoted to national and international fights for human rights (a religious and ecumenical movement that occurred during the same time as the organization of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in the South).<sup>728</sup> In order to create a new racial order in America, one based on equality in humanity and an adherence to Christian principles of fellowship, it was necessary for youth to be exposed to interracial and interethnic modes of cooperation for the greater good. This idea was not limited to groups along the West Coast: during the 1960s, SNCC also organized Freedom Schools (with both black and white instructors) devoted to educating young Southern African-Americans about their rights as U.S. citizens, demonstrating that education and interracial interaction were still important components of civil rights activism well into the mid-twentieth century.<sup>729</sup> Although

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<sup>728</sup> See Clayborn Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005) for a more in-depth discussion of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, an organization initially funded by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

<sup>729</sup> Carson, *In Struggle*, 109-110; 119-120. SNCC members formed the “freedom schools” as a means to educate children of their rights and liberties and build an appreciation for the voting process from an early age. Members also designed the schools to challenge traditional black/white relationships in the South, using both white and black instructors to work with children and demonstrate that mutual respect could go



Matsumoto explained that it was difficult “to expect any group of people to cultivate, let alone explicitly express, such supra-loyalty to Christian ideas,” his social and political activities were practical applications of this line of thinking.<sup>730</sup>

The Seattle-based Christian Friends for Racial Equality (CFRE) was an example of the type of post-war West Coast civil rights organization that carried on the principles which Matsumoto espoused with the help of former student Christian association members. The roots of the religious-oriented group lie in the YMCA interracial campus meetings at the University of Washington founded in 1939 by Filipino student Victor Carreon and guided by the mission of “welcome[ing] all peoples to our churches and strength[ening] those bonds which unite us all as one people in our democracy.”<sup>731</sup> Just like the student Christian associations, the CFRE was framed around a Christian understanding of democracy and cooperation in America. Guided by long-time missionary and Seattle native Edith Steinmetz with the assistance of Carreon, the organization grew to 500 by 1944 and later 745 members after WWII.<sup>732</sup> By 1956, the CFRE was the largest, interracial civil rights organization in Seattle.<sup>733</sup> The impressive growth of the organization after WWII was largely the result of a rising African American population in the city (where migrants took advantage of wartime employment in ship and plane plants such as Boeing) and, as city councilmen believed, rising racial tensions. After the war, Seattle Mayor Gordon S. Clinton maintained an active interest in

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a long way in promoting civil rights (as opposed to the “plantation” relationships which relied on black deference to whites). As Carson explains, the “freedom schools” were not always successful means of creating a new environment through interracial interaction: many of the white teachers described feelings of mistrust and suspicion among the children.

<sup>730</sup> Toru Matsumoto, “The Making of American Citizens,” *The Christian Science Monitor* (Sept. 1948), 11.

<sup>731</sup> “History of the Christian Friends for Racial Equality-1950,” pg. 3, box 3, folder 3, Speeches and Writings of Others, 1935-1946, Velasco Papers, University of Washington Special Collections.

<sup>732</sup> “History of the Christian Friends for Racial Equality-1950,” 3.

<sup>733</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4.

analyzing and addressing issues of racial inequality and civil rights violations, primarily in housing and employment. A variety of city councils were formed to investigate incidents of racial injustice and raise awareness of the problems that returning Japanese, African Americans, and other minority groups faced in Seattle.<sup>734</sup> Chapters of both the NAACP and the Congress of Racial Equality in Seattle also responded to increased discrimination and segregation in the city following an influx of African Americans to the Pacific Northwest from southern states during the War (despite some middle-class Seattle blacks at first being hesitant to assist working and lower-class migrants).<sup>735</sup> While the CFRE was overwhelmingly female and consisted mainly of white and African American members, other ethnicities and races (including Asian Americans and Jews) joined and participated in the organization.<sup>736</sup>

With the guidance of Carreon and Victorio Velasco (another former FSCM member), the CFRE became an integrated and interracial group that attracted members from the Seattle and UW YMCA/YWCA, the Chinese Baptist Church, the Temple de Hirsch, the Filipino Community Church, and the First African Methodist Episcopal Church of Seattle.<sup>737</sup> As a result of the religious-based framework of the CFRE, much of the activism centered on cultural exchange and “the procedures of investigation, persuasion, and when advisable, by publicity to foster equality and understanding.”<sup>738</sup> More specifically, the 1944 CFRE Constitution listed “endeavoring to promote understanding by social acquaintance” and “developing understanding rather than

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<sup>734</sup> See Quintard Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994).

<sup>735</sup> Taylor, *Forging*, 288-297.

<sup>736</sup> “History of the Christian Friends for Racial Equality,” 5.

<sup>737</sup> “History of the Christian Friends for Racial Equality,” 5.

<sup>738</sup> Johana McClees, “Christian Friends for Racial Equality: A Unique Approach to Religious and Race Relations in Seattle, 1942-1970,” (BA Thesis) University of Washington Special Collections.

resentment” among Seattle’s minorities as its main goals and these principles guided many of the social and cultural activities of the organization over the next three decades.<sup>739</sup> With the assistance of local churches and other organizations, the CFRE designed the Seattle Second Annual at Home Visits in 1950, “an extensive program of interracial and interfaith home visitation on New Year’s Day” which promoted discussions on race relations and interracial solidarity in the city.<sup>740</sup>

Velasco also worked to build relations between the Filipino community of Seattle and other minority groups by promoting interfaith and interracial/multicultural social and church events. In 1950, the CFRE “cooperated with Thalia, Allied Artists Inc. (of Seattle) in presenting its productions with interracial casts,” demonstrating an attempt to integrate the arts and culture scene in Seattle.<sup>741</sup> Together, Velasco and Carreon encourage the CFRE to sponsor the Civil Rights section of the Annual Institute of Government at the University of Washington as well as an educational project titled “American Conversations,” a panel of student speakers who led conferences and seminars on how to respond to “racist thinkers with Christian suggestions” and “explained away stereotyped ideas” at campus meetings and conferences.<sup>742</sup> Similar to Matsumoto, the CFRE also recognize the prominent role that students could play in the current and future movement for racial equality and understanding, calling on an earlier tradition of organizing among Asian students during the pre-war years. Victor Carreon

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<sup>739</sup> “History of the Christian Friends,” 6.

<sup>740</sup> “History of the Christian Friends,” 6.

<sup>741</sup> The CFRE also worked closely with the Fellowship Quintent of the Church of the Fellowship of All Peoples (an interracial, San Francisco-based nondenominational Church) when it came to Seattle to host a special meeting with ministers for addressing racial issues through church services and sermons.

<sup>742</sup> “History of the Christian Friends,” 6-7.

and Velasco were able to use their experiences in working on and off campus to address the issue of racial understanding through multicultural social events.

The growth of the CFRE following WWII represents an understudied aspect of the history of West Coast civil rights. During the late 1940s and into the 1950s, historians have argued that the Cold War focus on anticommunism in the U.S. drastically derailed budding civil rights movements in cities such as Los Angeles.<sup>743</sup> Activist organizations including the California Federation for Civic Unity feared the association among the American public and state, local, and federal officials of civil rights advocacy with subversion or attempts to incite class or racial warfare in order to promote a Communist take-over of the U.S. government. As a result, the CFCU and other groups placed a greater emphasis on anticommunism and community “betterment” programs rather than openly promoting a civil rights legislative agenda.<sup>744</sup> Mexican immigrants, members of Hollywood’s Jewish community, and African Americans such as famous activist/lawyer Loren Miller were particularly suspect among the California Un-American Activities Committee and often faced accusations of “radical subversion” for participation in labor organizing and civil rights protests.<sup>745</sup> Unlike the seemingly radical groups and organizations mentioned above, however, the CFRE and its Christian-based notions of fellowship, exchange, and cultural education continued to operate through the Cold War era without drawing unwanted attention from red-baiting legislators or fearful community members to its programs and policies. In the midst of an anticommunist attack on groups which largely advocated legal change or labor activism for racial rights, organizations such as the CFRE appeared to be innocuous and even model organs for the

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<sup>743</sup> Bernstein, *Bridges of Reform*, 105-107.

<sup>744</sup> Bernstein, *Bridges of Reform*, 103-105.

<sup>745</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

promotion of American and Christian notions of interracial cooperation. Underneath the surface, though, members of the CFRE, who were actively attempting to change the racial landscape of cities such as Seattle and stamp out prejudice for the betterment of mankind rather than just Americans, undoubtedly viewed their goals as “radical.” By examining the growth of the CFRE and its agenda, the more varied and complex nature of West Coast civil rights during the era of rising Cold War tensions and anticommunism becomes clear.

While the CFRE was based largely on a social understanding of how best to combat racial prejudice and intolerance in Seattle, the organization also forayed into legal action for civil rights during the 1950s and into the early 1960s. In many cases, the CFRE tackled issues that government agencies overlooked in the larger battle for racial equality and civil rights. During the early 1950s, Velasco, Carreon, and the other members of the Friends worked to end discrimination in cemeteries, in which certain churches and privately owned lands refused to accept the burial of certain racial minorities or segregated the deceased by separate plots according to race or ethnicity. Both African American and Japanese American inhabitants of Seattle brought complaints of discrimination to the CFRE during the early 1950s when local cemeteries refused to bury their deceased family members (including a WWII veteran) because they were not white.<sup>746</sup> The CFRE launched extensive letter writing, petition, and pamphlet campaigns against the discrimination in Seattle’s cemeteries “in order that practices within our country be brought into closer harmony with our pronouncements of foreign powers concerning justice and equality.”<sup>747</sup> Members delivered hundreds of materials to

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<sup>746</sup> “History of the Christian Friends,” 7.

<sup>747</sup> “History of the Christian Friends,” 7.

residents, churches, and local businesses decrying the blatant discrimination that was present in Seattle even beyond a minority's life on earth. Also, as Christians, discrimination in cemeteries was an "unforgivable act of inhumanity" for CFRE members as Velasco argued in one CFRE newsletter, explaining that there was "possibly no larger injustice [than]...being denied fairness even in death...when the human spirit is free from earthly prejudice and hate."<sup>748</sup>

The CFRE based its fight against cemetery discrimination on legal principles, demonstrating the group's combination of social and political action. In one pamphlet, the CFRE argued that the recent 1948 *Shelley vs. Kramer* Supreme Court decision (which made housing covenants based on race illegal) also applied to cemeteries. The CFRE enlisted the help of local churches, the Civic Unity Committee, as well as the NAACP to help battle discrimination in cemeteries and, by 1951, was engaged in a number of conversations with the Assistant to the Washington State Attorney regarding the issue. CFRE members as well as local ministers argued that discrimination in cemeteries was no different from housing covenants based on race: both acts represented "a denial among policy makers that racial injustice...had come to characterize inter-race relations in Washington following a war where America's sons had fought to bring democracy to the world."<sup>749</sup> The efforts of the CFRE in the fight to end cemetery covenants resulted in a 1953 Washington statute which made it "unlawful for any cemetery under this act to refuse burial to any person because such person may not be of the Caucasian race."<sup>750</sup>

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<sup>748</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>749</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>750</sup> "We Are Indebted," *Racial Equality Bulletin* (May 1952), 3. *The Racial Equality Bulletin* was the monthly publication of the CFRE.

The members' drive to end discrimination in cemeteries influenced the group to reach further outside of its social and cultural activities and to bring racial justice and end segregation in other areas of Seattle life. After fighting discrimination in cemeteries, the CFRE turned its attention to discrimination in Seattle-based auto insurance companies, where agencies denied coverage to minority groups or over-charged for services and plans.<sup>751</sup> Again, the CFRE worked with the NACCP as well as other interracial Seattle racial rights groups to bring legal justice to a social and economic problem, lobbying local and state politicians and raising awareness of the problem throughout the city and surrounding suburbs. As a result, Seattle passed the Financial Responsibility Law in 1949 which required insurance companies to grant equal treatment to all residents regardless of race, ethnicity, or religious affiliation.<sup>752</sup> The CFRE also worked to end discrimination in Seattle-area restaurants (the Coon Chicken Inn—which featured a racist, black-faced advertisement for its fried chicken—was a primary target of the CFRE, the NAACP, and the Congress for Racial Equality) as well as promote racial equality in hiring practices and in working environments.<sup>753</sup>

During the 1950s, the success the group experienced in the auto and restaurant industries prompted members to continue to combine education with legislative tactics. In 1958, the CFRE created a committee to work with local employment agencies and assist minority job-seekers in applying for jobs for which they were qualified regardless of their racial or ethnic status. At the same time, the CFRE and Velasco also sponsored a public panel discussion on the University of Washington campus to bring together civil rights activists to discuss ways in which Seattle citizens could push for fair

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<sup>751</sup> Taylor, *Forging*, 223, 242-257.

<sup>752</sup> McClees, "Christian Friends," 24.

<sup>753</sup> Taylor, *Forging*, 277.

employment.<sup>754</sup> Although the CFRE primarily worked at building interracial and intercultural cooperation for civil rights through social, cultural, and religious-oriented activities, the group also cooperated with other civil rights groups to work for equality through legal change. With the guidance of former students such as Velasco and Carreon, the CFRE represented a continuation of the efforts of students in Seattle for interracial cooperation and civil rights rather than a phenomenon of post-WWII changes alone. The influx of African Americans to Seattle during the war no doubt heightened the need for racial equality in Seattle and drew attention to racial injustices in the city; however, previous groups such as the student Christian associations had worked before the war to address the racial problems of a variety of minority groups and laid foundations for later organizations such as the CFRE. During the post-war years, the CFRE continued to use education and interaction as precursors to legislative change as well as follow-ups to new, anti-discriminatory laws in order to ensure that race relations in Seattle and in the Pacific Northwest were improving on social in addition to political and economic terms.

Velasco's participation in the CFRE also prepared him for his later involvement with the Seattle Citizen's Advisory Committee on Minority Housing during the late 1950s through the early 1960s. The Citizen's Advisory Committee was an initiative founded during the late 1940s by Mayor Clinton and designed to analyze and address problems with housing ranging from segregation to landlords over-charging minority renters living in Seattle.<sup>755</sup> By the early 1950s, racially restrictive housing covenants and discrimination in renting had become prominent issues for various civil rights

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<sup>754</sup> "History of the Christian Friends," 14.

<sup>755</sup> "Excerpts from the Report of the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Minority Housing, Seattle, 12/1962," box 7, folder 7- Reports, 1955-1963, Velasco Papers, University of Washington Special Collections.



organizations along the West Coast, prompting many ill-fated attempts at interracial, interethnic, and multicultural cooperation to address these problems and provide suggestions.<sup>756</sup> In Los Angeles, for example, the return of Japanese evacuees to the areas of the city once known as “Little Tokios” created tensions between the returnees and the African Americans who had moved into many of the homes and businesses.<sup>757</sup> For minorities in Seattle, however, the long-standing problem of housing discrimination drew various racial and ethnic groups together and the battle over desegregation in housing grew to a fevered pitch by the early 1960s when the CFRE, NAACP, and local churches supported multiple bills to end discrimination in the housing market. Unfortunately, these bills failed first in 1959 and again in 1961. Frustration mounted among these groups as the battle against housing discrimination appeared to be an increasingly uphill battle. In response to opinions stated by lawmakers and Seattle realtors that there was nothing that could legally be done about white renters and homeowners “simply not wanting to live amongst Negroes and other minorities,” the Citizen’s Committee resolved in 1962 to “study whether there is a need for federal, state, or local legislative aid or governmental assistance to minority families in securing adequate and suitable housing in Seattle.”<sup>758</sup> Velasco became an active participant in assisting with designing the proposed study, including suggesting that the Committee “study minority housing problems in other states and review the information reports” from other cities.<sup>759</sup> As a result of the study, Valasco revealed the findings of the CFRE’s survey (including rampant discrimination against black renters in certain districts and realtor discrimination

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<sup>756</sup> Kurashige, *Shifting Grounds of Race*, 178-181.

<sup>757</sup> Kurashige, *Shifting Grounds of Race*, 178-181.

<sup>758</sup> “Excerpts from the Report of the Citizens’ Advisory Committee on Minority Housing.”

<sup>759</sup> Ibid.

against potential Asian homeowners) to the Citizen's Committee in 1963, and the Seattle City Council and sympathetic legislators introduced bills for the 1963 legislative session that would create legal provisions for fair housing.<sup>760</sup> Unfortunately, the 1963 bills died at the hands of the Rules Committee, with similar losses again in 1964. Velasco and the CFRE continued to work with local civil rights groups to bring about legal change in housing when, in 1965, the Seattle Real Estate Board announced its compliance with a voluntary Washington State Board of Realtors non-discrimination code (possibly as a result of pressure from civil rights groups).<sup>761</sup> Later, in 1968, the Seattle City Council finally passed an open housing policy outlawing racial discrimination in housing. Although the work of Velasco and the CFRE had not achieved the desired effect in terms of enforceable legislation, the adoption of the 1965 non-discriminatory code by Seattle realtors can be viewed as a victory for the widespread organization of multiple civil rights groups in the region, including the CFRE.

The work of the CFRE in promoting fair housing, however, did not stop in 1965. Maintaining their belief in the idea that "though you can legislate against discrimination, you can cure prejudice only by social acquaintance," Velasco and other members of the CFRE continued to work to change minds in Seattle in addition to laws when it came to housing integration.<sup>762</sup> The CFRE worked with churches in various Seattle neighborhoods to encourage pastors to promote integrated housing and promote the benefits of "mixed-living" for children and families of various racial and ethnic backgrounds.<sup>763</sup> Velasco also headed a committee that would meet with individuals who

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<sup>760</sup> "History of the Christian Friends," 23.

<sup>761</sup> "History of the Christian Friends," 23.

<sup>762</sup> McClees, "Christian Friends for Racial Equality," 24.

<sup>763</sup> "History of Christian Friends," 24.

were selling their homes and encourage them to remain committed to non-discriminatory selling practices and refuse to be persuaded by realtors who may convince them to only sell to a certain race.<sup>764</sup> In general, despite the confirmation among Seattle realtors that they would engage in fair housing practices and the eventual passage of the 1968 anti-discriminatory housing legislation in the city, the CFRE continued to see restrictive covenants and housing discrimination as part of a larger problem of prejudice in Washington and along the Pacific Coast. Although laws could help limit the legal effects of discrimination, only education, understanding, and “social acquaintance,” the main principles of the CFRE, could bring about a real change in the racial atmosphere of Seattle by promoting interracial interaction based on Christian values.

The CFRE’s foundation of education and cultural exchange, while useful in creating an interracial base for civil rights in Seattle during the immediate post-war years, was their eventual undoing by the late 1960s. With the problem of racism in housing (legally) solved and groups such as the NAACP and the Civic Unity Council growing in importance for legal battles in Seattle, the CFRE was becoming less relevant on the civil rights scene and the membership numbers reflected this decline. Meetings which once attracted hundreds of Seattleites from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds waned to mere dozens of largely white, middle class women by the late 1960s. By 1968, the CFRE was also experiencing financial difficulties, facing steep cuts in membership dues as a result of declining numbers and trouble in garnering financial support from local churches for social events (the mainstay of the organization).<sup>765</sup>

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<sup>764</sup> “History of Christian Friends,” 24.

<sup>765</sup> McClees, “Christian Friends for Racial Equality,” 38.

More importantly, however, the prominence of nonviolent protest tactics in the evolving civil rights movement on the West Coast and across the country created a crisis of identity for the CFRE. While the group had always been devoted to “protesting by all peaceful means the denial of rights and privileges” to minorities, civil disobedience was a strategy that did not mesh with the notions of cultural exchange and education that were embedded in the CFRE.<sup>766</sup> While King and the SCLC embraced “Christian nonviolence” as a tactic that was a “natural consequence when...one is confronted by unjust and immoral laws,” Carreon explained in a *Racial Equality Bulletin* article from 1966 that “Christians should work to change inter-racial relations first, and then proceed to change the law through acts of peaceful protest and disobedience.”<sup>767</sup> In contrast to the SCLC, Carreon and the CFRE argued that civil rights organizations should push for integration through “natural” means of social interaction, rather than essentially skipping steps on the path to racial justice by attempting to bring legal change without first reaching out to all racial and ethnic groups.<sup>768</sup> Although the Seattle chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (a national organization founded on religious principles of fellowship and peace) embraced nonviolent direct action as a key to achieving civil rights victories in the desegregation of businesses and schools, the CFRE chose to continue its path of “social acquaintance” and work on changing the racial atmosphere in Seattle through interracial and cultural interaction.

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<sup>766</sup> Civic Unity Council, “CFRE Constitution,” Folder 8, Box 11, Records of the Christian Friends for Racial Equality, University of Washington Special Collections.

<sup>767</sup> Victor Carreon, “Thoughts on Racial Rights,” *Racial Equality Bulletin* (July 1966), 4. See also Sawyer, *Black Ecumenism*, 42-45 for a more in-depth description of the Christian aspects of King’s approach to civil disobedience.

<sup>768</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

The eventual decline of the CFRE on the Seattle civil rights scene speaks to both the legacy of Christian activists such as Matsumoto, Velasco, Carreon, and Gonzalez as well as the continuing evolution of the West Coast civil rights movement. Throughout the 1960s, the CFRE continued to work with growing civil rights groups such as the NAACP and the Civic Unity Council. In fact, Velasco and other prominent members of the CFRE encouraged cross membership between the NAACP and the CFRE and the CFRE and affiliated churches often rented space out to the Seattle chapter of the NAACP for events and planning.<sup>769</sup> The CFRE agreed with nonviolent tactics of protest, but differentiated between “nonviolent” activities such as cultural and social gatherings and those nonviolent protests which “demonstrated anger.”<sup>770</sup> Anger, even when well-placed, created divisions in society and divisions threatened the type of Christian and religious fellowship that the CFRE was devoted to from its earliest days.<sup>771</sup>

During the late 1960s, CFRE members attempted to understand the new wave of civil rights action and held a number of meetings to discuss their appropriate role in this new wave. In 1966, the CFRE invited Carl Miller of the Seattle Chapter of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee to come and speak on the issue of “black militancy” and the rise of the Black Panther Party.<sup>772</sup> Although Miller explained “black militancy” to the members of the CFRE in attendance at the meeting in terms which emphasized the use of militancy to “share power” with other minorities, not necessarily to have one group gain power over another, the CFRE was still not convinced that

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<sup>769</sup> Victorio Velasco, “From the Anti-Discrimination Committee,” *The Racial Equality Bulletin* (April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1966), 3.

<sup>770</sup> Victorio Velasco, “From the Anti-Discrimination Committee.” 3

<sup>771</sup> “History of the Christian Friends for Racial Equality,” 32.

<sup>772</sup> “History of the Christian Friends for Racial Equality,” 32-33.

militancy was the correct path to pursue.<sup>773</sup> In response, members of the CFRE continued with strategies of education and social interaction and attempted to revive membership by raising donations for scholarships to the University of Washington for local African Americans and working with adoption agencies to place minority orphans in Christian homes.<sup>774</sup> Members' attempts at helping the CFRE to become more oriented to the changes in the civil rights movement failed, however, and by 1970, membership in the organization had declined so rapidly that it simply faded from existence.

Despite its eventual decline, the CFRE represents not a complete disjuncture between pre and post-war struggles for racial rights, but rather a continuation of the ideas of the Christian student associations in West Coast civil rights battles. Although education and cultural exchange did indeed become relatively outdated modes of social action in the larger narrative of legislative civil rights activism, the principles of interracial and interethnic cooperation created a foundation for the later civil rights struggles that would characterize the 1950s and 1960s in states such as Washington and California. Legislation did, in many cases, trump education as the most important means of creating social and political change after the war, but this was not a rapid transition. Individuals such as Matsumoto and Velasco and groups such as the CFRE argued that legal change could only do so much without true interracial understanding and compassion, and the importance of education in post-war civil rights and race relations continued to shape the early years of the civil rights movement after WWII. The ideas and influences of the student associations continued on after the war as former members moved the struggle for racial equality off campus even as the associations themselves

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<sup>773</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>774</sup> Ibid., 35.

disintegrated. The activities of the student Christian associations prior to the war and the former members who went on to become prominent figures in state and local civil rights groups speak to the long genealogy of West Coast civil rights, created in part by the adherence of Asian students to Christian and spiritual ideas of belonging and fellowship in their fight for racial equality.

## Conclusion

“Although Asians in the United States have long been engaged in political action,” Asian American Studies scholar Yen Le Espiritu explains in her ground-breaking 1992 work *Asian American Panethnicity*, “their efforts never drew public attention until the 1960s.”<sup>775</sup> Espiritu continues by arguing that along with the impact of “civil rights and Black Power movements...on the consciousness of Asian Americans, sensitizing them to racial issues,” a panethnic Asian movement in the United States was impossible before WWII because “the predominantly foreign-born Asian population did not share a common language” and most Asian Asians were too preoccupied with ethnic-specific issues to build Asian solidarity.<sup>776</sup> Similar to Espiritu, historian William Wei argues that the Asian Rights Movement was a distinct and separate push for racial justice and an end to global oppression that began during the post-WWII era and brought Asian ethnic groups together for the first time.<sup>777</sup> While both Wei and Espiritu agree that Asian college students spearheaded the Asian Rights Movement, they claim that this phenomenon, for reasons described above, was a product of the tumultuous 1960s. There is no doubt that specific changes and events such as the Vietnam War, the unprecedented number of Asian American students on college campuses, the changes in

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<sup>775</sup> Yen Le Espiritu, *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identity* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1992), 25.

<sup>776</sup> Espiritu, *Panethnicity*, 20-21; 25.

<sup>777</sup> See Wei, *The Asian American Movement*, 46-49 and Yen Le Espiritu, *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993) for more discussions on the characteristics of Asian activism during the late 1960s. More recent works such as Laura Pulido’s *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2006) and Daryl Joji Maeda’s *Rethinking the Asian American Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2011) also place more emphasis on the intersections between the Asian activism of the late 1960s and early 1970s and that of other racial and ethnic groups; however, as with early studies on Asian rights, the timeframe does not extend before or after the Vietnam War era.



Asian immigrant groups arriving in America as a result of the 1965 Immigration Act, and the results of African American, Native American, and Latino struggles for rights helped in strengthening Asian American commitment to justice. To say that this large, panethnic student movement could not have possibly occurred without the specific events of the 1960s, however, discounts the Asian Christian students' devotion to racial justice during the interwar years and their influence on a "wide" civil rights movement.

This study of Asian students during the pre-WWII era demonstrates that the history of Asian civil rights activism far predates the protests and strikes of the late 1960s. Foreign-born Asian students used Christianity to form coalitions with American-born students and connect immigrant rights with racial rights in the United States, highlighting the interracial, interethnic, multicultural, and ideological roots of civil rights movements in American history. Well before war in Vietnam and the racial activism of the 1960s, Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students were working to create solidarity among various ethnic and racial groups both on and off campus in order to pursue racial justice and raise awareness of the devastating effects of racism and prejudice in America and around the world. This is not to say that the aims or missions of the students before and after WWII were the same: the later student movements of the 1960s included more female activists as well as those interested in socioeconomic equality, making issues of gender, sex, and class more prominent than among the earlier wave of Christian Asian activism. However, Asian student activists of both the 1920s and the 1960s shared many concerns including anti-imperialism, human rights, and racial equality, proving that Asian students and Asians more generally were not politically or socially inactive before the Vietnam War era. The large conferences, meeting groups, and labor activities of

Asian students along the West Coast during the interwar years and through WWII deserve a place in the history of the Asian Rights Movement, creating opportunities for more historical and comparative studies of Asian activism during the twentieth century.

The absence of the Christian Asian students from the history of Asian or civil rights presents a challenge to historians to include immigrant perceptions of American race relations and civil liberties in their works. Why have so many historians not considered the voluminous writings of Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese students and their social and political activities both on and off campus for what they can tell us about the connections between immigrant, civil, and human rights? Since so much of the literature on Asian American history focuses on ethnic identity and communities, and historians of the civil rights movement define “civil rights” as the guarantees of citizenship, the answer may lie in the students’ lack of access to American rights. The students’ religious orientation and use of Christianity to build networks and challenge racial discrimination also lie outside of a more traditional, historiographical approach to West Coast civil rights during the twentieth century which uses legislative or “radical” battles to construct the narrative of the movement. But Christianity, as this dissertation argues, was a way for students to argue against racism and for access to basic, human rights. As a result, the Christian Asian students and their activism are crucial for understanding how immigrant rights and civil rights converged.

More importantly, however, the long history of Asian student activism and interracial organization suggests that historians need to make Asians more visible in the racial history of the U.S. While the absence of Asians from many specific discussions of civil rights during the post-war era (including, for instance, the model minority myth’s

overshadowing of the need among Asian Americans for equal access to jobs and health initiatives) created a unique impetus for increased Asian activism, the Asian Rights Movement should not be seen as an entirely separate entity from the larger movement for civil rights in America.<sup>778</sup> Interracial and interethnic cooperation fueled civil rights movements along the West Coast during the early-to-mid twentieth century, placing Asians civil rights activists alongside some of the more well-known figures of battle for racial justice in the South and elsewhere in the U.S. Although there are merits to discussing the specific problems that Asian Americans faced in the larger realm of civil rights, there has been a tendency in the historical study of racial relations during the twentieth century to separate the struggles of Asian Americans from those of other racial groups (including, but not only African Americans). As a result, the struggle for Asian rights appears to run parallel to other racial rights movements—rarely intersecting with the goals of other minority activists. The case of Christian Asian students in my dissertation show that Asian activism in the U.S. was an integral part of the growth of civil rights activism rather than an off-shoot of a larger social movement during the

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<sup>778</sup> The term “model minority” was first used by sociologist William Petersen in a 1966 New York Times article “Success Story: Japanese American Style” to define the Japanese American’s perceived success at assimilation and economic and academic success despite a history of racism and discrimination (particularly internment during WWII). Sociologists, scholars, and, as historian Robert G. Lee argues, popular culture perpetuated the myth of Asian Americans as the “model minority” throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, drawing on the Asian American’s ability to overcome hardship as a way to argue that other minorities should be able to do so as well or to suggest that there were inherent cultural characteristics that helped Asian Americans to adjust and succeed more than other racial and ethnic groups. The model minority “myth,” as scholars began to argue during the 1980s and 1990s, unfortunately skewed the reality of Asian groups in America, glazing over the low income and education levels of immigrant groups and the employment discrimination that prevented even those Asian Americans with high economic and education levels with attaining better-paying positions and promotions. Lee also argues that the model minority myth continued to portray Asian Americans as perpetually “other” despite seeming to have gained access to “white” economic and, to a degree, social privileges in the U.S. See Robert G. Lee, *Orientalism: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999) and Rosalind S. Chou and Joe R. Feagin, *The Myth of the Model Minority: Asian Americans Facing Racism* (New York: Paradigm Publishers, 2008) for a more in-depth discussion of the model minority myth and its impact on Asian American experiences with identity and racism in the U.S.

1960s. The experiences of these students evince not only the story of a “long Asian American Rights Movement,” however, but rather an integration of Asians into the racial history of a nation-wide movement for racial justice.

The struggle for Asian rights is part of the larger struggle for racial equality in America that is constantly rebounded and redefined as the “long civil rights movement” by historians of race. Just as the activities of Asian Christian students prior to the post-WWII period suggest that a new understanding of the role of Asian immigrants and Asian Americans in the history of civil rights is necessary, their activism also encourages historians and scholars to understand how the continuing fight for racial justice in the U.S. is as “wide” as it is “long.”

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