JUSTIFYING HEGEMONY:

HENRY LUCE, UNITED CHINA RELIEF, AND THE ORIENTALIST FRAMEWORK FOR GLOBAL INTERVENTION

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On my honor I have neither given nor received any unauthorized aid on this assignment.

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Reader Approval

This thesis, written by Sam Schoenecker, meets the required guidelines for partial fulfillment of the Bachelor of Arts Degree in Asian Studies at Colorado College.

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Abstract

In this thesis, I examines the charitable organization United China Relief and its connection to prominent media mogul Henry Luce, along his vision of American geopolitical hegemony. I situate this inquiry in the context of the US public's shifting image of China, and itself, during the 1930s and 1940s. In order to contextalize my research, I first examine both the history surrounding UCR and the views espoused by Henry Luce in his famous editorial *The American Century*. After establishing this background, I investigate the connection between the UCR and Henry Luce's ideolgy through analysis of fundraising advertisements put forth by the UCR. Through this analysis, I examine the image of China that such material puts forth. Finally, I contextualize the UCR's vision of China as a product of America's shifting self-image, giving insight into how US depictions of East Asia reflect America's attempt to justify and affirm its worldview and the foreign policy created from it.

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Introduction

Founded in February of 1941, in New York City, United China Relief was formed in the context of the decentralized and disorganized landscape of China-focused humanitarian aid organizations. This landscape's decentralization was brought about due to the rapid rise of the movement pejoratively referred to as the "China Lobby," which formed in the 1930s as a result of increasing Japanese imperialist aggression against China. Despite the wish held by many who felt personally connected to China, in this time period, the United States was thoroughly entrenched in isolationist thinking. The United States' adherence to a policy of strict neutrality served as the impetus for the growth of the China Lobby and associated private aid organizations. The ragtag nature of the groups created among the supporters of the China Lobby limited each group's ability to coordinate to aid China effectively.

Among the influential figures associated with the China Lobby was media mogul Henry Luce. He grew up in a treaty port on the China coast, the son of two missionaries. Even after returning to the United States to pursue education, Henry Luce still felt a connection to China and its people. Luce started Time Magazine in 1922, and his media empire took off by the 1930s. Even before the founding of United China Relief, Henry Luce was already using his media empire to spread awareness about China and perpetuate his view of the country and its relation to America. As will be more thoroughly discussed later on, Henry Luce held significant importance in the founding and operation of United China Relief.

United China Relief, also referred to as the UCR, was an attempt to consolidate several smaller organizations. Only months after the UCR's formation, Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor marked the beginning of US involvement in the Pacific War. It was under these chaotic circumstances that the UCR was formed. In this paper, I will examine United China Relief, both

through examinations of it as an organization and through its fundraising material. By engaging with both primary source material and existing scholarship on the UCR's depiction of China, and Henry Luce's role in shaping and propagating United China Relief's depiction of China, I will show how the messaging central to United China Relief's efforts to garner donations closely matched Henry Luce's simplistic and romanticized view of China and its relation to the United States. I will also shed light on how this messaging was part of the broader shifts in discourse surrounding China.

In doing so, I will highlight how United China Relief, through its messaging, spread Henry Luce's notion of a American hegemony through interventionism and cultural imperialism as he espoused in The American Century. Through this analysis, I will present an initial impression as to whether the UCR played a part in laying the groundwork for the American Cold War-era anti-Communist crusades in Asia. The examination of such lines of inquiry will necessitate a close examination of the narrative constructed by the UCR, and its effect on the American populace's image of China. Before such topics can be explored, it's necessary to set the foundation for my inquiries in the broader history surrounding them.

A Historical Examination of US-China Relations

During the decline of China's late imperial era, and throughout the republican era, there were increasing interactions between China and the United States. Fundamentally, these interactions were a result of the growth of US imperialism coinciding with the decline and fall of the Chinese imperial state. Yet, just as important for the purposes of this investigation is that it led to an increasing number of Americans living within China for extended lengths of time. When thinking about self-proclaimed "China Experts" such as Luce, their view of China,

considered by some to be narrow-minded and self-serving, could be rooted in their postionality, growing up isolated in foreign enclaves imposed on China in the previous century.

In the early 1800s, trade with China included the import of exploitative products, such as opium. Western smuggling of Opium posed a potentially serious problem to the Qing government. Qing attempted to crack down on the practice, leading to conflict with the British, in what would later be known as the First Opium War. The escalating conflict between Britain and China was seen as an opportunity by US merchants, who worked as middlemen smuggling British contraband into China at exploitative rates (Spence 154). The conflict ended in Britain's favor with the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing on August 19th, 1842. The Treaty of Nanjing, and others that would follow, increased the severity of the issues facing the Qing dynasty, such as increased rates of addiction, an unsustainable outflow of silver which, coupled with a rapidly expanding population, served to undermine the quality of life for the people of China (Spence 165). The first Unequal Treaty between the United States and China took place in 1844 with the Treaty of Wanghia, which in its terms was similar to that of the Treaty of Nanjing with two notable exceptions: That Americans caught smuggling opium could be tried under Chinese law, and that Americans had an explicit right to build churches in treaty ports, allowing for the expansion of the missionary enterprise in China (Spence 161). Such treaties were both an inherent threat to Qing territorial sovereignty due to the creation of treaty ports, and served to further destabilize a society already struggling to adapt. As such, the treaties laid the groundwork for increased Western involvement in China's internal affairs, especially on the subjects of trade and religion. The Qing regime attempted to modernize, through actions such as the 1864 purchase of industrial equipment for arms production from the United States (Spence 198). Despite many such efforts at reform, the continued economic exploitation and subsequent

desabilitation of China eventually led to the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty in the Xinhai Revolution, 1911-1912. The revolution culminated successfully with the abdication of the emperor on February 12th, 1912, and the establishment of a republican government. This revolution was the result of increasing nationalism, which was accompanied by anti-foreign sentiment. This sentiment can be seen in the 1905 boycott of American goods and increasing urban tension between native residents and foreigners (Spence 238). This boycott, with the benefit of hindsight, could have been a sign that the populace of China, emboldened by rising nationalism, was not opposed to just the Qing dynasty, but also the foreign imperialists who first exposed and then exploited the weaknesses of the Qing state. As such, though the revolution ushered in what is known as the republican era, that does not mean that it brought about the pro-western, centralized, and democratic government many Americans imagined it would. On the contrary, the fragmentation of power amongst provincial warlords and the undemocratic actions and structure of the Guomindang highlight this difference between America's perception and China's reality. One important shift which was ushered in by the Republican Era was a change in the stance of foreign powers, including the United States, towards China.

Though the Republican Era contained events which could be construed as suggesting that western opinions were shifting away from the imperialist impulses of the 19th century, such as with the Nine Powers Treaty of 1922. The treaty, on paper, was mutual acknowledgement of the territorial sovereignty and independence of China and was affirmed by major powers with holdings in the region, including the United States. Hidden by this narrative is the core fact that throughout the republican era foreign investment in China rapidly expanded (Spence 382-83). This expansion highlights that what shifted in the Republican Era was not whether China was being exploited, but how the exploitation was framed and justified.

Fundamentally, the impetus for this shift is rooted in the evolving political landscape of the period. In 1905, Japan annexed Korea, and in 1931 it did the same to Manchuria, annexing the north of mainland China. Despite this earlier incursion into China and its traditional tributary, Korea, the aforementioned shift in framing becomes especially apparent after the 1937 intensification of the conflict in China's desperate war of resistance, in what is now known as the Second Sino-Japanese War. The attempted subjection of China by Japan posed a direct threat to the expanding economic and political interests of the United States, which were also undergoing major shifts during the period. The Second Sino-Japanese War began at a time when the United States was focused inward due to the Great Depression and the legacy of the First World War. Due to this, in the words of historian Michael Schaller, to most Americans, "China remained an abstract concept" and an "unimportant foreign state." As such, in the first half of the 1930s, the idea of averting possible war with Japan by seeking accommodation at the price of China's independence was contemplated (Jesperson, "American Images of China" 46). Such talk worried an increasing demographic of Americans with interests involving and personal connections to China. Said individuals, who would form the Core of the China lobby, felt that a barrier to aiding China was the lack of knowledge and awareness held by Americans regarding China. Though this ignorance posed a challenge, it also was an opportunity, as the nascent and unentrenched nature of China in the eyes of the American populace allowed for it to be more easily remolded to reflect shifts in America's perception of its place in the world. As such, this remodeling of the US view of China was fundamentally goal-oriented. It was an attempt to define America's self-image and justify the policies created from it.

The American portrayal of China was biased through the experiences of the Americans who had the power to popularize their image of China. Those people, due to their status as

foreigners living primarily inside the Treaty ports established by the Unequal Treaties, experienced only an isolated slice of China, insulated from much of its culture. This isolation created an image of China that was oversimplified and naive in its assumption that one's lived experience represented a reality consistent throughout a geographically vast and culturally diverse land. By contextualizing this in the China's Lobbies' attempt to disseminate information pertaining to China, the misconceptions held by those that disseminated it would also be conveyed to its recipients. With this in mind, due to his own media empire and as a major figure in the UCR, Luce was an important figure in understanding the image of China presented to the American Public.

Henry Luce, China, and The American Century

Henry Luce was raised in Tengchow, modern-day Penglai, for the first fifteen years of his life. Throughout his stay in China, Luce had little interaction with Chinese people, living in a walled compound situated within a treaty port (Hunt 323). What he saw of China while growing up was an isolated community forced to conform to Westernized ideals. Furthermore, being so young, Luce experienced this limited view of a westernizing China without the historical context to understand that what he perceived as a willing embrace was forced by the imperialism of the century prior. As such, his perception of China was divorced from the reality that the treaty ports were not a symbol of China's future, but instead one of the systems of exploitation that had humiliated China and brought it to ruin. Given the limited nature of Luce's experience in China, the fondness for China observed in Luce's latter life could be interpreted not as a reflection of his affinity for Chinese culture, but of his view of the supplanting of it; a usurpation which served as a major source of loathing for the very Chinese nationalists whom he placed so much hope.

Furthermore, though Henry Luce's positionality was expressed through a view of China that in many ways was positive, it still existed within a worldview which was Orientalist in its creation of a qualitative separation between the west from the non-west. This qualitative separation becomes apparent when examining statements Luce made later in his famous 1941 editorial, *The American Century*.

In this editorial, Luce makes his view of the world, and America's place in it, clear. He describes the United States as having positive "ideals and notions which are especially American…" while also being "the inheritors of the great principles of Western civilization" (Luce 170). In this assertion Luce idolizes western principles while implying an additional qualitative superiority unique to America. Largely due to this qualitative superiority, Luce states that it is the duty of America to "be the Good Samaritan of the entire world". Through this generosity, Luce argues, America will raise humanity "from the level of beasts to what the Psalmist called a little lower than the angels" (170-171). Given these remarks, it is apparent that Luce envions America being uniquely suited to uplifting the world due to its Western heritage and uniquely American characteristics. Furthermore, Luce's envisioned "uplifting" inherently contrasts his view of America as the bearer of an unique brand Western modernity, with cultures and peoples that don't conform to said ideals and are subsequently labeled as similar to "beasts." In this contrast lies Luce's vision of modernity, which places American society, and implicitly its European roots, as qualitatively superior when compared with societies that fail to conform to its inherently Western values.

In order to fulfill this duty ascribed to America, Luce argues the country discard its isolationist tendencies. The reasoning presented for this is that the United States is the predominant hegemon of the 20th century, and that as such, if the US finds itself in an

unfavorable geopolitical climate, the nation has “no one to blame so deeply as she must blame herself” (166). This, Luce argues, creates both an obligation and an opportunity for America. This opportunity to make the century America’s is founded in the underlying belief that the century marked the first time in history that the world is fundamentally indivisible (167). What Luce means by this is not any form of political unification, but a never-before-seen level of cultural conformity. Luce argues that due to said conformity, nations across the globe will form two competing factions. In this simplistic view of the world's political future, Luce stipulates that the two forces at odds will be those of freedom and tyranny. This prediction of a cold war-like future creates a framing of the United States' place in the world which forms a moralistic image. In this image America serves as the source of freedom, and said freedom is predicated on the widespread adoption of American values. Considering this adoption of the American conception of freedom in the context of the US’s stated hegemony and Luce’s claim of global indivisibility, an assumed global compatibility and synchronism with American values becomes apparent. Luce's latter statement supports the global applicability of American values: that the reason American values and culture could be so widely adopted is based on the idea that American prestige stems from people all around the globe having “faith in its good intentions” (169). Luce is, in essence, portraying America as a benevolent, paternalistic force of good. Considering all these points, one aspect of Luce’s worldview is the underlying assumptions that the United States is the the primary and preeminent force for good in the world, and is perceived as being so across the world, As such, Luce’s claimed global indivisibility is only predicated on a moralist view of America’s values and a culture that is exceptionalist thus allowing for widespread compatibility.

One might think that Luce's misconceptions, based on Childhood naivety, would be corrected with the perspective brought by age, but in the words of Hunt, Luce, even later on in life, was "locked into a ethnocentric, self-righteous, almost cartoonish conception of China" (Hunt 323). In fairness to Luce, such criticism should be taken in the context of World War Two and the broader rearrangement of American Orientalism "to meet the demands of America's new international policy" (Leong 168). But that contextualization's mitigation is somewhat nullified when considering the role of Luce in the formation of America's new international policy. Said policy was brought about as a reaction to the shattering of America's decades of isolation, and the subsequent reassessment of how the United States was affected by the outside world, regardless of whether it takes part in its development. Luce argued his vision of a path forward based on thate reality in his 1941 editorial titled *The American Century.*

Considering Luce's inability to correct inaccuracies in his view of China in the context of his broader view of American hegemony, it should be apparent that Luce's image of China as culturally similar to America justified and affirmed the cultural imperialism espoused in *The American Cenury*. As such, the propagation of his misconceptions of China would be beneficial to the advancement of the foreign policy he supported. To Luce, China was a personal example of how American culture was widely compatible and fundamentally superior. As such, acknowledging that China is culturally distinct and largely opposed to the loss of culture inherent in Luce's proposed widespread adoption of American ideals would discredit the basis of his own conception of America's place in the world. Due to this, if Luce ever realized his view of China was the product of looking through rose-tinted glasses, he never found a compelling advantage to taking them off. Given this ignorance, be it due to either nativity or a willful refusal based in the

protection of his own conception of America, Luce presented a new Orientalist image of China which advanced his own views.

By the time the China Lobby formed, Luce was already a media mogul, owning several publications, including Time and People's magazine. Starting in the 1930s, Luce mobilized his media empire to reshape public opinion on China. This effort was aided by the ascension of the Christian, Chang Kai-Shek, to the top of China's government. In Chang Kai-Shek, Luce found a potential symbol of China's westernization and someone he sincerely admired, possibly even idolized. Luce's fondness for Shek is apparent in Time's repeated praise of him, making claims such as that he is "the greatest man" in East Asia (Jesperson, *American Images of China* 28). Luce's idealization of Chang is consistent with his more general romanticized view of the world as a story where "great men control the world's destiny" (Hunt 325).

As the 1930s progressed, the plight of China became more severe, especially after the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War. The intensification of the conflict served to affirm the tangible results of the Lobby's efforts up to then. Specifically, efforts to increase awareness of China's plight during the 1930s paid off based on polling conducted in the midst of the escalation of China's War of Resistance. According to a Gallup poll conducted September of 1937, 43% of respondents to a Gallup poll were sympathetic to China. When asked one month later, this number increased to 59% (Park 394). This stark increase highlights that, unlike in the early 1930s, the US populace had a significant level of awareness, which can in large part be attributed to the efforts of the increasingly powerful China lobby. The escalation of conflict was still far from heartening to Luce and the rest of the China Lobby, which subsequently attempted to increase the amount of aid procured to help in China's war effort. As the need for aid continued to rise, competition and infighting amongst the major charitable organizations attempting to aid

China worsened, limiting the total funds raised. This led to the idea of a singular central fundraising organization being considered. The centralization of fundraising under a singular organization, which would come to be known as United China Relief, went from being considered to being implemented in large part due to Luce's pledge of support for the endeavor (Jesperson, "Spreading the American Dream" 274).

Examining United China Relief's Board and Structure

At the center of the UCR Organization lay the Board of Directors. Luce placed significant importance on staffing the board with "an outstanding group of Americans" (qtd. in Jesperson, *American Images of China* 47)[1]. If Luce meant influential by "outstanding", then it's fair to say that he accomplished said goal. Many prominent figures took their seats alongside Luce on the board. One such figure was Pearl S Buck, a famous missionary to China, who was heralded as an expert due to her portrayal of the "authentic" China in novels such as *East Wind West Wind* and *The Good Earth* (Leong 24). Three other board members of particular importance were Republican presidential candidate Wendell Willkie, former ambassador to the Soviet Union William C. Bullitt, and John D. Rockefeller III (Jesperson, *American Images of China* 49). However, there is less credible information about the exact nature of the connection of these three to China, and what insight is available paints three differing portraits. Specifically, Wendell Willkie is described as having globalist tendencies that matched closely with those of Luce, leading him to write his own work, *One World*, which put forth a similarly hegemonic messaging when compared with that of Luce (Buchanan 329). By comparison to Wilkie's globalism, William C. Bullitt's affiliation with the UCR can best be explained by his anti-communist

[1] Though usually indirectly quoting is frowned upon, as most archival UCR records are only available in person at the New York Public Libary, and as such are inaccessible for the purpose of this thesis, using Jesperson's quotations citing said archival records was the best available alternative.

tendencies, as highlighted in a 1950 New Republic article discussing McCarthyism, which references the former ambassador among the anti-communists of the China lobby (Harris 11). Bullitt's anticommunist views are further evidenced in his 1947 Time's article *Report On China*, which made dire predictions about the repercussions of a communist victory in the Chinese Civil War (Bullitt Par. 30). Finally, Rockefeller's reason for joining the board can be traced back to his family's philanthropy in the country, which dates back to 1913, along with the economic interests of his family's oil empire, Standard Oil (Qinghong 513). Considering all these prominent board members, it's clear that they were drawn to the UCR for a number of reasons, be it a personal connection to Luce, a fondness for China, or due to a perception of China as politically or economically significant to America. Immediately after its formation, the United China Relief board showed its ambition, setting the fundraising goal for its first year, 1941, at five million dollars, which would be an almost fivefold increase in comparison to the total raised by member organizations the previous year (Jesperson, *American Images of China* 48). Though the UCR ended up failing to meet its funding goal, it still nearly tripled the total of previous decentralized fundraising efforts, taking in 3.25 million dollars (United China Relief, *Five Year Report* 20). Under its charter, the UCR was not free to disperse said money as it saw fit. Instead, the first 1.175 million were to be distributed to the member funds without the UCR having any say in the matter. The next 1.175 million were to be distributed with UCR input (Jesperson, *American Images of China* 48). All funding above this point would be distributed at the sole discretion of the UCR. The compromise visible in the UCR's funding system illustrates the limits of the level of autonomy that its member organizations are willing to give up. Though the UCR was not truly unified in terms of its distribution of aid, it was unified in its fundraising efforts.

To this point, according to Jesperson, they choose to focus on showing this by portraying "China's interests closely paralleled America's…" and by focusing on "...the fundamental notion that the Chinese people were very much like Americans." (qtd. in Jesperson, *American Images of China* 50). This message of similarity and compatibility furthered the world view from which Luce had constructed his *American Century*. One way this similarity was shown was by focusing on the idea that China was accepting of Christianity. This depiction of China as Christian was a major misrepresentation, possibly stemming from the fact that though only a small portion of China's general populace was Christian, a large portion of the societal elite that served as primary contact points for Americans in China were Western-educated Christians. Furthermore, such a narrative was beneficial to several major UCR member organizations that were religious and proselytizing in nature. Overall, the UCR intended to portray China in a way that, in its misrepresentations, was consistent with Luce's conception of both China and America. The clear similarity between the UCR's depiction of China and Luce's views regarding the country suggests significantly more Luce control over the UCR than would initially appear. Specifically, Luce loaned out prominent journalists from Time Inc. to the UCR (49). The prominence of Luce employees in the UCR's marketing raises the question of what level of influence Luce had in controlling UCR's portrayal of China. This topic will be explored later on through the examination of UCR propaganda. Still, an internal memorandum that stated that the UCR's general purpose was to sell "China to America" raises the question of what the actual product was (qtd. in Jesperson, *American Images of China* 50). If it is the case that the UCR propaganda confirms its messaging as matching Luce's narrative, then the donor was buying into Luce's vision for China. Inherent in that vision is his broader world view of American hegemony through the propagation of American culture, ideals, and an active foreign policy based around a

paternalistic approach to intervention. Those who donated were buying a future where China shared American ideals and values, and as such, one in which US interests in East Asia were secure from the so-called forces of tyranny. This connection to Luces world view is also found in the final of the four objectives officially listed by the UCR: to create a unified fundraising effort, to distribute funds to five general areas: medical care, child welfare, education, disaster relief, and economic reconstruction, to teach about Americans the status of China, and finally to inform the people of China about the continuous good intentions of America and Americans towards China (Jesperson, "Spreading the American Dream" 275). Referring back to the final assumption Luce listed as underlying his *American Century*, that American prestige is based on the widespread trust of its good intentions, allowing for the proposed adoption of American values, the fourth official UCR objective is seemingly aimed at ensuring the validity of Luce's assumption. Overall the goal of the UCR's propaganda efforts can be summarized as an attempt to get Americans to donate by presenting them with a vision of China as a natural ally of the United States, accepting of its culture, religion, with a populace that both was similar to that of Americas and that has trust in the US's benevolence. This portrayal of China establishes both the UCR and Luce as actors engaged in shifting the lens through which America viewed China.

Luce and the UCR in the Context of the US's Evolving Image of China

Fundamentally, US Orientalism started from the same point as its European counterpart, with the people outside of the perceived West viewed as "decadent, exotic, and immoral" (Leong 7). By the 1800s American Orientalism diverged from the general European view, taking on distinctly American characteristics. It incorporated popular notions of manifest destiny to look beyond the western reaches of North America, out into the Pacific, with an intent to civilize. As

America's reach and power grew, so too did its ambitions regarding Asia. Specifically, as America became a global power, its negative perception of Asia, along with the narrative of cultural supremacy as put forth in Manifest Destiny, justified US intervention into the region, including China, regardless of the wishes of the native people. Along with said view, increasingly America viewed itself as China's protector from the imperialist conquests of other powers despite America's own imperialist mindset (Leong 10). This view implies a perceived difference in the morality of US imperialist efforts compared to those of other Western powers, highlighting the assumed exceptionalism that characterized America's view of its involvement in colonial regions. By the 1920s, still before the rise of the China Lobby and the creation of the UCR, the image of China and its people could be described as "primitive, slavish, exotic, manipulative, and amoral" (Leong 155). Such a set of terms communicates not just inferiority, but also disdain. It portrays China as the opposite of Western modernity and its values. This oppositionality is fundamental to what makes it orientalist. This negative depiction of China created an image that affirmed America's perception of itself as China's protector and civilizer. Furthermore, inherent in this paternalistic attitude is a gendered interpretation of both China and the United States. The narrative of the times juxtaposed depictions of American westward expansion, which emphasized masculinity, with depictions that emasculated China, further shifting the perceived social capital of the individual in favor of America (Leong 8). As the missionary enterprise in China grew in scope during the early 1900s, female American missionaries used this social capital to justify actively taking part in proselytization efforts as being consistent with gender norms (Leong 11). This effective relaxing of gendered expectations, even in the context of deeply patriarchal organizations, is one factor of many that led American missionaries to look back at their time in China with fondness. The letters and stories of these

"sentimental imperialists" played a significant role in the construction of the American Image of China in the first decades of the twentieth century.

Keeping the role of missionary nostalgia in mind, by the 1940s, in the midst of the US involvement in the Pacific War, sentiment had shifted. The United States and China had become Allies by means of a shared enemy, and US foreign policy had fundamentally shifted towards interventionism. Major media efforts such as those by the UCR sought to change the US image of China. This change is apparent in a wartime Columbia University research project which established that the American public viewed China as "courageous, peace-loving, backwards, and uncivilized, needing the United States…" and were "inferiors to be treated kindly" (Leong 168). This depiction varies from that of the 1920s in that it incorporates positive values that are not oppositional to those of the West but shared by them. Despite positive aspects to the portrayal, the wartime view of China previously summarized still fundamentally upholds the distinction between primitive and modern, inferior and superior, and as such is an evolution of America's Orientalist image of China, not a departure from it. In fact, this new depiction fundamentally affirms the already present images of America as China's protector and civilizer. As such, the shift in America's image of China had, in some ways, reinforced existing views. The 1940s truly marked a shift in American perception of China. The shift was brought on, at least partially, by American self-interest. In this case, as I have previously mentioned, US portrayals of China were objective-driven, serving to justify an interventionist post-war policy. The stated need of US assistance to China, and the view of China as inferior yet deserving of kind treatment, lends credence to this narrative and is compatible with Luce's post-war vision. As such, the shift in America's image of China can be seen as a justification for America to exercise its increasing influence around the world.

The Role of the UCR in Propagating Luce's Vision of American Hegemony

The fundraising material of United China Relief offers a unique lens through which to view the effort to reshape the American Image of China. Whereas Luce's Time Magazine put forth innate political messaging, the UCR did not (Jesperson, *American Images of China* 46). Though Luce had influence inside the organization due to the money and employees he contributed, he was not the only one who had influence. Though on the surface the UCR was just a vehicle to collect and distribute aid more effectively, it was also a meeting point for organizations and individuals with an interest in China's plight and potential. As such, the UCR's marketing material formed an image of China that represents, if not a true synthesis of views, then at least a message widely acceptable to its influential figures. As such, one point of inquiry when examining UCR media is whether the Orientalist Image of China created by UCR media incorporates or rejects Luce's worldview through its messaging. Specifically, though Luce's vision is interventionist, it is just one approach to interventionist policy. This distinction allows for the possibility of the UCR being interventionist, as it logically should be to garner donations, without seeing intervention as a vehicle for the export of American culture and influence. Regardless of the exact level of similarity found, such examination of messaging widely spread by the UCR can serve as a lens through which to view the shifting American image of China.

Fig. 1. United China Relief. *We Salute The Chinese Republic on Her Birthday, October 10th…: Help Her Fight Bravely On!*. 1941-1946, UNT Digital Library.

As has been previously stated, one aspect of the new American image of China formed in the lead up to and during America's Alliance with China during the Pacific War was the minimization of the difference between the two countries. Doing so both served to increase sympathy for China and advance the perception of American values as being widely embraced. This first piece of media, *We Salute the Chinese Republic,* is one such attempt to portray the people of China as similar to those of America. It depicts a photo of Sun Yat-sen, framed by artwork depicting the US patriotic symbol Uncle Sam and a Chinese soldier shaking hands, to the backdrop of the two nations' flags. Beneath the iconography is a brief written message: "We

salute the Chinese Republic on her birthday, October 10th. China- the First of our Allies to fight Japan, China- in spite of war, struggling victoriously toward democracy as we did 150 Years ago" (see fig. 1). This written message parallels the claim of similarities between the United States' populace and China's quite explicitly. The statement that China is "struggling victoriously toward democracy as we did 150 Years ago," implies both US seniority and superiority, drawing on the paternalistic attitude also prominent in *The American Century* (See Fig. 1). As such, the poster implies that donating in aid of China would serve to help China follow in America's footsteps. Donating, therefore, would contribute to the expansion of American values and culture so central to Luce's vision. There is no statement to the effect that US aid is necessary for China to follow in America's footsteps, just that aid is beneficial to that end. Also of note is the emphasis on the words "Chinese Republic." Considering the limited representation present under the Guomindang's rule, the choice to feature prominently the assertion that China has a representative government is both a charitable interpretation of reality and intentionally so. Modernity and Westernization are associated with representative forms of government, so portraying China as moving "toward democracy" minimizes the potential othering that the nondemocratic nature of Guomindang rule could cause. Similarly, the surface-level goal of the poster, to celebrate "her birthday," effectively serves to create a perceived parallel between October 10th and July 4th. This line effectively associates China's portrayed shift towards Western representative governance with a more uniquely American celebration of it, implying that China is not just Westernizing, but Americanizing (see fig. 1).

Much like the written messaging, the poster's imagery places emphasis first on the similarities between the US and China and each country's people. The poster shows two figures, representing their respective nations, shaking hands. On the American side, the figure present is

Uncle Sam. Being the personification of the United States and its government, having Uncle Sam shake the hand of China's personification quite clearly implies friendship between the two nations. Having a soldier on the other side representing China makes logical sense in the context of China's War. One creative choice of note is to depict the representatives of each country as being of roughly equal height, as often political cartoons depict Uncle Sam towering over others, representing the domineering nature of the US and its relative power (see fig. 1). That is not to say that the poster employs an equality between the two. Choosing to depict the two as equal in stature shows a respect often absent, especially in depictions of nations outside the West. Finally, the depiction of Sun Yat-sen, in the context of the poster's celebration of the anniversary of the Republic of China's founding places him as being symbolic of the Republic's foundation, and draws comparisons to the role of George Washington in the United States formation (see fig. 1). Another artistic choice of note is the poster's color scheme. The poster uses only three colors: red, white, and blue, which are the colors of the flags of both the United States of America and the Republic of China, further connecting the two nations in the eye of the viewer.

Overall, the poster made references to the similarities between China and America, both visually and through its written message. It doesn't list or imply any negative comparisons between the two countries, but it does imply a US superiority by stating that China was following in America's footsteps. As such, the messaging on this poster can be summarized as attempting to garner donations by creating perceived parallels between China and America and by implying that donations could aid the creation of an American-style democratic bulwark in Asia, and more generally, portrays China in a favorable light.

Fig. 2. James M. Flagg. *Help China!*. 1939-1945, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum

One positive descriptor previously mentioned as being used to describe China is courageous. In addition to illustrating courage, this second poster, *Help China*, also seeks to connect America and China, though in this case, this poster places much more attention on the ongoing conflict in China. The scene presented is of a soldier who appears injured, along with a mother carrying a child, fleeing a flaming backdrop while being helped by Uncle Sam (see fig. 2). The expression of all the subjects of the poster are resolute, and give off an impression of courage. Together, the expressions send a cohesive message: That the people of China, both military and civilian, are being negatively affected by the war, yet still have the will to continue resisting Japan's brutal occupation. This touches on a theme which will recur in other

material: the portrayal of military setbacks as evidence of determination and positive character traits. Such depictions of positive character traits challenge many of the racist Chinese stereotypes widely perpetrated. As such, the depiction of Chinese people in the poster avoids portraying its subjects in a way that draws upon such stereotypes. Another telling artistic choice can be seen in Uncle Sam supporting the women in the image (see fig. 2). Given that the image is a UCR creation, Uncle Sam's role in helping the noncombatants of the image highlights how the aid provided by the UCR was purely humanitarian.

The poster's message states this importance simply: We should "Help China" because "China is Helping Us" (see fig. 2). Such Quid pro Quo messaging provides a reason to donate that is immediately useful for the United States. That says it also negates the assumption one might make if only looking at the imagery: That the help is only going one way. This reference to the benefit to America's war effort through China's continued resistance touches on another persuasive reason to donate: because China doesn't just need America's help, but deserves it in reciprocity as an ally. Though this poster has no references to it, in the broader context, UCR material doesn't just portray China as an ally due to circumstance, but also due to ideology. This message of solidarity and mutual aid in a common struggle complements the visual aspect's subversion of negative stereotypes. In this, the poster highlights the high price being paid by the people of China without implying that the setbacks faced by China in the war are indicative of any deficiency inherent in its people. In doing so, *Help China* does put the United States in a relative position of strength, being the ones providing material aid, but not in terms of will to fight. As such, overall, *Help China* presents both a moral reason to donate, to help those displaced by the war, and a logical reason to donate, as doing so will benefit America through China's continued resistance.

Though the posters of United China Relief are fascinating both in style and in their ability to portray a complex set of messages, the UCR propagated its messages in a variety of other means. Among the other media types used is that of in-print publications. One such publication was the monthly newspaper called the *News of China*. One article from this publication that has particular value to understanding the UCR's depiction of China is *Post-War China Democracy*, published on September 9th, 1944. The article touches on the potential for post-war Americanization and uses the same defence of the nationalist administration often employed by Luce and his media empire: deflection. Furthermore, the article highlights the role that Christianity could play in the UCR's envisioned postwar reconstruction. The article covers the remarks made by Nationalist China's Minister of Finance, Dr. H. H. Kung, and by UCR National Chairman Charles Edison, during an event hosted by the Chinese Students Christian Association. The article, though short, lays out a general religious, political, and Cultural vision for post-war China, and establishes America's close connection to it. Kung's post-war vision for China is laid out concisely early on in the article, which states his vision has three points of focus: "national independence, democracy, and social well-being" (United China Relief, "News of China" 64). Furthermore, Kung states that in doing so, China would create a democracy, as described by Sun Yat-Sen. This mirrors the messaging of We Salute the *Chinese Republic*, which ties the potential of true Chinese democracy with Sun Yat-sen's role in starting the republican era. Both the aforementioned poster and this article tie in Sun Yat-sen as a symbol of China's adoption of Western values. Considering this envisioned westernization of China, this article makes clear that more than just democratization, there exists the paradigm of religious proselytization. This religious element was on display in the topics listed as having been discussed, which included "the contribution Christian forces may make to China's social, political, and economic freedom;

and the responsibility of Chinese Christian students to their country" (72). This discussion topic implies some level of connection between Christianity and the expansion of freedoms necessary for democracy to function. As such, the article associates modernity with not just becoming a democracy, but inherently through that as being Christian. As such, the article's vision of a modernized China is one based on the continued leadership by the western-educated Christian elites previously mentioned as being a cause of many to misconstrue the Chinese populace as Christian. Referring again to Figure 1, which celebrated the Founding of the Republic of China, the poster stated that China was "struggling victoriously toward democracy as we did 150 Years ago." The China presented in *Post-War China Democracy* is consistent with the narrative. This is seen in how the aforementioned post-war plan is based on the creation of a democratic system. The role of US-educated students from China in this future democracy is made clear by UCR National Chairman Edison: to be leaders (72). Edison states that Christian Chinese students in America have a responsibility. In connecting the responsibility to lead with being US-educated Christians, Edison is connecting the previously mentioned post-war plans as being reliant on the retention of power in the hands of Christians with ties to America. Furthermore, given that the statement was made while addressing "the severe strain" failures in the timely delivery of aid had placed on the Chinese public's opinion of America, part of the duty Edison refers to can also reasonably be interpreted, as leading China towards a continuation of friendly relations with the United States, and the rehabilitation of its image in the eyes of the Chinese public. Furthermore, though the event's audience was Chinese Students in America, the article's target audience was a much broader and largely American readership. With this in mind, considering the choice to include the quotation referencing the "severe strain" placed on the perception of America in China due to failures in US aid delivery, the article follows the narrative present in *China is*

Helping Us, that aiding China is just reciprocating the aid China provides through its continued resistance. As such, the failure in the timely delivery of aid is a failure to fulfill that implied obligation. Edison also implies said obligation in his excerpt, referring to China as having "for more than seven years you have carried almost the whole load of defending Asia against the power and ruthless forces of barbaric conquest" (72) This references the years in which the United States refused to come to China's aid and implies that more is owed to China as a result. Such an implication of debt for refusing to intervene is inherently interventionist, but not necessarily caused by Luce's vision of America protecting forces of freedom around the world. It could also be insinuating that America should have known it would be drawn into the conflict. There is not enough information to draw conclusions. The difference in length of conflict, however, combined with the previously mentioned failure of aid deliveries and shifting opinion of the Chinese populace, paints the picture of an America that is failing to do its part.

The article gives insight into the UCR's vision for post-war China by summarizing excerpts from a UCR-associated event. It puts forth a vision for post-war China, centered on the narrative of a modernizing and democratizing, Christian-led China. In this prospective future, many Chinese leaders who have experience with America through education would pave the way for positive relations between the two nations. That said, such a future is logically contingent on China's survival until eventual victory, which places significant importance on aid reaching China. Furthermore, the article makes it clear that the post-war Americanization of China is under threat, with problems with aid causing the Chinese populace to doubt the United States' sincerity and reliability. Such a line is telling in how closely it relates to Luce's claimed global "trust in American good intentions." As such, the article implies that the United States' future relations with China and the US role in its entrance into modernity are dependent on prompt,

continued, and possibly increased humanitarian support for China. The rebuilding presented in the article would create an Americanized China that is aligned with the United States, just as Luce's foreign policy would envision. As such, though in a roundabout way, the article makes the case that humanitarian aid should be provided, not just because it is owed, but also because doing so will allow for retention of a democratic bulwark capable of "carrying the whole load of defending Asia" in the a world split between the forces of freedom and tyranny as envisioned by Luce (72). Another indirect assertion of the article is that the people of China previously had a positive opinion of the United States, which was only recently under strain. As such, the postwar vision presented in this article advances Luce's vision of American hegemony, which has expanded and been maintained through US intervention to aid in forming and defending democracies.

Unlike the previous article, *China's Will to Win Strong,* from the November 4th, 1944 edition of the newspaper, focuses on China's military situation at the time of writing. With that in mind, though it contains several points present in past sources, it focuses just as much on doing something Luce and his media empire were known for: shifting blame away from the nationalist regime. Though Luce is often associated with this deflection, it more generally can be understood as a result of the United States' wish to deflect from rumors that China might seek a separate peace with Japan (Leong 164). One such method to deflect utilized by the article is the positive portrayal of the people of China. As context, the article was published near the end of the final major Japanese offensive in China, known as the Ichi-Go offensive. The campaign saw Japan make significant gains in control of major rail lines and air bases in China. This article, being published during the final months of the campaign, sought to reassure Americans of China's determination and competency as an ally.

The article does this by sharing the observations of UCR president Dr. James L. McConaughy, shortly after his return from his trip to Chungking. McConaughy starts by disputing the opinion that China is "folding up." To counter this claim, McConaughy states that China "has opposed Japan with courage, and usually with success, for seven years, and she will continue to do it as long as necessary for victory. The will to win is just as strong there as here" (United China Relief, "News of China" 80). This reaffirmation of Chinese resolve is straightforward, yet the claim that Chinese military opposition was usually successful appears discordant with the results of the Summer of '44 campaigns. Some concessions are made to this later on when he acknowledges that the "Chinese admit there was mismanagement and cowardice in part of the summer campaign." Even this acknowledgement is softened by the following line, which states that there was far more "courage and heroic fighting" on display. Additionally, McConaughy states that the summer campaign has shown that China can "keep their spirits up in spite of defeats better, perhaps, than we could." As such, McConaughy, in effect, is portraying the successive retreats and defeats of the Chinese Military during Ichi-Go as an illustration of the courage and will to fight of the Chinese people. This deflection and positive spin is consistent with the unwavering support for and defence of Chang Kai-Shek and nationalist China, Luce would maintain even after the fall of the mainland nationalist government in 1949. Considering this spin,one would not be remiss for viewing McConaughy's oddly rosy depiction of the situation on the ground as being divorced from reality. Even during the time period, many found the attitude of the US press, and particularly those outlets associated with Luce, to be disingenuous in the coverage of the War in China.

To this point, in his autobiography *Two Kinds of Time,* Graham Peck, who was serving with the US Office of War Information in China, raised a scathing critique of the prominent

depictions of China's war effort. "Acquired from the American Press: The gallant losing battles, the brave and clever guerrillas, the millions of determined refugees fleeing west. . . a new country a-building. . . . And Looming over the whole united land was the massive figure of the generalissimo…" (Peck, 35). Peck's semi-comedic critique highlights how such glorified depictions of the War in China did not match the reality he experienced on the ground. Core to Peck's critique, and its relevance to McConaughy's description, is the use of positive descriptors to spin events which otherwise would be viewed negatively. This rhetorical strategy is clearly employed by McConaughy in his assertion that the Chinese defeats during Ichi-Go are evidence of the heroism and determination of the Chinese Army.

McConaughy doesn't rely solely on the reader buying into the idea that the Chinese defeats during Ichi-Go were promising evidence of the Chinese will to fight. Instead, the article concludes by arguing that American success in the Pacific War had "contributed to China's immediate difficulties…" and that, in fact, "almost every military event involving American or British forces since 1941 has made China's task harder rather than easier" (United China Relief, "News of China" 82). The validity of this claim is hard to ascertain and not particularly important for the purposes of this paper. The importance of this statement lies in its implications: That the blame for the discouraging results seen in 1944 in China is the result of America's strategy in the Pacific harming China, not of inefficiencies or flaws in China's efforts. Luce-controlled media commonly used such deflection of blame, as it shielded Chang Kai-Shek, who was the subject of Luce's "hero worship" as one of the "great men who control the destiny of the world" (Hunt 327).

Considering this article as a piece of UCR fundraising material, its purpose is clear. McConaughy sought to refute growing dissatisfaction amongst the American populace regarding

how the war in China was progressing. But more than just convincing the US populace of China's will to fight, the article sought to shift focus from the territorial losses suffered by China during the Ichi-Go offensive to a positive interpretation of China's continued resistance despite said military struggles. In doing so, the article sought to shift the perceived blame from China to the United States. These efforts to portray China positively sought to convince the reader that, despite the military setbacks, China was still committed to continuing the fight and that any failures in said fight were not just the result of Chinese Nationalist incompetence but of American failure to relieve China. Considering this article as a representation of UCR's portrayal of the state of the War in China, it touches on several themes seen in previous pieces. One such common theme can be observed in Figure 2, *Help China.* The poster's portrayal of determined-looking fleeing refugees and a stalwart, injured, and retreating soldier matches closely with both the overly positive descriptions of McConaughy and the biting critique of Peck. This all combines to suggest that the UCR generally sought to spin the deteriorating conditions on the ground aggressively, sensationalizing China's resistance and pointing blame away from the Chinese government in a way consistent with Luce's long-term insistence, regardless of the situation, that Chiang Kai-Shek is not at fault. As such, this article is the most clear evidence of Luce's hand in how the UCR portrayed China.

It's important to keep in mind that Luce's portrayal of China did not exist in a vacuum. It had to be understood in the context of preexisting narratives. This third and final news article, *Essays on China*, from February 5th, 1944, shows the result of the UCR's previously stated objective to educate Americans, including youth, about China and the conflict in which it was embroiled. The article gives a glimpse into the lens through which the UCR wished to frame its education on China, and insight into how such UCR messaging was received.. The article

contains the winning submission to a UCR-sponsored writing contest on the war in China and America's relation to it. By examining the opinions and arguments of the essay, and reviewing what the selection of the essay suggests about the contest's judging criteria, much can be ascertained about how wartime UCR messaging was not evidence that American depictions of China were moving away from Orientalism, but that said depictions adjusting to fit America's foreign policy.

The competition winning article, *Have We Been Doing Our Part?* by Norma Parks, presents the pre-Pearl Harbor lack of aid to China as a case of Americans not living up to their own values, specifically concerning "helping the less fortunate" and in "doing all we can to preserve peace and security" (United China Relief, "News of China" 10). This focus on helping the less fortunate implies a power imbalance between the US and China. This power imbalance becomes a significant recurring theme throughout the essay with Parks referring to China as having "pleaded for help from stronger nations," a request which was then later described as "a pitiful cry for help" which was not answered until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. These demeaning comments are focused on China as a nation, with little being directly said about the individual. By juxtaposing China as weak and the United States as strong, the essay takes a more directly paternal tone than seen in the other articles. Additionally, Parks' reference to "preserving peace and security" as an American value suggests that global intervention in conflicts would be necessary to adhere to said values. Next, Parks argues that the attack showed Americans that the nation had let China "carry our burdens." As such, the article again implies an unfulfilled obligation, that the US was obliged to intervene at the very beginning, but failed (10). Additionally, in this case, the use of the term "burdens" is telling when considered with the word's historical association with justifications of the imperialist enterprise, most prominently in

Kipling's 1897 poem, *White Man's Burden*. Under this analogy, the notion that the United States has a duty to intervene against authoritarian conquests could be called the American Burden. Doing so follows the same logic as Luce's emphasis on the need for America to actively oppose tyranny and to propagate freedom and the American values that come with it across the globe in *The American Century*. As should be clear, Parks' argument's use of obligation stemming from power imbalance mirrors that of older orientalist images of China, which justified imperialist conquest. Grounding this observation in the context of Parks' essay, the prejudiced description of China's weakness creates and justifies the burden. As such, Park's essay highlights what is left unsaid in the previously examined media: That the feasibility of global intervention in and of itself highlights the power imbalances present, and that white supremacist, anti-asian sentiment didn't go away as the American image of China shifted. Fundamentally, the UCR's efforts to minimize the perceived differences between China and America were necessary to subvert popular perception of China.

Next, Parks presents this failure of America to realize its burden as a mistake. She questions whether China would be able to forgive the US for its previous inaction. Through this implication that the United States needs forgiveness, Park implies that China also felt that the United States had the "burden" to help, affirming the orientalist justification. Parks then suggests that the way to repent to China for previous inaction is "by helping her now" (14). Furthermore, she suggests that US aid to China shouldn't stop at the end of the war, as China would both face significant issues in its progress towards "inevitably becoming a leading nation." She then makes the source of these issues clear, stating that it will be difficult for "a nation as primitive as China to suddenly become a leading industrial nation." This juxtaposition between referring to China as "primitive" and stating that its ascension to become a leading nation was "inevitable" is

important due to its potential implications. It's unclear if the inevitability claimed by Parks was meant to imply that China's rise to modernity is inevitable regardless of Western aid, or if the inevitability of foreign influence in China is what makes its modernization inevitable. If the intended message is that it would happen regardless of American influence, then it partially refutes the American justification for postwar intervention: that non-Western nations require Western aid to be uplifted into modernity.

Parks' argument becomes more logical when examining the essay with the assumption that she believes the depiction of China presented by the UCR: That China is already modernizing due to its Christian leadership and cultural similarity with America. If so, then the obligation or burden of the United States, according to Luce's proposition in *The American Century,* is to be interventionist in its duty to protect and expand freedom around the world, championed by Luce, leading the obligation to intervene to be present regardless of the aforementioned necessity. Parks presents this attitude in a context similar to previous justifications of imperialist conquests. In doing so, Parks creates an argument that, in message, is quite standard yet more directly shows the paternalistic and culturally imperialistic aspects of Luce's vision of US hegemony.

If Park's essay was interpreted as a glimpse into the outcome of the UCR's messaging, believed and applied by a writer immersed in the preexisting biases of the era, then the way in which the UCR's image of China can be interpreted to conform with one's existing opinions becomes clear. China is portrayed as less fortunate, weak, pitiful, and primitive. These hostile descriptors starkly contrast the claimed "inevitable" future as a "leading industrial nation." Considering the disparity between the present and the future, it becomes a logical conclusion that the author's views of China are a result of mixing the UCR's application of positive character

traits to the people of China, considering the basic Orientalist logic that Western is modern and non-Western is primitive or backwards. As such, the primary burden is not that of 19th-century Whitman but of the 20th-century American: To expand American influence and culture by becoming the global opposition to the so-called forces of "tyranny," and by such effort justify the paternalism inherent in the assumption that the United States is the arbiter of freedom's nature. This view, which implies superiority of not only the West over the non-West, and of America as being being exceptional over all others, makes "helping the less fortunate" nearly interchangeable with "spreading American values to them." However, there is more to Park's argument than the so-called just burdens. Similar to in the messaging of the *Postwar China Democracy* article, Park's essay places the onus on the United States to aid others, with the ability inherent in that burden being the ability to influence nations being aided. Never once is it questioned if the influence is wanted, instead using Luce's assumption that trust would be granted due to knowledge of the US's good intentions.

Considering the UCR media examined as a whole, conclusions can be made as to the UCR's message, along with its relation to Luce and the newly formed American images of China. Overall, the UCR refrains from applying negative labels when describing the character of the people of China. They are depicted as brave, committed, and steadfast. They are also shown to be similar to the people of America culturally, pursuing the United States' path, though being over a century behind. As such, socially, China is portrayed as wishing to modernize, with American-educated Christian leaders guiding the nation on the right path, but as not truly modern yet. Due to China's weakness, America's help is needed. Additionally, due to China's aspirations to embrace freedom and their aid in the fight against tyranny, America has an obligation to help.

Considering this message, the UCR seems to have broken away from some of the more negative aspects of the more general US image of China; there is little that can be pointed to suggesting that the Chinese individual is inferior. The cultural and religious superiority of the United States is a clear assumption. From said superiority, there exists an often alluded to yet rarely stated burden for the United States to intervene broadly in cases where people considered free are under threat from those who are not. Such intervention is also shown as a way of exerting US cultural influence across the globe. Considering the implications of such a broad duty to intervene and expand the reach of US cultural influence, it fundamentally matches Luce's post-war foreign policy as described in the American Century.

Overall, the primary sources presented show a narrative affirming Luce's model for American Hegemony. Though I don't feel there is enough certainty to call the UCR a proponent of Luce's American Century, it is at the very least reasonable to conclude that the argumentation surrounding the American Century was used by the UCR to present an appealing image to the US populace. More precisely, an image that plays on the widespread belief in American exceptionalism, which the nation's envisioned ascendancy to global hegemony would confirm in the eyes of many. The UCR sought to answer questions as to why Americans should donate by framing it in the context of a strategy of foreign relations, which made donating a belated act of humanitarian intervention that will benefit America by spreading its influence

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The American Century's Failure

For Nationalist China, American support was only safe so long as Japan existed as a mutual enemy. As such, after the end of World War II in Asia, US aid to China began to decrease. The UCR was renamed to the United Service to China. The USC funding diminished,

and prominent campaigners gave up (Jesperson, *American Images of China* 154). Inside the US government, there was dissatisfaction with the growing incompetence of Nationalist China's leadership. Many also began to realize that previous claims of the Guomindang democracy were far from accurate. Yet many American eyes were still turned to China with hopes of an American Century. Chief among those still watching was Luce, and though the USC distanced itself from his increasingly extreme views, that version of events was still being broadcast through his media empire. Though previously the UCR had compared Sun Yat-Sen to George Washington, now Times' now compared Chang to Washington, and his Nationalist forces to the Continental Army (156). As the citation in China worsens, Luce's media cast increasingly dire predictions. In a March of 1948 Article titled *Struggle For Survival* Times predicted that the fall of China would lead to the spread of Communism into Southeast Asia and the Indian Subcontinent, cutting off 80 percent of the US's supply of natural rubber and isolating Japan. Afterward, the article claimed, USSR forces would paratroop into Alaska, taking the state and using it to launch bombs at all the American cities, all the way to Detroit and the heartland of the United States (162-63). Such fear-mongering was intended to scare the public into action. Yet, as hope for a nationalist victory became so improbable as to seem a delusion, many began to ask tough questions, including Luce and those who bought into his vision of China as a sister republic and bastion of democracy in Asia. If people of China were so similar to Americans, and wanted to emulate America as well, if China had its own George Washington, and its own Valley Forge, if its people consumed American media, and an increasing number followed America's religion too, and yet China fell to communism, then couldn't America meet the same fate (169)?

After the Civil War ended on the mainland, many were left questioning what went wrong. Polling from 1950 showed that upwards of 80% of respondents thought that Chinese

Communists were actively taking orders from the USSR, portraying communism as a monolithic entity (Jesperson, *American Images of China* 175). Some blamed a lack of US support during the war, others its actions afterward. Truman was blamed, and so was Chang. Little attention was paid to the role of Luce and the UCR, which finally gave up even attempting to fundraise in 1951 (178). The China Lobby's efforts to "save" China ended not with a bang, but with a whimper. Questions still remained about what America could have done differently to "save" China. No answer was found as they were asking the wrong questions and hiding from harsh truths. China never needed to be saved. China didn't die. The only thing that died was the American dream of it: the conception of a China that was "just like us." The Speed at which that dream was found and the way in which it shattered shows how American perception of East Asia is malleable, and more reliant on internal factors than external ones.

What Luce and the UCR Show About America's Perception of East Asia

Fundamentally, Luce and the UCR were significant forces in the formation of the American image of China that grew throughout the 1930s and 1940s. They created an image to serve a purpose: to convince an unsympathetic public to provide aid and to propagate their view, not just of China, but also of America and its place in the world. In doing so, they popularized a narrative and understanding divorced from reality. The consequences of this are visible in an intensification of the Red Scare upon Communist victory in the Chinese Civil War. Furthermore, the effects of Luce's claimed American duty to intervene all across the world can be felt in contemporary times. There is much to learn from the story of the UCR. The Story of the UCR and the China lobby shows how the ignorance-based ambiguities inherent in America's perception of East Asia can lead to the creation of images of it that are based not solely on its

perceived nature, but also on what any said image implies about America. Using the analogy of a painting, when an artist is to portray what they can't fully see or remember, places of ambiguity are filled in according to the vision of the artist, rough edges are smoothed, unsightly features discarded, until what remains is a painting that its creator approves of. For an artist, one's work is an expression of oneself. Similarly, the image created by Luce and the UCR was an expression of identity. The image of China they crafted affirmed their perception of themselves and their country. As such, their goal wasn't just to reimagine China in America's vision, but to create a new image of China, that when examined from across the Pacific Ocean reflected back an affirmation of the American Century. This relation between America's image of East Asia and its perception of itself, when applied to contemporary discourse on East Asia, including China, creates a lens through which we as Americans can examine not only our image of the region, but what said image's reflection implies about, both nationally and individually, our collective self-image.

Conclusion

I set out intending to show how United China Relief and its messaging were connected both to the worldview of Henry Luce and to broader shifts in the American perception of China. Through this analysis, I wanted to examine the role of the UCR spreading notions of American hegemony, and global interventalism. Finally, I intended to, by investigating these subjects, gain an initial impression as to the role of the UCR's message in subsequent Cold War Era US interventions in Asia. In order to better understand these topics, I investigated the UCR in a historical background of US-China interactions. Through this background, I positioned the UCR as a result of the mercantile, missionary, and geopolitical history which preceded it. I then

connected this missionary history to the upbringing of Henry Luce, and its effect on the formation of his view of China. I then examined Luce's influential editorial, *The American Century*, to better understand his worldview. From this examination, I found that Luce's view was one of American hegemony based on an interventionism justified by American exceptionalism, and rooted in the Orientalist assumption of there being a qualitative difference between the West and the non-West. I also used Luce's editorial to show the broader shift from isolationism to interventionism. After this, I examined the significant level of influence held by Luce inside the UCR, highlighting the connection between the two. I then connected Luce's vision to the theory of Karen Leong: that American images of China remained Orientalist despite shifting to be comparatively positive, so as to match shifts in US foreign policy. In this I found evidence of the broader shifts in American Images of China, and their connection to US policy. After this, I examined messaging of UCR fundraising advertisements. Several important themes were evident in the advertisements. The advertisements emphasized and exaggerated the similarities between America and China, and implied a significant acceptance of America values. They also portrayed the people of China positively, as brave and heroic, while still implying a qualitative difference between China and America. As such it can be concluded that the UCR, based on its articles closely matched Luce's worldview, highlighting the connection between the two. As Luce's worldview was based on US hegemony through interventionism, the UCR's advertisements propagated an image of China which justified said hegemony. As such, when combined with the quotations of Leong regarding the broader shifting US image of China, the advertisements appear as an expression of the broader shifts in America's foreign policy, and self image. Finally, I examined the failure of the American Century in China, and took a preliminary look at America's response to it. I found that members of the China Lobby including Henry Luce

became increasingly ardent anti-Communists when the Chinese Civil War turned against the Nationalists. Considering this, I return to the idea of the US view of East Asia as being an attempt by America to define itself and its policy. If true, then the question still remains of if US military involvement in Asia in the following decades could have been the result of this image of the region, based not in reality, but its implications for American identity. Though this paper does not contain nearly enough information relevant to this question due to its limited scope, it is an additional line of inquiry worthy of further investigation.

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