scale as were claimed, why were the perpetrators never brought to justice? In some contemporary cases, such as the claims of "escaped nun" Helen Jackson in the late nineteenth century, a cash reward was offered by Catholics to anyone who could substantiate her assertions. The money was never paid.[85] There is not one instance where someone collected a reward for a confirmed case of nunnery abuse. The Catholic Scare is a testament to the human propensity to create, believe, and spread salacious stories driven by long-standing stereotypes, rumors, and fear. It exemplifies the power of belief, which is all too real in its consequences. It is a story that is as relevant today as it was 150 years ago.

CHAPTER 2

"NO DOGS, NO NEGROES, NO MEXICANS"

THE SOUTHERN BORDER MENACE

When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. . . . They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with [sic] us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.

—Donald J. Trump, campaign speech, June 16, 2015

The signs in front of businesses enforced the prevailing attitude: No Dogs, No Negroes, No Mexicans.

—Francisco Natera, *Coyame: A History of the American Settler*, 2012

When in 2015 presidential candidate Donald Trump warned of Mexican immigrants being a threat to American society as rapists, drug dealers, and gang members, he evoked painful memories of ill treatment that were still vivid for many older citizens of Mexican ancestry. Animosity was once so great that until 1890, a person of Mexican heritage had the same chance of being lynched as an African American did.[1] Old, young, rich, poor, male, female—no one was spared from the brutality of the era. On a warm summer's evening in June 1911, a Mexican American citizen named Antonio Gómez was minding his own business, whittling a

shingle of wood outside a saloon in Thorndale, Texas. After being repeatedly harassed by several men for dropping his shavings on the sidewalk, he was beaten, sworn at, and called a "skunk." Humiliated and enraged, he fought back, lunging at one of his tormentors with his knife and stabbing him in the chest. Gómez was quickly tracked down by a group of vigilantes, attached to a chain, and dragged behind a horse through the center of town as upward of two hundred residents looked on with approval. He was then lynched from a ladder. Antonio Gómez was just fourteen years old. The four men charged with his murder were all found not guilty.[2] During this period, Mexicans were loathed as an inferior race who were a threat to American's economic growth and social progress.

Throughout our history, hostilities have often come to the fore over the misguided belief that citizens of Mexican ancestry were taking "American" jobs. To stop the corruption of the Northern European racial lineage, laws were passed to prevent them from marrying "whites." Harassment and violence were mainstays of everyday life in the early years of America's colonial presence in the Southwest.[3] Starting in the mid-nineteenth century and persisting to the present day, Mexican Americans have been the subject of several waves of panic, which waxed and waned with popular sentiment and political expediency. In 1929, Americans of Mexican descent were classified as white. With the onset of the Great Depression and the rising tide of jobless, in the 1930 census the government tried to limit immigration by categorizing them as nonwhite. A decade later, when there was a shortage of factory labor and soldiers to cope with the demands of the Second World War, they were conveniently reclassified as white again.

Until the early 1950s, Mexican Americans living in the Southwest were treated like second-class citizens. Signs proclaiming "No Dogs, No Negroes, No Mexicans" were proudly on display in the windows of many bars and restaurants across the region. A widespread fear and aversion to Americans of Mexican ancestry has permeated society in these conquered lands ever since the annexation of northern Mexico in the 1840s,

when the inhabitants could become citizens. As Anglo Americans began pouring into the region to work as ranchers, farmers, and miners, conflicts arose because the local residents were not accepted as equals. By mid-1850, anti-Mexican violence had spread to California and across the entire Southwest, as the result of competition for jobs, racist attitudes, and the growing belief in manifest destiny. White American settlers believed that it was their destiny to expand to the West Coast, spreading their superior European civilization and Christian values, while enlightening the "primitive" peoples of the region. Hispanics and Native Americans were in the latter category. Manifest destiny became a convenient rationale to justify the annexing of the territories of the Southwest and the subjugation of their people.

From the time Texas became an independent country in 1836, until its full annexation a decade later, its citizens of Mexican heritage were widely viewed by their Anglo conquerors as members of a lower race. They were seen as a strange mixture of "Negroid," "Mongoloid," and "American" racial types who were dirty, lazy, untrustworthy, and prone to thievery and gang activity. These traits were seen as the predictable outcome of poor breeding between the African, Spanish, and Native American races. Rufus Sage lived through this period. He describes Mexican Americans as "mongrels" with despicable morals, people who were incapable of self-government, and who needed to be "kept in their place by force, if necessary."[4] He wrote that, "As servants, they are excellent . . . but are worse than useless if left to themselves." Historian Reginald Horsman observed that a major rationale for America having invaded northern Mexico was that "Mexicans, like Indians, were unable to make proper use of the land. The Mexicans had failed because they were a mixed, inferior race with considerable Indian and some black blood. The world would benefit if a superior race shaped the future of the Southwest."[5] Many Americans steadfastly opposed annexing parts of Mexico—not on moral grounds, but over the fear of race mixing and contamination by inferior people.[6] During the 1840s, newspaper editors and politicians debated the benefits

of annexation. Many urged President James Polk to avoid taking tracts of land with large numbers of Mexicans.[7] Polk wanted to claim all of Mexico but compromised on the amount of land that was eventually seized, over the dilemma of Mexicans becoming citizens. Polk annexed only Mexico's sparsely populated northern regions, obtaining the most land with the fewest Mexicans—about 100,000.[8]

THE BLACK LEGEND

While Spain was part of Europe, many of America's early settlers looked down upon the Spanish as an inferior race that was prone to cruelty and sadism on the basis of the atrocities they committed in their colonial conquest of Central America and Mexico. Spanish historians would later refer to this negative perception and hostility as the Black Legend. The Spanish conquest of these regions had a devastating impact on the native peoples. The spread of diseases such as smallpox, for which there was no natural immunity, killed large swaths of indigenous inhabitants. Enslavement and the use of natives for hard labor led to more deaths, while priests outlawed religious and cultural traditions that had developed over millennia, supplanting them with Christianity. Ironically, Americans of Northern European ancestry had short memories, as they had taken part in similar acts of cruelty and barbarity to Native Americans, denigrating their culture, displacing their people, and deliberately spreading smallpox to exterminate entire tribes. Despite these inconvenient facts of history, by the mid-1800s, a number of Anglo American writers began exaggerating the exploits of the Spanish and demonizing them as an evil race. According to historian David Weber, "Englishmen and Anglo Americans who wrote about the Spanish past in North America uniformly condemned Spanish rule. . . . Anglo Americans had inherited the view that Spaniards were unusually cruel . . . treacherous, fanatical, superstitious, cowardly, corrupt, decadent, indolent, and authoritarian."[9] This demonization of the Spanish helped to justify American's expansion into the Southwest and further stigmatized the inhabitants as the product of inferior cultures and breeding.[10] Lothrop Stoddard's popular books on racial types reinforced these views; he warned of the perils of race-mixing along the Southwest border, which he concluded would lead to the inevitable contamination of the "pure" Nordic stock. He believed that poverty and political instability in Mexico and the Caribbean were the result of their having been "largely hybrid mixtures of whites, Indians, and negroes."[11] Stoddard's view of the mixed-breed Mexican peasant was far from complementary, describing them as "a poverty-stricken, ignorant, primitive creature, with strong muscles and just enough brains to obey orders and produce profits under competent direction."[12]

Stoddard believed that Mexican ancestry made people prime targets for manipulation by unscrupulous leaders, especially Communists. As such, they posed a threat to the nation as potential followers of revolutionary movements and rebellions. He saw Mexican peasants as "about the most 'alien,' unassimilable creature that could be imagined."[13] He continued, "His temperament and outlook on life are absolutely opposed to those of the typical American. Low in intelligence and almost devoid of individual initiative, the Mexican Indian is likewise splendid revolutionary material, because he is *a born communist*." Another popular nineteenth-century stereotype was that of the Mexican bandit, which reinforced the belief in that Mexicans were natural followers. Historian James Evans writes: "The Mexican bandit, like the typical Mexican, would rather steal than work, but he differed from the masses in that he possessed the ambition and physical stamina necessary for bandit activities."[14] Given their diminished mental capacity as an inferior race, Anglo Americans of the period held that the bandit leader could easily acquire "a following of admirers and thieves and cutthroats who became members of his band and participated in his raids." The modern-day equivalent is the Mexican as a natural gang member, ready to carry out the orders of his leaders without question. In the years following the Immigration Act of 1924,

which significantly restricted the number of incoming immigrants from all parts of the world, the porous southern border was viewed as America's Achilles' heel. As a result of this demographic shift, and with no scientific backing, many of the leading proponents of immigration restriction suddenly viewed Mexicans as among the worst offenders for racial contamination. In 1927, Stoddard wrote that in all likelihood, the non-Nordic races from outside northern Europe "can eventually be absorbed into the nation's blood without such alteration of America's racial make-up as would endanger the stability and continuity of our national life. But what is thus true of European immigrants, most of whom belong to some branch of the white racial group, most emphatically does not apply to non-white immigrants, like the Chinese, Japanese, or Mexicans."[15] Stoddard worried about a possible immigration invasion from the hordes of inferior races in Central and South America.[16]

AN INFERIOR PEOPLE

The widespread notion that Mexican Americans are of lower intelligence than "whites," has continued in recent times. They are commonly portrayed on American TV as unsophisticated, subservient, dimwitted and born followers.[17] This bias was evident in 1982, when controversy erupted in California after a set of test scores were invalidated due solely to their high results, and the ethnic background of those taking them. When the Princeton Educational Testing Service reviewed scores for the state, they found that the highest pass rates for the advanced calculus exam were from Garfield High School in Los Angeles. The school had a poor track record of exam success and a high proportion of Mexican American students. Fourteen of the eighteen who passed were suspected of cheating and were made to re-sit a different exam. While two of the students refused because they did not need the credits to pass, the remaining twelve took the new test. They all passed. School officials angrily asserted

that the students would never have been singled out if it had not been for their Spanish surnames or had they not come from low-income neighborhoods. The episode was turned into the 1988 film *Stand and Deliver*.[18] In 2016, the US Postal Service issued a stamp honoring their teacher, Jaime Escalante. After serving seventeen years at the school, Escalante left in 1991. Calculus scores immediately plummeted. The events at Garfield High highlight the importance of school environment and nurturing by exceptional teachers in getting good grades. Genetics had nothing to do with it.[19] As one journalist wrote, the key to his success was how he "cajoles, inspires and truly teaches them the difficult subject of calculus, and in so doing creates in them an enduring feeling of self-worth."[20]

In recent decades, several researchers have claimed that race itself can predict intelligence. In 1987, a pioneer in the field of intelligence testing, Lloyd Dunn, made the stunning claim that differences in measured intelligence between Latinos and whites were partly due to heredity. He wrote that "while many people are willing to blame the low scores of Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans on their poor environmental conditions, *few are prepared to face the probability that inherited genetic material is a contributing factor*. Yet, in making a scholarly, comprehensive examination of this issue, this factor must be included."[21] Dunn said that it would be naïve and irresponsible to claim that a ten- to twelve-point difference in IQ scores was solely caused by social and cultural factors.[22] However, an array of influences can account for the differences in test scores, including teacher attitudes and expectations, and disparities in resources and funding between schools.[23] Other researchers note that in culturally diverse, bilingual children, scores will reflect their degree of familiarity with Standard American English and the level of cultural assimilation.[24]

Dunn's conclusions fall into the realm of pseudoscience and quackery since he fails to accept the consensus within the scientific community that race is a biological myth. Race is also a social reality. Thus, if a student believes she is part of an inferior race, her belief may act as a self-fulfilling prophecy. She may lack self-confidence, stop trying, or give up altogether.

Many factors influence standardized test scores, not the least of which is culture. Law scholar Steven Bender observes that Latino families emphasize the importance of respecting authority and the collective good, while downplaying individual assertiveness. This outlook can influence student achievement. He writes: "In the classroom, this submissive tendency may be regarded by teachers as apathy to be contrasted with the aggressive, 'engaged' participation of Anglo students. Because teachers tend to reward the most active class participants with positive feedback, superior grades, and recommendations, this culture of the American classroom contributes to the negative channeling of Latina/o students away from college and academic pursuits."[25] Dunn's biased interpretation of the data hides his deeper political agenda. His findings that most Mexican American children lack sufficient scholastic aptitude or linguistic competency to master two languages led him to conclude that English should be the *sole* language of instruction in American schools.[26]

Given what we now know about the powerful role of social environment and self-belief in achievement, it is no wonder that Mexican American students have a poor history of achievement on exams and standardized tests. During the first half of the twentieth century, those of Mexican heritage living in the American Southwest were the subject of government campaigns to Americanize them in the hope that these children would begin to assimilate into society and start to lose their "peasant culture," which was seen as an impediment to modernization. Sociologist Carina Bandhauer writes that this new policy created a war on Hispanic culture and customs. As a result, "Mexican American children were taught that they were dirty, [were] unacceptable, spoke a forbidden language," and that their community, family, and culture were obstacles to successful schooling.[27] In teaching students about their inferior culture, it would have undoubtedly damaged their self-confidence and dampened any ambitions they may have had, other than aspirations of being house cleaners and low-level laborers.

EUGENICS—THE SCIENCE OF RACE

By the early 1910s, the eugenics movement had become part of mainstream science, and was being used to control "inferior" races, including Mexicans, to ensure that they did not spread disease and vermin. Medical researchers and public-health officials used statistics to justify claims that certain races were disease carriers and were over-represented in mental asylums. Such figures conveniently failed to count private mental institutions, which were more likely to be occupied by well-off whites.[28] By 1917, quarantines were established along the Southwest border with Texas in an effort to "protect" Americans from lower-class, disease-carrying Mexicans. Wealthier Mexicans and Europeans traveling by first-class rail were not subject to any restrictions. It was thought that those who had accumulated wealth were the products of better breeding and were more clever and sophisticated than their inbred compatriots. Meanwhile, Mexicans in the second-class cars were treated like animals and subjected to the indignity and humiliation of delousing. They were forced to strip naked, inspected for lice, doused in kerosene, and sprayed with an assortment of chemicals—including Zyklon B, a cyanide-based pesticide that would later be used by the Nazis in the mass murder of Jews. Those with lice were forced to shave their body hair with clippers and bathe in a mixture of vinegar and kerosene. In January 1917, the Bathhouse Riots broke out at a disinfection station on the Santa Fe Bridge linking El Paso, Texas, with Juárez, Mexico. Led by two hundred exasperated women, the unrest lasted several days after rumors that rail inspectors had taken nude photos of Mexican women and were selling them in the shops of El Paso.[29] The notion of Mexicans as a dirty, disease-carrying race were pure stereotype and were not borne out by the statistics. For instance, during a four-month period in early 1917, there were three fatalities from typhus along the US–Mexican border. This number is miniscule when considering that during this same period, inspectors examined over three-quarters of a million people.[30]

During the first half of the twentieth century, American eugenicists tried to weed out inferior gene pools by placing "defective" members of certain races in institutions for either mental or behavioral problems. Some facilities in California had up to a quarter of their population as Mexican Americans.[31] These behaviors were viewed as medical conditions that needed to be addressed by separating the afflicted from the rest of society in institutions for delinquents. Many were forced to undergo sterilizations in the misguided notion that doing so would prevent them from having defective or inferior children. Hispanic women who had children out of wedlock were branded as suffering from a hyperactive sex drive and were classified as delinquents. Mexican American males who committed petty crimes or were truant from school were also placed in institutions for the delinquent.[32] Between 1909 and 1979, the state of California oversaw about twenty thousand sterilizations, many without consent or under duress or coercion. Most occurred during the first half of the century.[33] Some facilities refused to release the patients until they agreed to the procedure, essentially rendering them prisoners of the state. Many only learned of their sterilizations after the event. Historian Natalie Lira studied the California eugenics archives and found that a disproportionate number of Mexican Americans were sterilized. Fortunately, the procedure rapidly declined in usage by the early 1950s.[34]

There was great enthusiasm when the first eugenics law was passed in Indiana in 1907. Scientists and social reformers were excited about the prospect of applying this new "science" to solve long-standing social problems. In California, eugenicists defined the genetically "unfit" as those who had disabilities and were of low income and education. The notion of social Darwinism was popular at this time, so a person's level of wealth and education were seen as a reflection of his or her inherited intelligence. Conversely, middle- and upper-class "whites" were encouraged to procreate and strengthen the Nordic racial stock for the benefit of the country. The state of California viewed Mexicans and Indians as the foremost racial problems facing the state.[35] There was a major concern

over what was believed to be their prolific breeding ability and the potential strain on welfare services. Charles Goethe, the cofounder of a San Francisco–based eugenics club, warned that the surge in Mexican peasants crossing the border posed a menace to society because they "multiply like rabbits."[36] This attitude appears in a 1920 California school report, which claimed that Mexican living standards "do not accord with ours, but it is more likely that intellectual differences account for most of their unsocial conduct."[37] The report asserts that Hispanic students were inherently deficient in intellectual ability. "Mexican children do not learn readily at school, and few of them ever pass above the third grade. Recent studies have indicated that this failure to learn is not because of language difficulties, but is more likely due to low intelligence." The author went on to claim that "the average intelligence of Mexican children in Southern California is not greater than three-fourths that of American children." As a result, the report concluded that "nearly one-half of the Mexican children in our schools are feeble-minded."

In one instance, state officials targeted a "half Spanish, half Indian" woman who had given birth to eleven children from two different fathers. Despite normal IQ scores, she was classified as a "high moron" and sent to a home for the mentally defective and eventually marked for sterilization, against her parents' wishes. Her misfortune was to have been of Mexican origin, to desire a large family, and to be poor.[38] The IQ ranking placed "idiots" as those with a score of twenty-five or lower; "imbeciles" as those with a score of twenty-five to fifty; and "morons"—those with a score of fifty to seventy-nine—who were seen as especially dangerous because they could pass as normal and spread their genes, thus diluting the purity of the population.[39] In most instances, "morons" appear to have been "normal" members of the Mexican American community who fared poorly on the IQ test. In 1975, several Mexican American women filed suit in court against non-consensual or coerced sterilizations. At the trial, it became evident that long-held stereotypes of Mexican Americans were alive and well in California. A medical student testified that she

had heard one of the sterilizing physicians remark that "poor minority women in L. A. County were having too many babies; that it was a strain on society; and that it was good that they be sterilized."[40] She further testified that he stated it was his intention to see "how low we can cut the birth rate of the Negro and Mexican populations in Los Angeles County."

SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS

More recently, Donald Trump has threatened to round up and send non-resident Mexicans back over the border. His remarks have generated anxiety for Americans of Mexican heritage, stirring up memories of the Repatriation from 1929 to 1936. During the Great Depression, the administration of Herbert Hoover launched a campaign of mass deportations to purge the country of Mexican American citizens, legal residents, and illegal aliens, who were blamed for taking jobs from "real" Americans. This episode occurred amid a wave of anti-immigration hysteria. Upward of two million were sent back to Mexico, 60 percent of whom were American citizens.[41] Those of Mexican heritage were the logical targets, as they were the most recent major group of immigrants.[42] In many cases, government officials knocked on the doors of families and tried to persuade them to leave—going so far as to give them free tickets back "home" to be with their "own kind." Many county governments cut welfare payments to Mexican families in an effort to discourage them. While the program was called the Mexican Repatriation, a more apt description would be the Great Deportation. The word *repatriation* evokes connotations of voluntary participation. In this instance, they were pressured, and sometimes forced, to cross the border, usually on trains or buses. County agents would knock on doors and say, "You would be better off in Mexico, and here are your train tickets. You should be ready to go in two weeks."[43] One appalling example involved Ignacio Pena of Idaho. Historian Francisco Balderrama recounts that as his family was about to eat breakfast,

sheriff's deputies entered the house. "They took everybody in custody, and they were told that they could only leave with the clothes that were on their back. They could not bring any of their personal belongings, and they were placed in a jail. His father was working out in the fields, and he was also placed in a jail."[44] After a week, they were shipped by train across the border to Mexico. "They never were able to recover their personal belongings, even though they were told that those belongings . . . would be shipped to them. And among those belongings was a documentation of his father having worked in the United States for over 25 years. Among those belongings was his and his sisters' and his brothers' birth certificates, having been born in the United States."

Mexican American citizens faced continuing discrimination throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, with efforts to block them from exercising their basic democratic rights to vote in state and national elections. In 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment to the US Constitution gave every citizen the right to vote regardless of race, color, or creed. The practical reality was very different. White lawmakers in many states found ways to keep new immigrants and unwelcome minorities from making their voices heard at the ballot box. This was especially true in the Southwest, where many communities had a majority of Mexican American residents. State leaders realized that if they voted as a block, they could exercise considerable political clout. Many state legislatures circumvented federal law by requiring residents to pay a poll tax or pass a literacy test to be eligible to vote. In 1894, California required voters to be literate in English, thus eliminating many residents who were uneducated or fluent in Spanish as their first language. They also required a fee to be eligible to vote. Hispanics were among the state's poorest residents and could not afford to pay. Texas followed suit in 1902, requiring a poll tax of between $1.50 and $1.75—a hefty sum at the time, especially for the poor. Some states stipulated that poll taxes be collected annually. These laws endured for several decades until they were challenged by the courts and deemed illegal. It was not until 1964 that the Twenty-Fourth Amendment abolished poll taxes in

national elections. Two years later, the US Supreme Court abolished them in state elections.[45] Some people believe that new voter identification laws in several key states during the 2016 presidential election may have contributed to the loss of Hillary Clinton. Trump narrowly won the state of Wisconsin by 22,728 votes. Conspicuously, the state had its lowest voter turnout in two decades, about 41,000 fewer than in the previous presidential election. Milwaukee County Clerk Joe Czarnezki is convinced that the voter ID laws handed the election to Trump. "I believe it was voter suppression laws from the state government that crushed turnout," he said, noting that those most affected were poor minorities who did not own a motor vehicle or a driver's license.[46]

The rights of Hispanic Americans were continually trotted upon during the first half of the nineteenth century. The heartbreaking case of New York orphans epitomizes their social position. In 1904, forty Anglo American orphans were sent to live with Hispanic families in Arizona Territory, outraging local whites who held fierce protests over allowing Nordic children to be raised by "half-breeds." Vigilante groups seized the children and placed them with white families. It is a testament to the deeply held racist sentiments of the time that the Arizona Supreme Court sided with the white parents, who were essentially kidnappers and child abductors. The court referred to the vigilantes as "committees." The New York orphanage was legally powerless to get the children back, and the children spent the rest of their lives with their new, white families.[47]

In 2018, the Trump administration exhibited a similar callousness in its treatment of refugees and asylum seekers from Latin America who were trying to enter the country at the Mexican border. The administration's policy of separating infants and children from their families as part of a deliberate strategy to discourage them from seeking safe haven in the United States was widely condemned, both domestically and internationally. As part of the zero-tolerance policy, persons who were not processed at one of the officially designated ports of entry were labeled as having attempted to enter the country illegally. However, many people were

turned away at the ports of entry, or, after waiting days or weeks without being processed, they eventually crossed elsewhere in frustration. Many did not have the means to reach a port of entry, and they crossed the border somewhere else without obtaining a visa, only to be branded as criminals. In many of these cases, upon entering the United States, the asylum seekers immediately sought out Border Patrol agents to request safe haven, only to find themselves under arrest and separated from their children.[48]

Present-day fears over the perceived threat posed by Mexicans, and the reluctance to fully accept Mexican Americans as equal citizens, continue to pose a challenge for our reputation as a tolerant and welcoming country. In June 2016, Donald Trump evoked race when he claimed that the judge presiding over a lawsuit against Trump University should recuse himself from the case because his parents were of Mexican ancestry. To insinuate that US District Judge Gonzalo Curiel could not rule fairly because of his Mexican heritage, since Trump proposed to build a wall between the two countries, has alarming racial overtones. While the United States promotes itself as a melting pot of ethnic and religious diversity, it has a checkered history when it comes to putting these ideals into practice. People of Mexican ancestry are but one of a long list of culturally diverse groups and nationalities that have been vilified as leeches on the American welfare system and a threat to our national security. Immigrants are some of the most vulnerable people on Earth, and make easy scapegoats for complex problems of the day. The efforts by President Trump to build a wall along our Southwest border, physically separating Mexico and the United States, is the most visible attempt to further underscore our differences, instead of focusing on our common humanity.

CHAPTER 3

"THE MONGOLIAN HORDES MUST GO!"

The Chinese Migration Ban

[Chinese] are uncivilized, unclean, and filthy beyond all conception, without any of the higher domestic or social relations; lustful and sensual in their dispositions. . . . The first words of English they learn are terms of obscenity or profanity. . . . Clannish in nature, they will not associate except with their own people, and the Chinese quarter of the city is a by-word for filth and sin. Pagan in religion, they know not the virtues of honesty, integrity or good-faith.

—Horace Greeley, "Chinese Immigration to California," *New York Tribune*, September 29, 1854

Amid fears that the country was being overrun by hordes of immigrants from the Far East who would corrupt the American way of life, in May 1882 Congress took the extraordinary step of banning Chinese laborers. It was the first significant legislation in American history in which a group of migrants were excluded from settling on US soil based solely on their race and class. The anti-Chinese hostilities would not end until the early twentieth century, when all migrants from China were banned. Passage took place at a time when scientists thought that the world was divided into racial groups. The existence of superior and inferior peoples was a cornerstone of the curriculum in high school and university biology classes across Europe and North America. The Chinese were believed to be a branch of the Asiatic "Mongol Race," a step above the "Negro," but well below whites. In 1866, the editor of the prestigious *Anthropological Review* described them as an inferior "infantile" race, as evidenced by their "backward" art, literature, and government. "They are beardless children, whose life is a task, and whose chief virtue consists in unquestioning obedience," he wrote.[1] A few years later, in 1871, attitudes had changed little, as Ohio Congressman William Mungen stood on the floor of the House of Representatives and complained about the wave of Chinese immigrants who were taking jobs from more worthy Americans, referring to them as "a poor, miserable, dwarfish race of inferior beings."[2]

Many newspapers and scholarly journals of the period published apelike images of the Chinese, implying that they were lower on the evolutionary scale. There were many comparisons to insect swarms, especially bees, ants, and locusts. They were portrayed as mindless followers who looked alike and acted with a common purpose.[3] This imagery frightened white Americans. Perhaps more than any other factor, the belief in different racial types is what fueled the anti-Chinese hysteria, although economic factors certainly played a role. The initial ban was for ten years, but it was renewed and eventually expanded to include *all* Chinese by 1902. The policy would not be abolished until the Second World War, when politicians finally relented after the United States and China found themselves as allies in the fight against Japan.

The backdrop of the scare was the sudden influx of Chinese immigrants arriving on the West Coast during the second half of the nineteenth century, as they fled civil war, economic turmoil, and political unrest in their native land. Many took jobs in the California gold mines, where tensions soon boiled over. The views of San Francisco attorney John Boalt were typical of the period. He wrote that white and Mongolian races were incompatible, observing that their physical peculiarities were so repulsive as to "prevent any intimate association or miscegenation [sexual intercourse] of the races."[4] California politicians shrewdly capital-

ized on the anti-Chinese mood to gain votes.[5] They did not fear a backlash from Chinese voters, because foreign-born Asians were ineligible for citizenship and could not cast ballots.[6]

INVASION!

The initial surge of Chinese migrants was in response to the California gold rush of 1848, and later to build the western branch of the transcontinental railroad. Others took jobs in the agricultural and fishing sectors. For company bosses, they were a welcome supply of cheap labor who had a reputation for hard work. Most were willing to do any job, including those that their white counterparts were reluctant to fill. During the 1850s, an Anglo American earned about three dollars a day in the gold fields. Their Chinese counterparts were paid as low as $1.25 for the same work, and most were paid at least a dollar below that of a white laborer.[7] In 1850, a mere 660 Chinese were living in California, most hoping to make their fortune mining gold.[8] Within two years, 25,000 more would pour into California. By 1880, more than 105,000 Chinese had made the voyage across the Pacific in search of a better life in America—most in California. Only one in five was an American citizen.[9] In 1868, Congress passed the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution to ensure equality for the recently freed black slaves. It stated that all persons born or naturalized in the United States were American citizens, including blacks. This allowed Chinese immigrants the chance to obtain citizenship, which was for the courts to decide, on an individual basis. That changed in 1878 when a California court ruled that members of the Mongolian race were of neither Anglo nor African descent. While Chinese born in the United States could still become citizens, those born outside the country were now prohibited from applying.[10]

Anti-Chinese hostilities grew steadily in the 1870s. Once the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, thousands of Chinese

workers flooded the West Coast job market at a time of economic hardship. Attempts to address concerns over the growing number of Asians entering the labor force prompted Congress to act in 1875, banning the immigration of convicts or prostitutes from any country. It was a thinly veiled attempt to reduce the number of unskilled Chinese laborers from entering, and to stop the flow of Chinese women to lower their birth rate. At the time, Chinese women were portrayed as sexually promiscuous and natural prostitutes who posed a threat to the morals of America's youth. The law did little to slow the arrival of Chinese immigrants.[11] As fears grew over cheap Chinese labor taking jobs from white citizens and corrupting American values, calls to address the issue grew louder. William Locklear observes that the Chinese migrant was viewed as "a slave of another color," willing to undercut white labor. To him, they were a cunning and godless race with no respect for American morals. "He lived in 'herds' amid squalor, gambled, smoked opium and forced Chinese women into prostitution, thus endangering the health and morality of the community."[12] Anti-Chinese sentiments reached such levels that many Anglo Americans vowed never to live in a house previously occupied by "filthy" Chinese, and complaining that whenever they moved into a neighborhood, property values dropped.[13] The Chinese were demonized by politicians and journalists alike, culminating in the Exclusion Act of 1882. The act was a form of scapegoating for the wage decline of the 1870s, but the reality was very different. The presence of Chinese workers had little impact on the overall economy. In the 1880 census, those of Chinese descent comprised a mere 0.002 percent of the nation's population—just over 100,000 out of 50 million. While the law was worded in economic terms, it had racist overtones.[14]

The 1882 ban exempted the Chinese upper class: diplomats, merchants, students, teachers, and travelers, but it prevented *all immigrants* from China from becoming naturalized citizens.[15] These well-to-do newcomers were believed to have had better breeding by virtue of their wealth. It was assumed that those who were financially better off were naturally

smarter than poorer Chinese, as their intelligence had allowed them to accumulate wealth. In 1888, the law was expanded to bar the return of Chinese immigrants who had temporarily left the country, stranding about 25,000 of their compatriots overseas. By 1893, amid the continuing clamor from white voters to address the so-called Yellow Invasion, lawmakers expanded the definition of *laborer* to include merchants, miners, laundry owners, and those in the fishing industry. By 1902, the issue was emphatically resolved when *all Chinese immigration was prohibited*.[16]

It was no small irony that the better life so many Chinese had come searching for was itself a fiction, an embellished image that was packaged and sold by shipping companies to promote their self-interests: making as much money as possible by filling their vessels to capacity for the voyage to America. As they docked in port cities like Canton and Hong Kong, broadsheets were handed out to lure locals into taking the voyage. One company urged residents to seek their fortune in the California goldfields. Their handbill read: "Americans are very rich people. They want the Chinaman to come and will make him welcome. There will be big pay, large houses, and food and clothing of the finest description. . . . Such as wishes to have wages and labor guaranteed can obtain the security by application at this office."[17] Dreaming of gold and wealth, many sold their homes and fishing boats, or borrowed money from relatives to make the long journey. They were soon to be disillusioned by what they found.

THE DRIVE TO PURGE THE HORDE

To the surprise of many, the 1882 Immigration Act not only failed to placate supporters and calm anti-Chinese sentiments but also had the opposite effect—igniting and emboldening opponents. As hostilities grew, many residents living in western states formed anti-Chinese organizations for the purpose of lobbying for even stricter laws to combat the perceived threat to their jobs and the American way of life. Some

encouraged boycotts of Chinese goods and businesses, harassed Chinese citizens, and, in several instances, ran Chinese residents out of town. In 1884, Congress made it more difficult for merchants and travelers to obtain an exemption by expanding the definition of *merchant* to include peddlers and fishermen.[18] By 1892, all existing Chinese exclusion laws were renewed for another decade. The racist nature of the act was evident in its language. The law stipulated that any Chinese laborers residing in the country had to register with the government and obtain a special certificate allowing them to stay. Anyone found without a certificate was subject to a year in prison followed by deportation. However, people could be saved from this fate if a "credible *white* witness" was to testify on their behalf that they were indeed US residents who had a good excuse for failing to register. In 1893, the law was amended to include "one credible witness *other than Chinese*" to prove residency.[19] By the turn of the century, white animosity toward the Chinese was stronger than ever. In 1901, San Francisco Mayor James Phelan viewed the campaign against Chinese immigrants as a titanic struggle for the future of white humanity. He proclaimed that California government officials were "wardens of the Golden Gate; we must stand here forever in the pathway of the Orient. . . . It is for us to sound the alarm. I regard the Chinese question as a race question . . . and above and over all, a question involving the preservation of our civilization."[20]

While the most intense hostilities were concentrated in California, other western states were also forced to address the issue. In Montana during January 1886, a group of women who washed laundry for a living placed a notice in a Helena newspaper complaining that "Mongolian hordes" were putting them out of business. Predictably, the editor came out in support of the women and against the "almond-eyed citizens."[21] The Montana papers were filled with anti-Chinese sentiments at this time, depicting them as unscrupulous, perverse, unclean, uncivilized, and ungodly. Throughout the state, they were commonly referred to in the press as John Chinaman and Chink Chink Chinaman.[22]

FROM MODEL CITIZENS TO INFERIOR MENACE

Historian Stuart Miller found overwhelmingly negative images of Chinese in American books, newspapers, and magazines in the century leading up to the 1882 Exclusion Act. He observes that during the first half of the century, most of what trickled down to the American masses were reports from diplomats, missionaries, and merchants who had visited China, recounting stories of Chinese idolatry, cruelty, infanticide, and sexual perversity.[23] However, California newspapers had an overwhelmingly positive description of these strange newcomers. The image would quickly change. These early press accounts held them to be well-dressed, refined, and civilized. For instance, the prominent *Daily Alta California* had nothing but praise. A typical comment appeared in the paper on May 12, 1851: "Scarcely a ship arrives here that does not bring an increase to this worthy integer of our population. . . . Perhaps the citizens of no nation except the Germans, are more quiet and valuable." Another issue described them as possessing a lofty moral and industrious character: "They make good, honest and industrious citizens, and no one of them has ever yet been before the authorities for larceny or any other criminal charge."[24] By 1852, California Governor John McDougal not only praised them as "one of the most worthy classes of our newly adopted citizens," he pushed for land grants to attract greater numbers of Chinese migrants to America.[25] The tide would quickly turn. Later that same year, with the swearing in of Governor John Bigler, anti-Chinese sentiments had well and truly taken hold. Bigler supported a bill that would halt further immigration of unskilled Chinese laborers.[26] By 1862, Governor Leland Stanford took up the cause with vigor, referring to local Chinese as "dregs"—worthless people. His position was the height of hypocrisy. At the same time, thousands of low-wage Chinese workers were being imported to construct the Central Pacific Railroad. Stanford was the railroad's president. From 1865 to 1869, over ten thousand Chinese were hired to construct the railway, at two-thirds the wages of whites. They

were shamelessly exploited in other ways, such as having to provide their own shelter and food. The use of Chinese workers saved the company an estimated $5 million—an enormous sum at the time.[27] The exploitation of migrant workers to cut costs remains prevalent across America today, as does the taking advantage of migrants who are deemed to have illegally entered the country and fear deportation if they complain. For example, during the demolition of a building to make way for the construction of Trump Tower in Manhattan, Donald Trump was aware that many of the construction workers were illegal Poles, whom he threatened with deportation when they complained over a pay dispute.[28]

These early press accounts fail to mention that trouble was brewing in the gold mines where Chinese workers were resented for their thrift and willingness to accept low pay. Tensions had been building for several years, even if they did not often make the newspapers.[29] With few blacks and Native Americans involved with mining, and with the exodus of Mexicans and South Americans due to taxes, Chinese miners became the obvious targets of abuse given their numbers, different physical appearance, and seemingly strange customs. Difference was quickly equated with inferiority. The predominantly white miners also considered the Chinese to be part of a colored race.[30] By May 1852, one California newspaper made a reference to them as "cloven-footed inhabitants of the infernal regions" and called for their removal from the mines. In September, a state mining convention voted to call on Congress to protect the industry from Chinese immigrants. They complained about the state policy "by which whole hordes of degraded, dark colored and worthless laborers, of mongrel race and barbarous education, are allowed, and even invited, to come hither merely to rob the rightful owner" of their mining treasures.[31]

By 1853, the *Alta California* had changed ownership and with it had taken an anti-Chinese stance. In November, the same paper that just two years earlier had characterized Chinese migrants as model citizens was now portraying them as a criminal race. Historian James Evans writes that "a petty crime committed by or blamed on a single Chinaman was publi-

cized as though it evidenced that all Chinese were criminals endangering the state. The Chinese sector of San Francisco was now pictured as a squalid area of filth and vice rather than a place where thrifty immigrants lived quietly."[32] Evans continues: "These diminutive little folk who had previously been an amusing but admirable novelty from a distant land and had been the epitome of virtue, thrift, and picturesqueness in San Francisco were now regarded as pig-tailed barbarians. . . . Their ability to live cheaply was no longer evidence of the virtue of thrift; it was proof that they could survive at a degraded level unfit for white men."[33] San Francisco was the epicenter of the anti-Chinese movement since large numbers of new arrivals disembarked and made their home there. Alarmists in the state spread baseless claims that the Chinese were responsible for spreading every disease under the sun, from cholera to small pox and leprosy.[34] During this period, in the eyes of many Anglo Americans, the Chinese could do little right. They were deemed to have been a public-health threat, a view espoused by no less an authority than the *Police Gazette*. Its March 21, 1868, edition described Chinatown as a repulsive cesspool: "That this eye-sore, this great fountain head of disease and death, this corruptor of our youth, this destroyer of morals, this blight upon property, this strain upon the escutcheon of the city itself, this putrid, rotten, 'damned spot,' should be allowed to lay and fester, spreading its death smell, like the deadly upas tree, all around . . . [is] a profound mystery."[35] Ironically, many of the rundown buildings in Chinatown were being rented out by prominent white citizens.

Depictions of the Chinese in California would soon reach new levels of vitriol, even among those entrusted to be neutral and maintain law and order. In the April 4, 1868, issue of the *California Police Gazette*, the editor described the Chinese as "the rat-eating, mooneyed, lying, thieving Mongolians, who have no affinity with us either in race, religion or customs." Such attitudes highlight the racist feelings held by not only many California police officers but also the criminal justice system, as Chinese were at a disadvantage in court. They could not testify against whites after an

1854 ruling in the California Supreme Court that gave them the same legal status as American Indians. In 1869, the same court ruled that Chinese could not even testify in court against the "lowly Negro."[36]

On August 8, 1853, the *Alta California*—a paper now known for its anti-Chinese stance, published a story about the treatment of a Chinese man, which even it described as disgraceful. It underscores the injustice of the period, and the intensity of anti-Chinese feelings: "An American yesterday attacked a Chinaman in Dupont street, beating him shamefully. The Chinamen in the neighborhood were afraid to interfere, and the Americans, of whom there was a large crowd, stood by and saw the poor Chinaman abused. . . . [Soon] a policeman came up, saw by his bloody face that he had been in a fight and arrested him. Unlucky John slept in the Hotel de Ville last night; the fellow that beat him was lucky enough to get off without being arrested." Even the editor of the *Alta California* had to admit the unfairness of a legal system that barred Chinese from giving testimony against non-Chinese. On March 26, 1854, he noted his opposition to the law, even though he considered them a lower race: "justice to ourselves, as well as to them, demands that they should be permitted to testify like persons of other colors. Their evidence should not carry . . . so much weight with a court or jury as that of a white man; but it does not follow that their evidence should be excluded entirely. . . . Although the majority of the negroes, Chinese, Malays, and Indians are not reliable witnesses, yet, there are exceptions."

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, Californians commonly referred to the Chinese as "heathens," not because of their non-Christian beliefs, but because it was a derogatory term.[37] The word *heathen* became synonymous with *Chinese* thanks to the 1870 publication of a poem by Bret Hart in which he made reference to "the heathen Chinee." It was certainly not complimentary and told of a Chinese man who had cheated two Western miners at cards.[38] Other common descriptions were the terms "moon-eyed" and "slant-eyed" in reference to the epicanthic fold, which causes the eyes to appear slanted. Anti-Chinese

clubs popped up like mushrooms across the West Coast during the 1880s and 1890s. They held conventions, circulated petitions, and lobbied lawmakers to purge the region from the scourge of the Chinaman. Some groups encouraged boycotts, reasoning that if every resident refused to buy Chinese goods or employ Chinese, they would be forced to return home. Manufacturers were encouraged to place labels on their products affirming that they were made without Chinese labor. Many businesses tried to capitalize on the hysteria, with anti-Chinese displays. One such advertisement was used by a meat seller: "BE CAUTIOUS! A DUE RESPECT FOR A NATURAL prejudice against using MEATS Handled by Chinese and kept in their Unventilated Dens until sold for market use, has decided us to advertise the fact that we SELL NO MEATS that have been handled by CHINAMEN."[39] Politicians jumped on the anti-Chinese bandwagon. The influx of Chinese was often referred to as the Yellow Invasion, yet it was the height of hypocrisy that these same Americans who had invaded and conquered the Indians, were themselves complaining about being invaded. Given the importance of the labor vote in California, gaining support often meant being more anti-Chinese than a politician's opponent.[40] To gain a sense of how engrained and pervasive anti-Chinese hostilities were, in 1899, US Supreme Court Justice Stephen Field wrote that to preserve America's independence, the country must be on guard from Chinese immigrants, whom he described as "vast hordes of people crowding in upon us" and who constituted "a different race" who were deemed to be "dangerous to peace and security."[41]

POPULAR FICTION WARNS OF THE ASIATIC SWARM

Fear of a Yellow Invasion by Chinese migrants along the West Coast was fueled by racially charged novels. One such work was *Almond-Eyed: The Great Agitator* which was published by Atwell Whitney in 1878.[42] Set in "Yarbtown," California, where factory owner Simon Spud (a not so subtle

hint that he was Irish) decides to hire a large number of Chinese laborers. After littering the town with their refuse and driving many white residents out of business, the new workers from the Orient spread small pox. Eventually, a group of white workers who had lost their jobs to the Chinese begins to riot, resulting in a massive fire. After the factory and Chinatown are rebuilt, the new factory manager vows to only hire white workers. Because the Chinese remain, racial tensions continue unabated, leaving Whitney to write of perpetual conflict.[43] "The stream of heathen men and women still comes pouring in, filling the places which should be occupied by the Caucasian race, poisoning the moral atmosphere, tainting society, undermining the free institutions of the country, degrading labor, and resisting quietly, but wisely and successfully, all efforts to remove them."[44]

In Pierton Dooner's *Last Days of the Republic* (1880), the Chinese government tries to take over the United States through unlimited migration. Eventually, a race war breaks out, and America becomes a territory of China. The Chinese characters in the novel are cunning and power hungry. Dooner portrays Chinese workers as mindless zombies willing to give their lives for their race and who are ready to carry out the wishes of their leaders at a moment's notice. Historian William Wu observes that the invasion is successful due to their hordish character, allowing for "absolute, unquestioning, immediate obedience to the government of China." Wu writes that "Dooner's image of the Chinese as a mindless mass is required in order to make plausible the slow process of infiltration and the subsequent arming and training of the Chinese in the United States."[45] Treating the Chinese as a swarm or herd reflects the belief that their actions stemmed not from free will but from their racial makeup. Hence, they could not be dealt with rationally any more than a herd of cattle or a swarm of insects could be reasoned with. They were an irrational force that had to be kept out at all costs.[46]

Other novels would further highlight the invasion threat. Robert Woltor's *A Short and Truthful History of the Taking of Oregon and California by the Chinese in the Year A.D. 1899*, resembles a history book.

Published in 1882 and written by "a survivor," it tells of the conquest of California and Oregon following a series of uprisings aided by a visiting Chinese flotilla. Woltor claims that the Chinese were deliberately massing in urban ghettoes for strategic purposes, and that they were able to act in unison as a large organism with a single-minded purpose: conquest. He depicts the Chinese as mindless puppets.[47] Woltor's novel exploits racial stereotypes of the period: "Our enemy, moreover, possess two great elements . . . which may well be the envy of warmer-blooded races, namely a stoic indifference to pain, which makes them fearless to deeds of blood, and a certain coolness in moments of excitement and danger." In contrast, Woltor portrays the Europeans as less primal and more cerebral leaders.[48] Despite these qualities, the "Asiatic swarm" is victorious in conquering the West Coast. Perhaps the most dire scenario was portrayed in Oto Mundo's *The Recovered Continent: A Tale of the Chinese Invasion* from 1898. In it the Chinese invade Southeast Asia, pour across Europe, and eventually take over the United States and conquer the world.[49] The portrayal of Chinese settlers in the literature of the early twentieth century was unflattering and racist. Even religious publications routinely referred to them as inferior and heathens.[50] During this time, Chinese women continued to be portrayed as prostitutes.[51]

THE WHITE BACKLASH TO THE YELLOW PERIL

While discontent with Chinese miners first broke out in the California goldfields in the late 1840s, it was not until the following decade that the situation reached crisis proportions. The fear of Chinese taking white jobs prompted a fierce backlash. Mobs and vigilante groups systematically drove the strange newcomers off their claims, often at gunpoint, seizing and destroying their tools, tents, and supplies. In many cities and towns across the west, especially along the coast, law and order broke down. One trouble spot was Shasta County, California, where during

the winter of 1858–59, a race war erupted as anti-Chinese riots spread throughout the county. In Shasta City, a mob forced a group of Chinese men to parade through the streets as jeering townsfolk pelted them with stones. Riots sprung up in several small mountain towns, including Middletown, Oregon Gulch, and Horsetown. Sheriff Clay Stockton eventually managed to restore order and quell what became known as "the Shasta wars." Many vigilantes were rounded up and brought to trial. Each was found not guilty.[52] In 1853, upward of 3,000 Chinese were working the mines of Shasta County. By 1860, that number had dwindled to 160,[53] many of whom were working under the protection of European employers.[54] During the 1880s, two riots broke out which claimed the lives of dozens of Chinese Americans and prompted the call for federal troops to quell tensions. In September, a race riot in Rock Springs, Wyoming Territory, left 28 Chinese dead and $150,000 in damages as the local Chinatown was leveled. That same month, an attack on a remote campsite by a group of angry residents at Squak Valley in Washington State killed three Chinese hops pickers. Several days later, there was a midnight raid by a band of masked men who burst into the sleeping quarters occupied by 37 Chinese workers of the Oregon Improvement Company mine in Coal Creek, Washington. They ordered the workers outside and burned down the building. In early November, a white mob in Tacoma, backed by the police and mayor, entered the Chinese district and ordered the inhabitants to leave. They were forced onto a train bound for Portland. During February 1886, a riot broke out in Seattle during attempts to remove the city's Chinese inhabitants. Marshall Law was declared and federal troops were summoned to restore order.[55] Between 1850 and 1890, Chinese migrants in the western United States endured verbal abuse and threats, fistfights, biased news reports, segregation from whites, shootings, stabbings, the destruction of Chinese property, and premeditated murder.[56]

One of the worst acts of violence took place on March 14, 1877, when four Chinese agricultural workers were murdered in Chico, California, at

the hands of white supremacists. The killings occurred amid a series of arson attacks on Chinese homes in the area, and businesses employing Chinese. While on a mission to burn down Chico's Chinatown, several arsonists shot the four migrants, doused them in kerosene, and set them alight. The perpetrators were members of the Order of Caucasians. The incident coincided with a period of global economic decline between 1873 and 1896, which some writers refer to as the Second Great Depression. The men were soon captured and put on trial for murder and arson. Four of the men received life sentences, while the others were given ten to twenty years for arson. A social commentator would later remark: "Had their victims been white men, they would have been hanged. In fact, they would have been . . . accorded that special type of hanging termed lynching."[57]

On February 14, 1879, Senator James Blaine, the nation's foremost advocate for Chinese exclusion, proclaimed that "either the Anglo-Saxon race will possess the Pacific slope or the Mongolians will possess it."[58] A week later he referred to Chinese migrants as criminals and compared their spread to that of a disease: "If as a nation we have the right to keep out infectious diseases, if we have the right to exclude the criminal classes from coming to us, we surely have the right to exclude that immigration which reeks with impurity and which cannot come to us without . . . sowing the seeds of moral and physical disease, destitution, and death." Blaine's influence cannot be overstated. At the time of his speech, he was the leading candidate for the Republican nomination for president, and although unsuccessful, he would serve as secretary of state under James Garfield. Many of Blaine's Republican colleagues enthusiastically supported his views on immigration. Representative Addison McClure of Ohio echoed Blaine's racist sentiments, quipping: "Alien in manners, servile in labor, pagan in religion, they are fundamentally un-American."[59] Wisconsin Senator George Hazelton likened them to "packs of dogs," while other politicians equated the Chinese to swarming insects and rats: creatures considered pests and devoid of moral character.

Waves of violence and intimidation would continue across the country into the new century, with friction especially prevalent in the western states, and along the West Coast where the Chinese were most concentrated. Even those who had been fortunate enough to be exempt from the exclusion legislation, such as Chinese government officials, were not immune from the intimidation and harassment. One notorious episode involved Tom Kim Yung, a military attaché based in San Francisco. On September 13, 1903, he was handcuffed by two city police officers, tied by his hair to a fence, and then severely beaten. A former bodyguard of the emperor of China, he was so distraught at having been falsely accused of starting the altercation that shortly after the incident he committed suicide. Prior to the attack, Yung was walking back to the Chinese embassy with several merchants and was just a few feet from the door when a police officer grabbed him. A *San Francisco Call* journalist describes what happened next, based on eyewitness accounts: "He was met by Policeman Kreamer . . . who took hold of him rudely and made an improper remark in pigeon English. The colonel shook off the policeman's grasp with an angry gesture, whereupon Kreamer struck him a severe blow in the face," after which a second officer arrived and the beatings intensified. Several witnesses to the incident later testified that the police had started the altercation.[60]

ROADBLOCKS

Even before the 1882 Exclusion Act, California lawmakers were busy thinking up new and ever more creative ways to make life difficult for Chinese migrants in the hope that they might become discouraged and leave the country. In 1852, foreign miners who were not eligible to become citizens had to pay a monthly fee of $3—a hefty sum for the time. It was no coincidence that most foreign miners who were ineligible for citizenship were Chinese. Within three years, the fee would double. Two years

later, the California Supreme Court gave Chinese the same legal status in court as "Red Indians" and determined that they could not testify against whites—a ruling that endured for the next eighteen years. In 1862, all Chinese living in California were forced to pay a police tax of $2.50 cents for the cost of looking after their health, safety, and moral conduct. The tax was a reflection of stereotypes of the Chinese as dirty and unhealthy people who were inherently inclined toward smoking opium, gambling, and prostitution. Those refusing to pay the tax had their property seized and sold at public auction.[61] By the end of the year, the State Supreme Court ruled the law to be unconstitutional. In 1863, Chinese were barred from giving testimony in civil and criminal court cases. The most outlandish law was the Cubic Air Ordinance of 1870, which targeted Chinatown, known for its congested living arrangements. The law made it illegal "to rent rooms with less than 500 cubic feet of air per person." Ironically, county jails could not even meet the requirement, so the law was voided.[62] Since the Chinese were the only people who carried clothes and vegetables on the end of poles, that same year the Sidewalk or Pole Ordinance was passed, prohibiting anyone from walking on the sidewalk using poles to carry goods.[63] Another unusual law involved hair. In 1873, the city of San Francisco passed an ordinance banning male Chinese prisoners from wearing braids—a long-standing cultural tradition. Also known as the Pigtail Ordinance, it was intended to stop Chinese from committing crimes, as losing one's braid was a sign of disgrace. Although the mayor vetoed the bill, a similar version passed in April 1876. The law was thrown out in 1879 after Ho Ah Kow sued the local sheriff and was awarded $10,000 in damages.[64] In 1880, California amended its thirty-year-old law prohibiting marriage between blacks or "half-castes" with whites, to include Mongolians. It was specifically meant to prevent marriages between Europeans and Chinese. A dozen other states soon followed as Chinese were banned from marrying whites in such places as Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, Virginia, and Wyoming.[65]

There were also attempts to prevent the Chinese from attending school with whites. In 1859, the San Francisco School Board closed a public school for Chinese students but were then forced to reopen it. However, between 1871 and 1885, state officials were able to shut down Chinese American schools. Legal historian Joyce Kuo writes that during this time, "the Chinese were explicitly excluded from the all-white and even the separate schools in the public school system."[66] During this period, the Chinese were denied a public education despite their tax dollars going to fund the education of the other races. Some Chinese children were homeschooled or sent to expensive private schools; others were tutored by missionaries; but not all could afford the expense. In 1884, the Chinese exclusion policy was challenged in court and deemed to have been illegal, prompting the establishment of separate Oriental Public Schools.[67] By 1896, the US Supreme Court had rendered its historic *Plessy v. Ferguson* case, allowing for public segregation of whites from nonwhites in public places ranging from schools to movie theaters, parks, swimming pools, school buses, and even libraries and hospitals. The court ruled that nonwhites could be excluded from white public schools so long as the state provided "separate but equal" facilities. This became the law of the land until 1954, when the Supreme Court deemed it illegal, resulting in mass desegregation of schools across the country. From the 1850s until well into the next century, there were numerous attempts in California to segregate Chinese students from their white counterparts in school. In 1855, the state enacted discriminatory legislation stipulating that school instruction had to be in English.[68]

The power of the times to influence one's views can be found in the US Supreme Court. In his legendary dissent in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case, Justice John Marshall Harlan wrote that the government has a responsibility to ensure "equality before the law of all citizens of the United States, without regard to race."[69] Harlan has been hailed as a visionary for his position on equal rights for blacks. However, in his very next paragraph, he mentions the Chinese: "There is a race so different from our

own that we do not permit those belonging to it to become citizens of the United States. Persons belonging to it are, with few exceptions, absolutely excluded from our country. I allude to the Chinese race. But by the statute in question, a Chinaman can ride in the same passenger coach with white citizens of the United States, while citizens of the black race [are not allowed]." While this curious passage is often ignored by his supporters, legal scholar Gabriel Chin has examined Harlan's past decisions and writings and concluded that he was a "faithful opponent of the constitutional rights of Chinese for much of his career on the court." Justice Harlan was a product of his times. Chin observes that reprints of Harlan's dissent often omit the Chinese passage.

FROM PUBLIC MENACE TO MODEL MINORITY

An extraordinary turn of events would see the axing of the Chinese Exclusion Act, and renewed friendship between America and China. This remarkable attitude shift took place over a span of a few years starting in the late 1930s and would become crystalized by a single event: the Japanese attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. On December 8, 1941, the day after the attack, the United States and China both declared war on Japan and became instant allies. Public opinion had already begun to change with the Japanese invasion near Peiping in northern China during July 1937. The very next month, an American poll found 43 percent of the populace was sympathetic to the Chinese. By 1939, favorable ratings had risen to 74 percent.[70] By the early 1940s, a series of influential newspaper and magazine editorials appeared, underscoring the importance of China as a friend to the United States and an influential partner in the war effort.[71] This new alliance created an awkward situation given the US treatment of Chinese laborers over the previous sixty years, and the inflammatory rhetoric that was often spouted by anti-Chinese politicians and activists during this period. China was now seen as a key ally

because Washington's main aim was to retake Europe. It was hoped that the Chinese could keep the Japanese at bay while the United States focused on its "Europe First Policy." Toward this end, in January 1942, the United States lent China half a billion dollars to help fight the Japanese.[72]

The imperial government tried in vain to break the new bond by reminding the Chinese of America's shameful policy on Chinese migration. After Pearl Harbor, Japan began to refer to its war as the Greater East Asian War and claimed that its purpose was the liberation of East Asia from the "Anglo-Saxon imperialists." By February 1942, the Japanese insisted that their war effort was aimed at emancipating Asian peoples, with the goal of "racial equality and harmony." In a clear reference to the Chinese Exclusion Act, the imperial leaders observed that America was exploiting Asian peoples.[73] By June, the *Asahi Shumbun* newspaper published a series of "Open Letters to Asian Peoples," proclaiming that "Asia must be one—in her aim, in her action and in her future," noting that "when Asia becomes one in truth a new order will be established throughout the world."[74] The pressure was now squarely on the shoulders of the American government to counter the campaign by the Japanese propaganda machine—a campaign that had a stinging reality. Attempts to drive a wedge between America and China were destined to fail, since each side needed the other more than ever. For their part, the Chinese went on a charm offensive, with the wife of leader Chiang Kai-shek visiting the country between November 1942 and May 1943. She worked vigorously to build support for a new US–China relationship. An eloquent speaker, she was given the rare privilege of addressing both Houses of Congress in mid-February, hailing democratic values and talking about the need to build a world "based on justice, coexistence, cooperation, and mutual respect."[75] Throughout the spring, she traveled the country, calling for more military aid and better relations. As a result, politicians and media commentators emphasized the similarities between China and America and began pressing for a repeal of the Exclusion Act.

By May 1943, a group of prominent intellectuals formed the Citizens

Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion and Place Immigration on a Quota Basis. Among them was the influential founder of *Life*, *Time*, and *Fortune* magazines, Henry Luce, and writer Pearl S. Buck. An acclaimed novelist known for her stance on human rights, Buck grew up in China as the daughter of missionaries. She played a role in swaying public opinion, pointing out that the Japanese were winning the propaganda war against the United States by exploiting America's treatment of the Chinese. She called for cooperation between people of all races, colors, and nationalities if the war was to be won.[76] Adding further momentum to the movement, thousands of Chinese Americans were serving their country in the armed forces, underscoring their sacrifice in the war effort and earning them the nickname of the "model minority." As American political scientist Harold Isaacs would observe, the perception of Chinese Americans had shifted from the "Age of Contempt" to the "Age of Admiration."[77] The deluge of sentiments for ending racial discrimination against the Chinese finally bore fruit on December 17, 1943, when Franklin Roosevelt signed into law the Chinese Exclusion Repeal Act. Events had come full circle. Our longtime enemy, the Yellow Menace, was now our best friend. But while there was a thaw in US–Chinese relations, a new villain had just as quickly filled the void, as Americans found another scapegoat for their problems: Japanese Americans.

CHAPTER 4

"CHILDLIKE, BARBARIC, AND OTHERWISE INFERIOR"

The Fear of Native Americans—Foreigners in Their Own Land

Indian-ness was conflated with foreignness, which placed Native Americans outside the nation—as foreigners in their own land.

—Robert Elias, *The Empire Strikes Out: How Baseball Sold US Foreign Policy and Promoted the American Way Abroad*, 2010

What would happen if the United States government made it illegal to practice religious beliefs, outlawed celebrations on the Fourth of July, and banned gift giving at Christmas? How would you feel if it were a crime for adults to tell their children about the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy, and if those practicing such traditions were publicly chastised and labeled as ignorant for spreading superstitions? What if those convicted of these offenses were fined, thrown in prison, or forced to endure hard labor? Incredibly, just such an event occurred in 1883 when the American government issued the Code of Indian Offenses. The code was a watershed moment during which, virtually overnight, an array of customs and ceremonies that had been practiced for millennia were suddenly deemed to be crimes. While some resisted the new laws by wor-

carcass because he lacks spirit to pursue others.'"[50] Hoxie observes that public drunkenness convictions were "equally mild." He continues, "One tribal member found that on his fourth conviction for inebriation, the fine had been reduced from ten dollars to five dollars. What seems to have been at least as important as the punishment was the reinforcement of the relationship of elder to youth. Authority and prestige were the judge's reward for his service, and these could be renewed at each session of the court regardless of the presence of 'repeat offenders' or the persistence of 'immoral' conduct."[51] Despite different forms of resistance, Native American culture continued to be suppressed for decades. The code was not amended until 1933, under President Franklin Roosevelt, when all bans on dances and other customs were eliminated.

The criminalization of native customs was a form of ethnocide, prompted by a belief in European superiority, that is responsible for the devastation of Native American culture. Natives were seen as needing help and guidance from the missionaries and, later, the government, to become acceptable citizens of the newly formed United States. But Native Americans adjusted to their new reality and found ways to bypass the white man's laws or used them to their own favor. Native American history is an example of adjustment, resistance, and survival, since some traditions and customs are still practiced today, despite efforts to destroy them. In reflecting on the systematic attempt to wipe out tribal customs and spiritual beliefs, we would do well to heed the words of religious scholar Jeremiah Gutman, who observes that when foreign practices appear strange or unpopular, "A religion becomes a cult; proselytization becomes brainwashing; persuasion becomes propaganda; missionaries become subversive agents; retreats, monasteries, and convents become prisons; holy ritual becomes bizarre conduct; religious observance becomes aberrant behavior; devotion and meditation become psychopathic trances."[52] After the arriving Europeans failed to wipe out American tribes through violence and war, the Code of Indian Offenses succeeded by exterminating a significant portion of their age-old customs and beliefs.

CHAPTER 5

"DON'T TRUST THE HUNS!"

The Anti-German Hysteria of World War I

"One hundred percent" Americans did not use any language other than English, did not read foreign-language newspapers or attend foreign-language church services, were not members of any clubs adhering to German customs . . . and did not criticize the government.

—Katja Wüstenbecker, *Immigrant Entrepreneurship: German-American Business Biographies, 1720 to the Present*, 2014

During World War I, the fear and suspicion of all things German swept across North America like a blight. Anti-German sentiments rose quickly with Canada's entry into the war during August 1914, in support of the British Empire. Widespread intolerance and harassment soon spread to the United States, where German Americans and immigrants were made to feel unwelcome and their loyalties questioned. During this period, German immigration slowed to a trickle. In 1911, over 32,000 Germans poured into the country. Most were welcomed with open arms as upstanding members of their communities. By 1919, the figure was just fifty-two individuals, and each was looked upon with wariness.[1] Prejudice and mistrust ran deep. Some branches of the American Red Cross, long known for neutrality and independence, excluded volunteers with German surnames, amid rumors that infiltrators were grinding up glass

and placing it in bandages used to treat wounded soldiers.[2] The *New York Times* reported claims that bandages were being soaked in poison.[3] None of the allegations were ever proven. By 1918, the scare had reached such proportions that in New Haven, Connecticut, city cleaners were kept busy clearing the roadways of rocks, bottles, and eggs after a car drove through the streets dragging an effigy of the kaiser.[4] That same year, the syndicators of the popular comic strip *The Katzenjammer Kids*, about the misadventures of two German brothers, changed the name to *The Shenanigan Kids.* In the new strip, Hans and Fritz became the Dutch siblings Mike and Alec. The cartoon reverted back to the original characters in 1920, as hostilities began to subside.[5] Such was life in America during the Great German Scare.

From New York to California, paranoia and conspiracies were the order of the day as people saw plots where none existed and turned in their German neighbors, fearing they were enemy agents. One rumor held that German musicians were passing secret messages in their arrangements. According to another, German submarine captains were surfacing in remote locations along the coast and coming ashore to attend the theatre to spread influenza germs.[6] Perhaps the most far-fetched claims involved pigeons. When a new species was shot in Michigan, there was speculation that it was German and was being used to send coded messages between spies.[7] The discovery of an exhausted carrier pigeon on a farm near Brisbane, North Dakota, also caused alarm. On its legs were two bands with a series of numbers and letters. After examining the bird, a bank teller took it to authorities believing it was a "German agent" and the bands were coded messages.[8] It was also rumored that the Germans were melting the corpses of soldiers taken from the battlefield to make soap, candles, and explosives. This story was later revealed to have been an Allied fabrication.[9]

Tales of dubious German atrocities and inhumanity highlighted the ruthless nature of the enemy in order to whip up public hysteria by demonizing Germans as an evil, warlike race. This created problems for

scholars who had previously written that the early American pioneers were descendants of ancient Germanic tribes. History was hastily rewritten to include the theory that most of the original inhabitants of Germany had been killed off by Asiatic barbarians.[10] The government Committee on Public Information played a major role in stifling voices of dissent and rallying public opinion behind the war effort. A nationwide poster campaign portrayed Germans as thugs and beasts. One depicted an attractive woman being carried off by a demented apelike figure wearing a German helmet—the caption reading: "Destroy this Mad Brute—Enlist!" Another showed a German soldier impaling a baby with his bayonet.[11] During the war, the American Defense Society was influential in portraying Germans as an evil, vicious race. Led by its honorary president, Theodore Roosevelt, one of its publications described Germany as "the most treacherous, brutal and loathsome nation on earth. . . . The sound of the German language . . . reminds us of the murder of a million helpless old men, women, and children; [and the] driving of about 100,000 young French, Belgian, and Polish women into compulsory prostitution."[12]

In Canada, there were fears of a surprise attack from German Americans loyal to the kaiser, who were supposedly training on the northern border of Western New York to stage raids or a full-scale invasion. The worst offender in spreading these tales was Sir Courtney Bennett, a British diplomat stationed in New York City. Bennett had a propensity for making sensational statements. In early 1915, he made the dramatic claim that as many as eighty thousand German loyalists were secretly drilling near Buffalo and Niagara Falls, New York, for an invasion. Other rumors held that a five-thousand-man German militia was operating in Chicago, and a force of eight thousand had formed in Boston. Canadian Police Commissioner Percy Sherwood was worried enough to send agents across the border to infiltrate areas where there were large concentrations of German Americans. After visiting bars and clubs in the hope of uncovering subversives, they could find no evidence of a plot to attack Canada or any attempt to recruit volunteers for an invasion.[13] Anti-German feelings reached such

levels that one historian would later observe that "there was hardly a major fire, explosion, or industrial accident which was not attributed to enemy sabotage," and further investigation "invariably led elsewhere."[14] While there were mysterious fires, explosions, and equipment failures during the war in both Canada and the United States, it is difficult to know which were sabotage. The small number of confirmed incidents were more of a nuisance than a serious threat to the security of either nation.

Attempts to disrupt the war effort in both countries were often so amateurish as to border on the comical. In late 1914, the German Foreign Office received intelligence that Japan was deploying troops to Vancouver, so a scheme was hatched to blow up several bridges of the Canadian Pacific Railroad.[15] After learning that the report was untrue, the plan was canceled. The ringleader of the bridge plot, an agent identified only as Captain Böhm, was never informed of the aborted mission and went ahead with the operation to cross into Canada from Maine. Just before they were to leave, seven of his eight recruits backed out at the last minute, so the mission was aborted. The eighth conspirator, a bungling German army reservist named Werner von Horn, had the easiest task: blow up the Vanceboro Bridge just over the Maine border, for which the German government paid him the hefty sum of $700.[16] Thoroughly inept, von Horn arrived late to the rendezvous point, oblivious to the change in plans. Confident of fulfilling his destiny, he and an Irish companion set out to cross the border in frigid temperatures during a snowstorm. Before long, the Irishman got lost, leaving von Horn on his own. He eventually found the bridge, and, in the early-morning hours of February 2, set off several sticks of dynamite before crossing back over the border and into the small town of Vanceboro, Maine, where residents were on alert after having been awakened by the explosion.[17] By daybreak, von Horn was under arrest. It was not difficult to identify the guilty party, as he "was carrying a supply of dynamite and detonators, and spoke poor English with a heavy German accent."[18] For all of von Horn's efforts, he had managed to delay bridge traffic by six hours, and the structure was completely repaired within two days.[19] To describe von Horn's mission as a failure would be an understatement. The

German counsel in New York observed that newspaper publicity surrounding the failed attempt to blow up the bridge only fueled anti-German hostility in America. Von Horn was eventually sentenced to eighteen months in jail and was fined $1,000. But his ineptitude did not end there. He had a propensity to talk too much and claimed to be an officer in the Prussian military. This resulted in his being treated as a prisoner of war; and, in late 1919, he was extradited to Canada and given a ten-year prison term. After concerns had been raised over his mental health, he was deported to Germany in August 1921. British Canadian historian Martin Kitchen writes that while there were several other attempts by Germans to sabotage the Canadian war effort, "they were so unsuccessful that the Canadian authorities were not aware of them."[20] It was a similar story in the United States.

US WAR HYSTERIA RISES AS THE *LUSITANIA* SINKS

The scare over the loyalty of persons of German heritage living in North America intensified on the afternoon of May 7, 1915, when a torpedo fired from a German U-boat lying in wait off the Irish coast slammed into the ocean liner *Lusitania*, killing 1,198 passengers and crew, including 128 Americans.[21] The incident fueled outrage and was widely condemned as a cowardly and ruthless attack on innocent civilians. In reality, the German government had warned of the danger the very day the vessel left Pier Fifty-Four in New York City bound for Liverpool. The German embassy placed ads in several major New York newspapers appearing near notices of the *Lusitania*'s planned voyage, stating that Germany and Great Britain were at war, and they could not guarantee safe passage. It urged passengers to reconsider boarding. The Germans also maintained that the ship had been carrying munitions for the war, a claim supported by recent archeological surveys of the vessel that identified a cache of Remington .303-caliber bullets—the same type used by the British in the war.[22] The anti-German backlash was immediate and swift.

While the overwhelming number of Americans of German heritage were loyal citizens, they were soon widely referred to as "Huns" and "hyphenated Americans" who were looked down upon and viewed with suspicion. As attorney Charles Nagel remarked during the scare: "I do not believe that at this stage any value would be attached to an expression from a citizen of German name."[23] As a result, in the first postwar census taken in 1920, about 900,000 German-born Americans "vanished" by either claiming to have been born in the United States or assuming a different ethnicity.[24] As in Canada, the US government would eventually intern German Americans suspected of disloyalty—about four thousand. Following the cue of their northern neighbors, there were soon calls to rename everything from Germanic-sounding streets and schools to food. A public campaign was mounted to change "sauerkraut" to "Liberty Cabbage."[25] But the hysteria did not end there. Restaurants changed the name of hamburgers to "Liberty Burgers," meatloaf was referred to as "Salisbury Steak" (after a British Lord), while frankfurters and wieners, named after Germanic cities, became known as "hot dogs"—a name that stuck.[26] Luckily, Limburger cheese was given a last-minute reprieve when it was found to have been of Belgian origin. Diseases were not even spared, as some people began referring to Rubella or German measles as "liberty measles."[27] There was even a report in *Life* magazine of people euthanizing dachshunds.[28] In Cincinnati, Ohio, Berlin Street was rechristened Woodrow Street, after President Wilson, while German Street became English Street.[29] In St. Louis, the Kaiser-Huhn Grocery had its delivery wagons pelted with stones. It soon became the Pioneer Grocery Company. In the suburb of St. Charles, the German Evangelical St. John's Church decided in the interests of self-preservation to remove the word *German* from its name. In Chicago, the directors of the Kaiser Friedrich Mutual Aid Society, named after the former German emperor Friedrich III, raised eyebrows when it tried to mask its Germanic origins by becoming the George Washington Benevolent Aid Society. Many residents went so far as to take anglicized names: Müller became

Miller; Schmidt became Smith; and Oachs was changed to Oaks.[30] No German American was above suspicion. Even major league baseball players changed their names to remove any hint of disloyalty. Cleveland Indians pitcher Fritz Coumbe became "Freddie," while Cincinnati Reds third baseman Heinie Groh began calling himself "Henry."[31] When John Fluhrer debuted for the Chicago Cubs in 1915, he went by the British-sounding "William Morris." If the name change was intended to ward off questions of loyalty after his newfound fame, he need not have bothered. His major league career consisted of just six at-bats.[32] Several American towns and cities had the unfortunate distinction of bearing the name of Germany's capital. As a result, Berlin, California, was renamed Genevra; Berlin, Iowa, was re-christened Lincoln; while Berlin, Michigan, became Marne. A number of states had their own Germantown. In Texas, it became Schroeder, to honor Paul Schroeder, the first resident of the community to die in the war; while Germantown, Nebraska, was changed to Garland; and Germantown, Indiana, was renamed Pershing, after General John "Black Jack" Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Force on the Western Front.[33] Ironically, his father was of German descent, and the family name was anglicized from Pfoerschin.[34]

There were 10 million German Americans in 1910; about 20 percent were foreign-born.[35] In 1915, one in four high school students studied German; by the end of the war, it was a mere 1 percent.[36] Historian Paul Finkelman observes that during the war, there was a common belief that language was organic to the soul. Hence, if you spoke German, you would start to think like a German, and "you would become a totalitarian in favor of the kaiser."[37] Today, the idea would seem ridiculous. It was a similar picture with German-language newspapers, many of which were forced to survive by unofficially becoming part of the government's propaganda campaign. In Texas, papers that were once vigorously pro-German were suddenly urging their readers to "Buy Liberty Bonds," while the editorial pages of many of these publications carried images of the American flag.[38] In Pennsylvania, the Pittsburgh *Volksblatt und Freiheits-*

freund went to extreme lengths to prove its loyalty, such as publishing images of a bloodied dog with a German emblem, attacking a mother and child.[39] The German press was under careful scrutiny, and by October 1917, Congress passed a law requiring foreign-language papers to provide an English translation of war-related articles and give them to the local postmaster before they were allowed to be mailed. By the end of the war, the number of German-language newspapers had halved, as many businesses withheld their advertising.[40] The German press was in an impossible situation. Historian Alexander Waldenrath observes that "papers were suspect even when they supported the American cause. Consequently, advertising fell off sharply as did circulation. The legislation of 1917 which required translations of the papers to be filed and permits for publication to be secured added heavily to the publisher's burdens."[41]

"SPEAK OF THE DEVIL AND HE IS BOUND TO APPEAR"[42]

Politicians helped to fan the flames of hysteria as social paranoia reached the highest levels of government. While emphasizing that America was at war with the German government, not German Americans, President Woodrow Wilson cultivated a fear of those very people. On June 14, 1917—Flag Day—he issued an ominous warning to Congress that disloyal German Americans "filled our unsuspecting communities with vicious spies and conspirators and sought to corrupt the opinion of our people in their own behalf."[43] Spurred on by fear-mongering politicians and alarmist press reports, citizens were urged to do their patriotic duty by spying on their neighbors. Worried over the government's ability to combat the threat of so many German spies and subversives, Attorney General Thomas Gregory approved a plan to use volunteers to gather information on anyone of German heritage living in the country, especially immigrants. The organization became known as the American Protection League, and it was billed as a group of amateur sleuths who investigated the actions of possible German subversives in their local communities. In reality, it was a hodgepodge of wannabe police officers and private investigators. Members were given a policelike badge identifying them as a "Secret Service" agent of the American government. At one point, their ranks swelled to an astounding 260,000 members.[44] With so many eyes and ears on the lookout for spies, they were soon found to be lurking everywhere. America's ambassador to Germany, James Gerard, proclaimed that "the time has come when every citizen must declare himself American—or traitor!"[45] This "You're either with us or against us" attitude was reflected in the actions of Missouri Governor Frederick Gardner, who declared in April 1918: "A pro-German is no better than a spy." His inflated rhetoric and bombastic warnings are no more evident than in his claim that any pro-German found in Missouri would face a firing squad.[46] During the war, the term "100 percent American" became a popular battle cry among super-patriots on the home front.

Spurred on by groups such as the Anti-German League, there were widespread attempts to ban or burn both books published in German and English works suspected of being subversive and a threat to the nation's youth. One League pamphlet proclaimed: "Any language which produces a people of ruthless conquestadors [*sic*] such as now exist in Germany, is not a fit language to teach clean and pure American boys and girls."[47] In true, exaggerated moral-panic fashion, it also claimed that Germany was "the most treacherous, brutal and loathsome nation on earth."[48] One educator even asserted that the German language was phonetically difficult to tolerate due to its "unrefined," "uncivilized," and "animalistic" nature. In arguing that German should not be taught in American schools, one American educator claimed that the German philosophy "prides itself in its inhumanity [that] murders children, rapes women, and mutilates the bodies of innocent men."[49] Across the country, organizations controlling local libraries generated lists of unacceptable books that were taken off the shelves and either put in storage or destroyed in rallies culminating in public burnings. In Cincinnati, Ohio, the trustees of the city library voted

to remove all 10,000 books written in German. It issued a statement supporting the decision, which read: "English is the language which must become universal in the United States, and the Library should be one of the instruments through which this is to be accomplished." Fortunately, the books escaped the bonfire and were stored in the basement.[50]

Intolerance reared its ugly head in the form of federal and state laws quashing anyone sympathizing with Germany or dissenting against the war, as the government ran roughshod over the First Amendment "guaranteeing" freedom of speech. Passage of the Espionage Act of June 1917 imposed fines and prison terms for engaging in antiwar activities. The following May, the Sedition Act set harsh penalties for anyone found guilty of using "disloyal, profane . . . or abusive language," including insults to the government, the flag, the Constitution, or the military. At least 1,500 people were arrested under these laws as "troublemakers" and dissenters opposing the war.[51] One of the targets of these laws were socialists, who often claimed that the real reason for the war was to boost Wall Street. When New York journalist and prominent socialist Rose Stokes charged that the government was profiteering from the war, she was sentenced to ten years in prison. When the head of the American Socialist Party, Eugene Debs, made similar comments, he was also given ten years. In Texas, the *San Antonio Inquirer* published a letter to the editor criticizing the treatment of black soldiers who had engaged in a violent mutiny in Houston; its editor, G. W. Bouldin, spent the next two years in prison under the Espionage Act. Hysteria began to die down after the war, and Stokes was freed in 1920 when a federal court overturned her conviction, while Debs was pardoned in 1921.[52] Members of pacifist religious groups were also arrested under the new laws because they were viewed with suspicion for their failure to support the war effort; silence and neutrality were often equated with being pro-German.[53] Canada snapped out of the anti-German spell before America. In May 1917, the United States passed the Selective Service Act and tried to draft a variety of pacifist groups. As a result, over 1,500 members of the Mennonites, Hutterites, and Amish

sects fled north. The Canadian government aided in their resettlement and even provided them with tracts of farmland. In a similar vein, while both Canada and the United States are experiencing the Islamic refugee panic, Canada has grown more accepting and has agreed to take in many refugees fleeing over its southern border.[54]

Some laws were more symbolic than substantive, like attempts to ban the teaching of the German language in schools. By summer 1918, nearly half of all states had banned or restricted the use of German. Some state legislators went to extremes to counter the threat. In South Dakota, the government's Council of Defense not only ordered a halt to German being taught in schools but also prohibited the speaking of German in telephone conversations.[55] On May 23, 1918, Iowa Governor William Harding signed a proclamation that English must be spoken in public places, prefacing with the extraordinary claim that his decision was *not* in violation of American's right to free speech![56] When the Reverend Henry Prekel of the Immanuel Lutheran Church defied the order, preaching half of his sermons in German, state agents turned up. He soon agreed to comply after he was "generously" allowed to repeat the gospel in German during an "after-meeting." The ban presented a dilemma for one Lutheran pastor in Alta, Iowa, who was not fluent in English. When he refused to take a leave of absence to study English, he was summoned before a military board, after which he promised to behave.[57] As for Governor Harding's call for banning all languages but English, he made the unsubstantiated claim that German "propaganda and plots against the federal government were spread through Iowa by the use of all foreign languages."[58] Despite these hostile sentiments toward the German language, within a decade of the war's end, it was once again being taught in schools across the nation. With hysteria clouding their judgment, it is remarkable to think that many American school boards feared that the teaching of German could undermine American values. It is absurd to think that speaking a foreign language in school somehow made a person less patriotic.[59] Nonetheless, after the war, many American class-

rooms would again hear the echo of German words, helped by a 1923 US Supreme Court ruling that teaching and learning a foreign language in private and religious schools were protected under the Constitution.[60]

During the scare, residents throughout the country were accused of disloyalty and subjected to harassment based on actions that had little or no legal basis. In Indiana, the alleged crimes of local German Americans included failing to buy Liberty Bonds, displaying the kaiser's picture, failure to salute the flag, calling President Wilson a warmonger, "or uttering any sentiment objected to by whatever patriotic ears might overhear the remark."[61] Those deemed to have been disloyal were sometimes forced to kiss the American flag or sing the national anthem. Some groups used the groundswell of anti-German sentiment to further their agendas. The Anti-Saloon League, an advocate for the prohibition on alcohol consumption, expressed concerns that German brewers based in the United States were funneling their profits back home. Hence, they could make the case that supporters of prohibition were aiding the war effort. This state of affairs prompted one Kansas newspaper to assert: "The two great menaces in the world today are German militarism in Europe and German brewerism in America."[62]

The press further raised fears and inflamed passions. In the lead-up to America's entry into the Great War, the *Washington Post* published no less than thirty articles on the internal threat from spies and saboteurs. One sensational headline proclaimed: "100,000 Spies in Country." The *New York Tribune* also contributed to the dark mood with the scare headline: "Spies Are Everywhere! They Occupy Hundreds of Observation Posts . . . They Are in All the Drug and Chemical Laboratories."[63] Hollywood played a role in the scare as a series of silent films appeared highlighting the dangers posed by German spies and infiltrators, who seemed to be lurking everywhere. Fraser Sherman has documented the surge in these films during the war. Notable pictures in the genre include *Fair Pretender* (1915), involving stenographer Madge Kennedy, who stumbles upon a German spy nest. That same year, *Her Country First* was released,

in which the daughter of a munitions maker, Vivian Martin, suspects that their butler is a German spy. She eventually learns that everyone on their staff is a spy—with one exception: the butler, who turns out to be an undercover government agent![64] Just as contemporary films are filled with Communists and Muslim evildoers, Sherman found that during this period, Germans were the bad guys. As a 1919 article in *Variety* observed," the villain has to be a German spy—the audience wouldn't feel at home if they were confronted with a villain of any other variety."[65]

Another genre of motion pictures was that of the invasion scare, which contributed to fears of a likely, if not imminent, German attack on the continental United States. This notion was supported by many books and magazine articles depicting the threat. Eric Van Schaack has documented the many films that led to this "new view of reality, an America threatened by a ruthless invader intent on the destruction of all that Americans held dear" and "whipped up the public fear of the brutal 'Hun.'"[66] During the summer of 1915, the patriotic film *The Battle Cry of Peace* was released about a group of enemy agents who work with pacifists to cut defense spending. They then launch a full-scale attack on the country. This film was based on the book *Defenseless America* by Hudson Maxim, who made alarmist claims that America was weak and ill-prepared to protect itself from foreign invaders whom he claimed could land hundreds of thousands of men on American soil within a few weeks.[67] After America had entered World War I in May 1917, the film was reissued under the title *Battle Cry of War*.[68] A second invasion film was also released in 1915: *The Nation's Peril*. Its plot centers around the character Ruth Lyons, the peace-loving granddaughter of a Navy admiral who opposes war, and her efforts to stop the development of a powerful American secret weapon—the aerial torpedo, a remote-controlled flying bomb. She unwittingly gives the plans to a man who turns out to be a foreign spy, endangering the country. While the film has a happy ending, its theme is that America must maintain a strong military and be prepared for war. To underscore the threat, it includes appearances by the Secretary of the Navy and two admirals.[69] In 1916, there were three more

invasion pictures: *The Flying Torpedo*, *The Fall of a Nation*, and *America Unprepared*, followed by *Zeppelin Attack on New York* (1917), *Womanhood, the Glory of the Nation* (1917), and *The Kaiser, the Beast of Berlin* (1918). During the war years, the Hollywood film industry, not the government, promoted invasion fears. Big government-sponsored feature films of the period—*America's Answer*, *Under Four Flags*, and *Pershing's Crusaders*—never even hinted at the possibility of a German invasion. Their purpose was to reassure the public and show that the American military was strong.[70] Invasion literature was also popular in the early twentieth century, much of which was anti-German. Many books gained wide exposure due to their tie-ins with popular films, such as Maxim's *Defenseless America*. Another book that created fear over a possible German invasion was *America Fallen! The Sequel to the European War* (1915). In it, Germany launches a successful invasion of an ill-prepared America and agrees to withdraw only after the government pays $12 billion. The book was viewed seriously because the author was the prestigious J. Bernard Walker, editor of *Scientific American*.

VIGILANTE JUSTICE

Rumors of German spies and saboteurs abounded. In Muenster, Texas, there were claims that German Americans had secretly stockpiled an arsenal of rifles and ammunition in the cellar of the Sacred Heart Church. By some accounts, it was to be used in an uprising. Another story held that they were to be sent to Germany to help in the war effort. Authorities scoured the church but turned up nothing.[71] There was widespread persecution and harassment of Americans of German ancestry. In many places local citizens either took the law into their own hands or formed vigilante groups, frustrated at the perceived inaction by law enforcement. In East Alton, Illinois, a German American merchant suspected of being disloyal was forced to kiss the American flag and threatened with hanging. Local

police and journalists often turned a blind eye at attempts to dispense small-town justice to those deemed to have German sympathies. In March 1918, an observer in the Midwest wrote: "All over this part of the country men are being tarred and feathered and some are being lynched. . . . These cases do not get into the newspapers nor is an effort ever made to punish the individuals concerned. In fact, as a rule, it has the complete backing of public opinion."[72] Some German Americans were harassed or beaten for not giving enough to war-bond drives.[73]

The most extreme instances of anti-German vigilantism took place in Illinois and Texas. The former case involved German-born coal miner Robert Prager, a baker by trade, who was lynched from a tree in Collinsville, Illinois, after being accused of making disloyal remarks and spying. The incident happened on April 4, 1918. The local mayor and police looked on passively as the events unfolded, and Prager was led by an alcohol-fueled mob to the outskirts of town and hanged from a hackberry tree shortly after midnight. His last request was for his body to be draped in an American flag before burial.[74] It is a testament to the deep feelings of German phobia at the time that a jury acquitted every one of the eleven men who were tried for his murder.[75] After the verdict, there was little remorse. Even the editor of the local newspaper remained stubbornly defiant: "The city does not miss him. The lesson of his death has had a wholesome effect on the Germanists of Collinsville and the rest of the nation."[76] An equally abhorrent episode occurred in Bastrop County, Texas. According to court records at the state archives, a deputy sheriff led a group of vigilantes who tracked down a local farmer who had been uncooperative in the local Liberty Bond fund drive. "On catching up with his mule-drawn wagon, the deputy sheriff held the farmer with one hand while fatally shooting him with the other." They then beat the victim's widow before escorting her home at gunpoint. The local German newspaper, the *Giddings Deutsches Volksblatt*, ironically noted that two of the participants were German Texans.[77] For those accused of disloyalty, it was difficult to regain their reputation. Although not impossible, it took a

concerted effort on the part of local residents and government officials to rescue their standing. In 1917, several Gainesville residents accused Marie Deitz of Cooke County, Florida, of committing acts and making statements "that would indicate that she was not loyal to our government." A local official published an article in the local paper affirming that Ms. Deitz was a good citizen, noting that the false accusations were made in part due to her fluency in German. At the end of the article were no less than twenty-eight signatures of her co-workers, vouching for her patriotism.[78]

RUMORS

In the South, long-standing fears of a black revolt merged with rumors of German subversives to create a hybrid narrative: African Americans were being manipulated by German agents to create chaos. Fears of a black uprising flared in 1917. The signs were everywhere. In Greensboro, Tennessee, a citizen wrote an urgent letter to the Justice Department noting that some blacks in the town had refused to yield to whites while walking on the sidewalk. Their actions were interpreted as a blatant display of disloyalty encouraged by outside agitators.[79] During April, the *Tampa Morning Tribune* reported that agents loyal to the kaiser were fanning out throughout the South to form an alliance with blacks. When rumors spread across Bradford County, Florida, that blacks were being offered "political and social equality" in exchange for their aid, police took the stories seriously enough to investigate. In response, armed guards were sent to patrol the Tampa water reservoirs and electricity plant amid "rumors that the Germans had hired Negroes to blow up the plant and poison the water supply."[80] Other Florida papers fueled the social paranoia and kept the population on the lookout for spies. The St. Andrews *Bay News* was one of the worst offenders at fearmongering. While acknowledging that there were many loyal German Americans, it cautioned in April 1917 that some "are but enemies in disguise, who are

plotting against us, and even now are committing acts of treason."[81] It asked all patriotic Americans to "search out" these evildoers and report them. With such exhortations, it should come as no surprise that Floridians began turning in neighbors whom they believed were spies. A man in Plant City was arrested, "his baggage searched for vials of typhoid and yellow fever germs which, according to rumor, were to be deposited in the county water supply." That same month, a piano teacher at Florida Female College was fired for un-American acts. Miss Felma Bjerge had reportedly refused to take down a German flag and a picture of the kaiser from her studio. Because Florida is a peninsula with long stretches of coastline, state residents felt vulnerable to an invasion by sea; these fears were reflected in unverified stories of mysterious vessels spotted offshore.[82] On July 21, 1918, anti-German tensions spiked across the country after a German U-boat appeared off the coast of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, and without warning opened fire on a tugboat, the *Perth Amboy*, which was towing several barges. While the vessel sustained heavy damage, there were no fatalities. A few stray shells cratered a marsh near the beach at the town of Orleans, making it the first and only time during the war that any part of the continental United States had been shelled by an enemy. The incident triggered a spate of phantom Zeppelin sightings, while rumors of German plots abounded, including claims that an unfamiliar species of pigeon was spotted flying secret messages over the Canadian border from German agents in the United States.[83]

THE WAR ON GERMAN MUSIC

Moves to ban music and plays of Germanic origin show the depth of fear and ill-feeling during the war. More symbol than substance, these bans had little effect on the war itself. Hostilities even extended to conductors and musicians. Of the nine conductors of major symphony orchestras with German roots, two were considered such threats that they were placed in

internment camps: Ernst Kunwald of the Cincinnati Symphony, and Karl Muck of the Boston Symphony. One of the more fortunate conductors was Alfred Hertz, who managed to survive a smear campaign that bordered on the ridiculous. In 1915, the struggling San Francisco Orchestra had hired the accomplished German conductor who had been with the esteemed New York Metropolitan Opera House since 1902. Hertz had the unfortunate distinction of speaking with a thick accent, which did not endear him to some music fans. Before long, residents sent letters to the Justice Department alleging that he was part of a spy ring. Many of the charges made against him were outlandish, such as claims that he had purchased German—not American—butter at a local grocery store, and that he had once left the stage while the orchestra was playing "The Star-Spangled Banner." Authorities could find no evidence to substantiate these claims, and he continued in his post until gaining citizenship in 1917.[84] Other German conductors were not as lucky.

With the declaration of war in 1917, the Boston Symphony, which was composed of no less than nine Germans, was suddenly under great scrutiny. None of its members were scrutinized more than its accomplished conductor, Karl Muck. A Swiss national, Muck was known for his conducting of German arrangements, and he held an honorary German passport. It did not help matters that due to his fame, it had been signed by the kaiser himself. His personality was described as "blunt and tactless," and many of his friends were ardent supporters of the kaiser.[85] A series of unfortunate events would transpire that would result in his losing his job and being imprisoned. One incident involved his summer rental cottage on the Maine coast at Seal Harbor, which was found to have a disassembled radio transmitter. Boston District Attorney Thomas Boynton became concerned that Muck may have been attempting to contact German submarines. In reality, the previous tenant had been a "wireless nut." As a result, Muck was given a stern warning and reminded that German nationals were not allowed to reside or even visit the Maine coast.[86]

The perception of Muck as disloyal and untrustworthy soon grew. It began innocently enough, with a scheduled concert in Providence, Rhode Island, on October 30, 1917. In the lead-up to the appearance, the Boston Symphony had received a telegram from several local civic and patriotic organizations to open the event with the playing of "The Star-Spangled Banner." At the time, it was a common practice for most orchestras to play the composition. The orchestra's manager, Charles Ellis, passed on the request to the orchestra founder, Major Henry Higginson, a stubborn figure who refused to tolerate outside interference. "Does the public think that the symphony orchestra is a military band? No: It is a classical musical organization. To ask us to play *The Star Spangled Banner* is embarrassing. It is almost an insult," Higginson quipped.[87] The trouble was, no one had passed the request onto Muck, who was oblivious to it and was flabbergasted when he first learned about it while riding the train back to Boston. He said that he would have happily obliged the request as a goodwill gesture. Muck would be haunted by the incident for the rest of his life.

The next day, newspapers published a torrent of criticism directed at Muck for his supposed refusal to play the anthem. Newspapers were deluged with angry letters. Many political figures soon entered the fray, including former president Teddy Roosevelt, who declared: "Any man who refuses to play the Star-Spangled in this time of national crisis, should be forced to pack up and return to the country he came from."[88] In Baltimore, where the symphony was scheduled to play, former Maryland Governor Edwin Warfield addressed a rally held to protest the composer's disloyalty, during which could be heard shouts of "Kill Muck! Kill Muck!"[89] Warfield whipped up the crowd and vowed to lead a riot against the concert if it went ahead as planned. He proclaimed: "I told the Police Board members that this man would not be allowed to insult the people of the birthplace of the 'Star-Spangled Banner.' . . . I would gladly lead the mob to prevent the insult to my country and my flag."[90]

A later concert presided over by Muck went ahead at Carnegie Hall, only with a heavy police presence. Public outcry continued to dog Muck

for his perceived disloyalty, culminating in his arrest on the night of March 25, 1918. When federal agents combed through his residence, they found nothing that would directly tie him to nefarious activities or indicate disloyalty, but they did find a horde of letters from a love-smitten twenty-year-old socialite from Boston, an aspiring singer named Rosamond Young. A search of her safety deposit box uncovered a series of letters from Muck in which he expressed anti-American sentiments and German sympathies. While he was clearly no spy, he was a German sympathizer who had made insulting comments about his host country. Confronted with the letters, Muck refused to discuss their contents because they were a personal matter involving a lady. He was eventually indicted for the official crime of having violated US postal laws and deemed a potentially dangerous enemy alien. On April 6, he was sent to Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, where he spent the rest of the war as prisoner number 1357. When the war ended, he was shipped back to Germany in August 1919.[91] That November, the *Boston Post* published a sensational twelve-part series revealing the contents of Muck's letters, in a manner that was intended to enrage patriotic readers. His frustration and anger at America was evident, yet there was no direct evidence that he had been disloyal. On the contrary, in one letter he had stated: "I am doing only my duty and nothing against the holy (even Satan was once holy) laws of the so-called U.S.A."[92] The exposé painted Muck as a cunning, ungrateful spy who went around deflowering young women. Part of the outrage with Muck centered on his perceived immorality: a fifty-eight-year-old man having an affair with a twenty-year-old woman.

Even after the war ended and the peace treaty with Germany was signed, throughout 1919, pressure against German music continued. In January, there were indications that the public mood was beginning to thaw, as several excerpts of Wagnerian music were included in programs conducted by the New York Philharmonic. While some letters of protest were received and four plainclothes police officers were stationed in the hall as a precaution, there were no major incidents. The gradual reincor-

poration of Germanic music may have taken place without much hubbub, if not for the return of a large number of servicemen who began to disembark in New York City in large numbers during this time. In March, when New York's Lexington Avenue Theater announced plans for several German operettas, patriotic groups like the National Security League and the American Defense Society expressed their usual disapproval, but what could not be ignored was the surge in troops throughout the city. The Navy Club on Fifth Avenue quickly drew up a petition calling for a halt to proceedings, gathered two thousand signatures, and sent a delegation to meet with Mayor John Hylan. It read in part: "We feel that such an undertaking at this time is insulting to our patriotism and to the memory of the brave boys who have given their lives that the world shall be free from German influence."[93] The concerts were postponed indefinitely, amid fears of a full-scale riot. Five hundred sailors marched down Lexington Avenue in a victory parade.

With the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919, opposition to the playing of German music and the use of Germanic conductors began to wane. On July 3, a *New York Times* editorial called for an end to the witch-hunt: "The crisis is passed now and well passed, and German music can again delight the ear without offending the sensibilities that lie deeper."[94] In October, the Lexington Theater attempted another program with German music, under the "Star Opera Company." There was again immediate opposition by many military organizations. While Mayor Hylan considered closing down the performance, he was unsure of his legal standing and instead sent over two hundred police to guard the theatre and ensure order. The mayor shut the opera down the next day, but they were soon saved by a temporary court injunction, and performances resumed on October 23.[95] By January 1920, opposition to German music and composers subsided. In early January, even the American Legion, heretofore the archenemy of all things Germanic, announced that it was time for a change of heart: "Good music, whether it be by Wagner, Strauss, or Sousa, cannot and should not be killed, and

any attempt to suppress it is bound to fail." The organization officially endorsed German opera, "where the spirit, the language and the personnel are truly American."[96]

ISLAMOPHOBIA: THE GERMAN SCARE IN MODERN CULTURAL GUISE

It is remarkable to think that many Americans once thought that listening to German music and learning German in school posed a threat to the United States by corrupting the morals of our youth. In the calm light of day, more than a century removed from the hysteria of World War I, even the most ardent conservative would likely agree that the reaction was extreme and out of proportion to the reality. The exaggerated threat was a tell-tale sign of a social panic. Yet Germanophobia and kindred scares involving periods of intense intolerance of ethnic groups are alive and well. In December 2015, Virginia high school teacher Cheryl LaPorte was overseeing a class on world geography and Islamic culture when she asked her students to practice calligraphy by copying a single sentence in Arabic from the Qur'an. The assignment created such a public furor and deluge of hate mail that the school closed over safety concerns. The Associated Press reported that Riverheads High School received "tens of thousands of e-mails and Facebook posts" from angry citizens, spurred on by a national conservative radio host who highlighted the incident.[97] The school's holiday concert had to be canceled, along with several sporting events. LaPorte, who is not Islamic, asked the students to write a common Muslim prayer—the *shahada*, which proclaims: "There is no god but Allah. Muhammad is the messenger of God." She gave the students the script in Arabic and did not offer a translation—nor were students asked to translate or recite the prayer. The focus of the lesson was not on religion but on the complexity of Arab calligraphy. It is difficult to imagine the same reaction if she had asked them to write a passage in Hebrew letters about Moses from the Torah. As the editorial board of

one newspaper retorted: "And the charge that copying an untranslated passage of calligraphy constitutes 'indoctrination' into Islam is as ludicrous as suggesting that American students are 'indoctrinated' by being taught to write words about democracy in French class."[98] It is no small irony that the school closed for fears of safety—fear not of Muslims but after threats of violence and intimidation by American citizens espousing Christian values.

While the German Scare happened over a century ago, there are many parallels with today. Just like members of the Anti-German League in the United States and Canada worked to rid their countries of German influence, anti-Muslim organizations have popped up like mushrooms across North America and Europe today. In Germany, one of the largest is PEGIDA—Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West. In the United Kingdom, the English Defense League openly advocates against Muslims. In the United States, SIOA—Stop Islamization of America—is one of over a dozen active anti-Muslim hate groups. Just as mysterious fires and industrial accidents were once blamed on the Germans, anything that remotely looks like a terrorist attack is now attributed to Muslims. And just as the number of confirmed acts of German sabotage and espionage were quite small, so too have been the number of Islamist terror attacks in the West. Several so-called terror attacks were later determined to have been the result of mental illness or anger over a work dispute. In 2015, there were 372 mass shootings in America, resulting in 475 deaths. The vast majority of the gunmen were not Muslims.[99] While mass shootings in the United States are a major problem, it is not necessarily a Muslim issue. And just as German Americans were discriminated against and harassed due to their ancestry, many Muslims have experienced verbal harassment and are looked upon as oppressed. Having an Arab-sounding name does not help in applying for jobs, just like many German Americans sought the extreme measure of changing their names in the hope of avoiding discrimination and finding work.

The most remarkable aspect of the German Scare was not its violence, its widespread nature, or even the depth of hostility, but how quickly Americans were able to accept Germans as fellow citizens afterward. Once the fear began to subside and the threat appeared to have passed, the fog of war quickly dissipated, as if a spell had been broken. But for the many German Americans who had to endure this dark chapter in our history, it would take far longer to forgive and forget. For those who changed their names, the scare left a permanent mark on their very identities: a constant reminder of the intolerance of a bygone era, and the lengths that citizens were willing to go to protect themselves and their families.

CHAPTER 6

"BEWARE THE YELLOW PERIL"

The Japanese American Scare

No matter what label is used, the United States government, backed by its citizens, identified one group by race, deemed them dangerous, and ordered them imprisoned without the benefit of due process as defined in the United States Constitution. . . . Neither due process nor a trial were granted to the Japanese who were placed behind barbed wire.

—Jolie Kelley, "Social Forces Collide: The Japanese American Internment," 1999

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, the mass internment of Japanese Americans that followed is widely believed to have been a sudden, knee-jerk reaction to the attack. In reality, the exaggerated response was based on deeply ingrained, long-standing racist beliefs that began on the West Coast and eventually spread across the country. In the decades leading up to the war, many citizens viewed the Japanese as members of an intellectually and morally impoverished race. American military intelligence had no hard evidence to indicate that people of Japanese ancestry ever posed a threat to the nation's security. The United States was also at war with Italy and Germany, yet those of Italian and German ethnicity were not interred, outside of a small number of enemy combatants such as soldiers who happened to be in the country when

the war broke out. The reason for the different treatment is simple: these groups were widely thought to be part of the superior European Nordic race that looked physically similar in appearance and shared common cultural and religious traditions with much of white America. The seeds of discontent with those of Japanese heritage were sown in the late nineteenth century when Asian immigrants began flocking to the West Coast in large numbers to escape food shortages, overcrowding, and political unrest at home. Like the Chinese before them, they came with visions of a better life. Ironically, opportunities existed from the void left by the exclusion laws.[1] At the time, the average wage of a Japanese worker was just fourteen cents a day. In California, they could earn about two dollars. The Japanese newcomers took up many of the same jobs as the Chinese: working the gold mines, laying railroad track, farming, and any occupation that white Americans saw as beneath them.[2]

During much of the nineteenth century, Americans held a favorable view of Japanese immigrants. Many writers portrayed them in glowing terms, often in direct contrast to the Chinese, who had long been despised. They were viewed as cleaner, better educated, of higher intelligence, and more willing to accept Christianity and Western customs. One schoolbook from the period described them as "the most progressive" of the Mongolian racial branches.[3] In fact, early Japanese immigrants to the West Coast stayed away from the local Chinatowns, believing themselves to be a distinct and superior people who were the equals of Anglo Americans.[4] Their positive reception in California would change soon after they began arriving in large numbers.[5] It started with a trickle. By 1885, only a few hundred Japanese immigrants had come to the mainland. By 1900, the number had risen to just over 12,500.[6] With the approach of the new century, the image of Japanese migrants began to erode rapidly as West Coast journalists began depicting them as lazy, ignorant, and dirty. The once curious, exotic strangers from the Orient began to quickly turn menacing over fears that the West Coast would soon be overrun by hordes of cheap workers who would take white jobs.[7] Japanese migrants

were easy scapegoats by their dress and distinct physical features, just like the Chinese had been. They were blamed for an array of issues, ranging from crime and vice to low wages.[8] For instance, during June 1892, California union leader Denis Kearney, previously known for the slogan, "The Chinese Must Go!" turned his attention to what was considered the "Oriental menace." On June 17, the *San Francisco Examiner* reported that Kearney had "sounded his old-time slogan 'must go' at the corner of Montgomery Street and Broadway last night to a crowd of about 300 people. He is now urging a crusade against the Japanese." Kearney argued that the Japanese were so fundamentally different from Europeans that assimilation was impossible.[9] San Francisco Mayor James Phelan supported the movement, asserting that people of Chinese and Japanese descent were "not bona fide citizens."[10]

The first major protests against Japanese migration broke out in 1900 after alarming press reports from California that Congress intended to either "water down" or scrap the Chinese Exclusion Act when it came up for renewal in 1902. Suspiciously, that March, Bubonic Plague was "discovered" in the Chinatown district of San Francisco, prompting the mayor and city board to quarantine the Japanese and Chinese sections of the city—but no other locations. The "plague" crisis quickly passed after complaints from business owners that any outbreak would hurt sales and give the city a bad reputation.[11] While some cases of the plague were later identified in California during this period, it was not confined to Chinatown. Despite a complete lack of evidence, and influenced by the racism of the time, many physicians advanced the theory that the plague was spread by Asians.[12] By May 7, the San Francisco Labor Council passed a resolution to include the Japanese under the Chinese exclusion laws.[13] That same month, Stanford University sociologist Edward Ross triggered a firestorm of criticism when he stood in front of an anti-Japanese rally in San Francisco and claimed that cheap Asian labor would soon overwhelm white California. If Ross had stopped there, his speech would have sounded like many other bigoted rants of the period and likely

would have gone relatively unnoticed. But he went further, asserting that if the situation grew worse, "it'd be better for us to turn our guns on every vessel bringing Japanese to our shores rather than permit them to land."[14] He had essentially called for the murder of Japanese immigrants and was promptly fired by the university. As more immigrants poured in and were viewed as posing a threat to the white American worker, by the turn of the century, immigrants were depicted as deceitful and menacing.[15] In November 1901, with the Exclusion Act just months from expiring, the San Francisco City Council held a convention to support its renewal. They adopted a resolution recognizing the increasing numbers of Japanese immigrants who posed "a menace to the industrial interests of our people."[16] Some argued that the "Japs" posed a greater danger than the Chinese. One plucky Japanese immigrant stood outside the convention, proclaiming to anyone who would listen that it was OK to exclude Chinese, but the Japanese were a superior race.[17] The mood on the East Coast was very different because there was an overwhelming sentiment in Congress *against* excluding the Japanese, due to the low number of migrants there when compared to the West Coast, and where they were considered less of a threat to jobs and national security. The convention failed to pass its Japanese exclusion resolution.

THE INVASION SCARE

Japan's stunning defeat of Russia in 1905 made it a world power. For Americans on the West Coast, the surprise outcome of the Russo-Japanese War led to heightening fears of a Japanese invasion. That same year, the *San Francisco Chronicle* published a series of inflammatory articles about the threat from Japanese immigrants who had already "infiltrated" the country. Scare headlines included: "The Japanese Invasion—The Problem of the Hour"; "The Yellow Peril—How Japanese Crowd Out the White Race"; "Brown Men an Evil in the Public Schools"; and "Crime

and Poverty Go Hand in Hand with Asiatic Labor."[18] Historian Roger Daniels describes the *Chronicle* at the time as, "without doubt, the most influential newspaper on the whole Pacific Coast." As for the motivation, Daniels believes it was its editor John Young's long-standing worry over "the Oriental issue."[19] In March, the Labor Council of San Francisco launched a campaign to boycott any merchants or manufacturers employing Japanese workers. On May 14, labor groups from around the country sent representatives to San Francisco, where they formed what would become the Japanese Exclusion League, and, later, the Asiatic Exclusion League. Their goal was simple: encourage boycotts and lobby lawmakers to restrict Asian migration. They also wanted separate schools for Japanese and European children.[20] Such was the popularity of their message that within three years they would boast 238 branches and 100,000 members.[21] By year's end, California legislators passed a resolution containing nearly all of the *Chronicle*'s main points on stopping Asian immigration.

ANTI-JAPANESE SENTIMENTS SPREAD

Up until 1905, the Japanese exclusionist movement was mostly a California phenomenon, with the concentration of migrants on the West Coast. Anti-Asian sentiments grew as the number of Asian immigrants continued to rise.[22] In October 1906, the San Francisco School Board created a national kerfuffle after voting to separate students of Japanese descent from their white classmates. The resolution was made on racist grounds and stated that it was done "not only for the purpose of relieving the congestion at present prevailing in our schools, but . . . that our children should not be placed in any position where their youthful impressions may be affected by associations with pupils of the Mongolian race."[23] Claims about the need to relieve congestion were farcical. Of the twenty-five thousand students attending city schools, just ninety-three were Japanese, and twenty-five of

those were born in the United States.[24] The second part of the resolution, about white students being morally and intellectually polluted by their exposure to those of Mongolian descent, was blatantly racist.[25] The decision was made to appease the state's powerful labor unions and prevent Asian males from comingling with white girls, for fear that they might strike up relationships.[26] Despite stereotypes of the Japanese as lacking in moral aptitude and being prone to crime, Stanford University sociologist Walter Beach would later publish the results of a study of Asian criminal activity in California from 1900 to 1927. Most of those involved were of Japanese and Chinese descent. However, the nature of the crimes were in stark contrast to stereotypes held by many white Californians. Most offenses were traffic violations (27 percent), followed by gambling (16 percent), and intoxication (11 percent). The Japanese were found to have committed the fewest felonies of any racial group.[27] The school board withdrew its segregation order in March 1907 after President Theodore Roosevelt intervened; he promised to take action to reduce the number of Japanese laborers migrating into the country by lobbying the imperial government to restrict the flow. The two governments soon reached a series of informal agreements on the issue.[28]

Even among groups supporting Asian citizenship, there was not a widespread view that Asians were on an equal par with whites, although they were considered to be of better genetic stock than the "lower races" like the "Negro." A prominent nineteenth-century anthropologist, Daniel Brinton, asserted that the Mongolian race—that is, the Japanese and Chinese, were second only to whites, and that they could assimilate with relative ease if given the opportunity.[29] During the early 1900s, there was an attempt by pro-Japanese groups in California to view the Japanese as a distinctly separate race from the Chinese. In their attempt to gain full equality with Anglo Americans, the Japanese American Citizens League would later claim that they shared a similar Mongolian heritage with Native Americans who crossed the land bridge from Asia during the last ice age.[30]

In 1907, the National Socialist League announced its opposition to Asian immigration. While some members cited economic reasons, others were more worried about the threat posed by interbreeding and diluting the "purity" of white America.[31] One of the more curious anti-Japanese organizations at this time was the Anti-Jap Laundry League, which was created in 1908. Centered in San Francisco, its goal was to organize boycotts and pickets of Japanese-owned laundries and to intimidate customers. As a result, several laundries were driven out of business.[32] In August 1908, the issue of Japanese assimilation came to the fore as former San Francisco mayor James Phelan called on the exclusion of all Japanese from the state because they could not assimilate into white society and therefore posed a menace. During 1909, California was plagued by a wave of fear, hysteria, and prejudice that was fanned by racially charged reporting on the exclusion issue. Phelan's anti-Japanese stance led to his soaring popularity. He was soon elected US senator. During that same year, state lawmakers introduced no less than seventeen separate anti-Japanese bills, although little was accomplished because it was realized that any immigration laws would be rescinded by the federal government in Washington, DC.[33] Also in 1909, the secretary of the California Corrections Board, W. Almont Gates, gave a national address in which he made the sensational claim that after the Russo-Japanese War, a wave of former Japanese soldiers, owing their allegiance to the emperor, had migrated to the United States in search of work. He saw them as a grave risk to national security. "It would be easy to marshal an army of fifty thousand Japanese veterans at any point in California in forty-eight hours. . . . These ex-soldiers of Japan did not surrender their allegiance to their emperor. They are today as truly his subjects."[34] Gates noted that when the war with Russia had broken out, many ex-soldiers returned to their homeland to take up arms, and that they would do so against the United States.

Historian Michael Meloy observes that by 1910, "through the persistent efforts of many dedicated white Californians, Japanese-hating became a cottage industry with branches reaching into virtually every

corner of California life."[35] The movement to ban all Japanese immigration had an unlikely ally in another group that was struggling for equal rights: white women. The campaign for (white) female equality and voting rights, which gained momentum during the second half of the nineteenth century, served to heighten anti-Asian sentiments by employing racist and anti-migrant themes. One prominent suffragist, Maud Younger, complained that white women were in poor company when it came to those who were not allowed to vote: "In California every adult may vote excepting only Mongolians, Indians, idiots, insane, criminals, and women."[36] She and other feminist leaders believed that Anglo American women were inherently more worthy and capable of being given the right to vote over "inferior" people of color.

A 1920 propaganda pamphlet epitomizes the literature of the period. Produced by newspaper publisher Valentine McClatchy, it pleads for severe restrictions on Japanese immigration. He argues that their prolific ability to breed would result in America becoming a province of Japan by 2080—at which point, the number of ethnic Japanese would have reached an astounding 216 million![37] The exclusion issue had waned during the Great War, with the Japanese fighting on the side of America, but it quickly resurfaced in the early 1920s and would snowball into an unstoppable force, as a who's who of California politicians launched an all-out campaign to halt Japanese immigration. This time they would succeed, first at a state level and then nationally. In 1913, California legislators had passed the Alien Land Law, which prohibited nonresidents who were ineligible for citizenship from owning farmland. At the time, Asians who were not already citizens were barred from obtaining it. The law was a clear attempt to target Japanese migrants and limit the amount of farmland they controlled. There were also fears that Japanese farmers would soon take control of the state's food supply. In contrast, European and African immigrants could obtain citizenship and were unaffected by the law. In 1920, the land law was toughened to prevent a loophole that allowed Japanese migrants to buy farmland under the names of their

American-born children and managing the property themselves.[38] While hailed as a victory for white Californians, it was more psychological than tangible, as the net effect was to cut the percentage of Japanese producing crops from 13 to 9 percent.[39] As it happened with the Chinese, the measure was in blatant disregard of the Fourteenth Amendment, which says that "No state shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the law" regardless of race, color, or creed.[40]

Four years later, the Fourteenth Amendment would again be trampled on as Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1924. The law prohibited all Japanese immigration and limited European migration to no more than 150,000 persons per year using a quota system, which was "based on the contribution of each nationality to the overall US population in 1890, thereby preserving the racial and ethnic status quo."[41] Historian Russell Bearden writes that passage of the legislation was the culmination of a campaign replete with "dubious statistics that pointed to an 'alien invasion' of agriculture, to the 'peaceful penetration' of America by alien people and to the proliferation of 'yellow babies' in California."[42] Although the action angered the Japanese and violated a gentleman's agreement between the two countries, Congress had deemed the preservation of racial purity to have been more important than maintaining a good relationship with Japan.[43] In the lead-up to passage, the anti-Japanese propaganda campaign was in full swing and took the form of newspaper and magazine articles, books, pamphlets, speeches, and films. One of the most brazen was *Shadows of the West*, released in November 1920. The film reinforced every negative stereotype about the Japanese in America. It depicted Japanese Americans as sexual deviants, spies, wife-beaters, abductors, and would-be murderers, as well as cunning profiteers who were manipulating food prices by dumping fish and vegetables into the ocean.[44] In 1917, the Hearst Corporation had released a fifteen-part anti-Japanese serial that was to be shown in weekly installments under the title of *Patria*. It depicted a plot by Mexico and Japan to invade the southwestern United States, and contained unflattering and inflamma-

tory representations of the Japanese. The serial was so offensive that, by request of President Woodrow Wilson, it had to be reedited and toned down because the United States wanted to maintain some semblance of a relationship with its ally Japan after America entered the war that April.[45]

RACIST IDEOLOGY

During the early twentieth century, California politicians and union leaders led the charge to repel the West Coast "Asian invasion," especially the Japanese; this was a cause that was frequently bolstered on racial grounds by scientists of the day. At the time, it was widely believed that humanity was composed of several distinct races, at the top of which were the Nordic Anglo-Saxons. Such views were common in America and Europe, where one's personal qualities were thought to be fixed by heredity. Whereas today there is a consensus among scientists that nurture is the primary determinant of behavior, back then many prominent scientists believed that nature was the driving force. The Immigration Act of 1924 was driven by scientific racism, where popular opinions were presented as scientific facts. At the time the act was passed, most in Congress had accepted the view that the white Nordic race was superior to all others, and that such a position was supported by science.[46] An influential figure who promoted this view was geneticist Harry Laughlin, who was a paid advisor to the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization. He had been hired to support the committee's racist views.[47] He and other opponents of Asian immigration were quick to place their objections under the banner of science. Eugenicists of the period asserted that the genetic stock of different races could be improved through selective breeding. The eugenics movement was so influential that some leaders of the Immigration Restriction League even considered changing their name to the Eugenic Immigration League.[48] In reality, eugenics was an unproven science with unproven ideas about superior and inferior races.

A key point of contention in the immigration debate was whether members of the "lesser races," most notably Asians and Southern Europeans, were capable of blending into American society without tainting the white Nordic stock to such an extent that it would be permanently corrupted. These were the proponents of the "melting pot" theory. Opposing them were the restrictionists, exclusionists and isolationists who believed that certain migrants lacked the capacity to assimilate, based solely on their genetics. An enormously influential book at this time was *The Passing of the Great Race*, which had been published in 1916. Its author, Madison Grant, popularized the idea that the United States had been settled by the biologically superior and genetically pure Nordic race, which was thought to be under threat by "impure" immigrants.[49] At the time, the Committee on Selective Immigration supported the Immigration Act of 1924, claiming that it would keep out foreigners with "lower grades of intelligence" and who were contributing excessively "to our feeble-minded, insane, criminal and other socially inadequate classes."[50] Hitler would eventually put Grant's proposals into action by sterilizing "defectives" followed by the eventual extermination of "inferior races" such as the Jews and Roma peoples.[51]

Geneticist Laughlin claimed to have been a dispassionate scientist who considered the immigration issue to be a matter of biology rather than economics, and that he was simply following the facts. At one hearing, he said: "I am here simply as a scientific investigator to present the facts to the gentlemen of the committee, with the hope that the facts and their analysis might be of use."[52] Nothing could have been further from the truth. At the time, the influence of the environment was well-known in scientific circles.[53] Laughlin's argument was based on the controversial new field of eugenics. His first premise, that the "Nordic-Anglo-Saxon" race was inherently superior, was justified on the grounds of social Darwinism and the assumption that one's social and economic standing were a reflection of one's genetic worth. Many eugenicists supported this position by making the dubious claim that immigrant communities were notorious

for poverty, crime, illiteracy, and disease. His theory of disharmonious crossings held "that the offspring of a cross between two different strains will always be inferior to both parental strains."[54] It was these arguments that eugenicists were using to support laws aimed at putting a stop to the mixing of the races, and thus diluting the nation's so-called racial purity.

Despite the perception that what Laughlin was doing was scientifically grounded, in reality, it was speculation and a biased interpretation of the data. Laughlin had succeeded in passing off popular opinion as scientific fact.[55] It may be that leading scientists of the day were hesitant to publicly challenge such a respected scientist, given the anti-immigration mood of the times, especially as the tenor of the debate often turned ugly. It was also clear that the committee was biased against the role of the environment because most of the experts invited to testify were supporters of the Nordic superiority claim. When Representative Emanuel Celler, a pro-immigration Jew from New York, cried foul and insisted that the committee call an authority on the other side of the issue, Herbert Spencer Jennings was invited to testify. When he arrived, he was told that his testimony would be limited to only a few minutes due to the supposedly crowded schedule, and he was asked to submit a written report—a report that was highly critical of Laughlin. Celler later called the committee hearings a sham: "We have heard a great deal in the discussions of the subject of races, race types, ethnic strains, heredity . . . and so forth. What efforts were made by the committee to know something of the important phases of the subject?"[56] Instead of listening to the testimony of proponents, Celler asked why it was that prominent physical anthropologist Ales Hrdlicka of the National Museum in Washington, DC, was not called. "Dr. Hrdlicka is well known to the chairman of the committee. . . . No; the committee only wanted those who believed in 'Nordic' superiority; men who deal in buncome [*sic*]." Laughlin's flawed assertions on the need to keep out undesirable races were widely publicized after the measure was enacted on May 26, 1924. For instance, on June 1, the *New York Times* reported that Laughlin's assumptions (on

which passage of the act was based) were not grounded in sound science. Other papers, such as the *Chicago Tribune*, also painted Laughlin's claims as dubious, but the damage was done.[57]

After passage of the act, Laughlin boasted that similar arguments were being considered by politicians in Europe, who were contemplating their own restrictions on immigration. One admirer was Adolf Hitler, who wrote in *Mein Kampf*: "There is today one state in which at least weak beginnings toward a better conception are noticeable. Of course, it is not our model German Republic, but the American Union, in which an effort is made to consult reason at least partially . . . refusing immigration on principle to elements in poor health, by simply excluding certain races from naturalization."[58] In December 1936, the Nazi regime would bestow Laughlin with an honorary doctorate in medicine from Heidelberg University for his work on eugenics and immigration restriction. He was praised as a "successful pioneer of practical eugenics and the far-seeing representative of racial policy in America."[59] The man who had nominated him for the award was Dr. Carl Schneider, professor of racial hygiene at Heidelberg University. Three years later, Schneider would serve as a key scientific advisor to the Nazi euthanasia campaign that resulted in the extermination of thousands of mentally and physically disabled Germans.[60] In 1939, the Nazis expanded their eugenics program to include the extermination of the physically and mentally handicapped.[61] It is noteworthy that the first eugenics laws ever passed were in the US state of Indiana in 1907, when the legislature approved a measure to sterilize mentally handicapped prison inmates. Many other states followed suit. The American model was soon adopted in many European countries, such as Sweden and Denmark, by 1934.[62] During the Nuremberg war crimes trials, Nazi administrators often justified the sterilization of "defectives" by pointing to similar policies in American history—policies that included a preoccupation with racial purity.

INTERRED WITHOUT TRIAL

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which paved the way for the forced removal and internment of an estimated 120,000 Japanese, most of whom were American citizens living on the West Coast. The 1940 census counted nearly 127,000 persons of Japanese birth or heritage on the mainland, 47,000 of whom were not US citizens. They constituted a mere one-tenth of 1 percent of the total population of the forty-eight states of the union.[63] The order did not single out Japanese Americans or any particular group or location but stated in general terms that the War Department had the right to circumvent constitutional freedoms and exclude people from certain areas. It was quickly applied to those Japanese on the Pacific Coast who were deemed to pose a national security risk, given their proximity to crucial war assets there. Military officials argued that they might work to undermine the Allied effort by acting as spies and saboteurs and engaging in fifth column activities, especially in California.[64] In a 1943 newsreel produced by the Office of War Information to explain and justify the relocation, it was noted that many Japanese lived near military installations, shipyards, and oil wells. Furthermore, Japanese fishermen could watch vital ship movements, and farmers could observe the activity on airfields—hence the "necessity" of relocation.[65] In addition to California, EO 9066 applied to the western halves of Washington and Oregon, and a small section of Arizona. Americans of Japanese ancestry living on the East Coast "were left in nervous liberty throughout the war." [66]

There were fifteen assembly centers where people were temporarily held, such as the Santa Anita Racetrack in California, and the Puyallup Fairgrounds in Washington State. They were soon moved to one of ten permanent camps that were in preparation—most in remote western locations such as Gila River in Arizona or Heart Mountain in Wyoming. In the haste and chaos that ensued after being forced to leave on short notice, many Japanese Americans sold their homes, businesses, and

belongings for a fraction of the cost. Designations such as "relocation" and "evacuation" were euphemisms for forced removal. Words like *occupants* and *interred* were just another way of saying "prisoner" and "inmate." While the "assembly centers" had schools, it was far from a semblance of normalcy. The camps were dirty and overcrowded, and there was little privacy. Historian Paul Spickard writes: "No one could go outside the barbed wire except for extreme medical emergencies, and then they went under guard. Friends could visit. . . . The guard towers, machine guns, guard dogs, searchlights, and fences reminded them that they were prisoners. The daily regimentation reinforced that awareness. There was a roll call in the mess hall each morning. At night there was a curfew, and the inmates were counted again."[67]

Japanese Americans were taken into custody *en masse* as military authorities believed that it would take too long to conduct investigations into the loyalty of each subject. Writing in June 1945, when emotions were still running high on both sides of the debate, Yale law professor Eugene Rostow called the decision an "unjustified," "unnecessary," and "mistaken" action that constituted "the worst blow our liberties have sustained in many years."[68] Historian Roger Daniels concurred, describing it as "a major blot on the record of American democracy."[69] Ironically, as the war was fought to preserve freedom, one group was singled out—without evidence—to temporarily lose its freedoms. At the time of the action, there were about 1,100,000 foreign nationals from enemy nations living in the United States. Less than 4 percent were Japanese nationals.[70] While the United States was at war with both Germany and Italy as well, the order did not apply to those of German or Italian ancestry, despite the fact that they were the largest foreign-born ethnic groups in the country. The internments can only be understood within the context of the long-standing debate in America over the racial suitability of Japanese Americans to assimilate into mainstream society and fears that they may dilute the Nordic stock. Indeed, after having been fed a steady diet of anti-Japanese propaganda over the previous decades, during the war, American soldiers were more hostile to

the Japanese than the Germans. According to testing by military psychologists, near 40 percent agreed with the statement: "I would really like to kill a Japanese soldier."[71] Conversely, under 10 percent indicated that they would like to kill a German soldier. Just imagine if the government had applied the same criteria to German and Italian Americans that they had used to intern Japanese residents. Besides being impractical given the sheer numbers of people (in the millions), Paul Spickard observes that there would have been a public outcry because it would have meant interring the likes of New York Yankees outfielder Joe DiMaggio and the mayor of New York City, Fiorello LaGuardia. He writes: "German Americans, in the minds of most White decision makers, were indistinguishable from Anglo-Americans. There was never any thought of interning German Americans, except for the few aliens who had been identified as probably Axis agents."[72] The same was true of Italian Americans. While a small number were arrested because they were believed to pose a threat, and there was initial concern over the loyalty of some who had neglected to file for citizenship, there was never any serious consideration given to interring citizens of Italian heritage.[73]

The issuing of Executive Order 9066 is a remarkable event in American history because the United States is a nation of laws. The order was passed, over the objection of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, who believed it was unnecessary, and Attorney General Francis Biddle, who deemed it unconstitutional. Fear and panic had become the order of the day as anti-Japanese hysteria gripped the nation and threatened to undermine the very foundations of American government. Every society lives by a set of core values. These are the nonnegotiables. In the United States, those tenets are the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Historian Jolie Kelley observes that these rights were temporarily suspended for Japanese Americans, in direct contradiction of the Fifth and Sixth Amendments. The Fifth Amendment states that "no person shall be . . . deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law," while the Sixth Amendment guarantees those accused of crimes "the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury . . . and to be informed of the nature

and cause of the accusation." Kelley writes: "No matter what label is used, the United States government, backed by its citizens, identified one group by race, deemed them dangerous, and ordered them imprisoned without the benefit of due process as defined in the United States Constitution. . . . Neither due process nor a trial were granted to the Japanese who were placed behind barbed wire."[74] It is notable in that there was support for Japanese Americans during the war, among some liberal left-wing groups and religious organizations, based on moral grounds. Throughout the 1930s and early 1940s, there were also growing doubts about the accuracy of claims by advocates of eugenics, although the movement still held some influence.

Many of the country's most influential newspapers backed the relocation program either directly or indirectly by questioning the loyalty of Japanese Americans, including the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*.[75] Several religious publications opposed the internment. While supporting the Allied war effort, Reinhold Niebuhr, publisher of the magazine *Christianity and Crisis*, was critical of the removal policy, likening it to Hitler's Nuremberg Laws, which targeted Jews based solely on racial grounds. He also questioned why those of Japanese descent were being targeted when second-generation German Americans were not. The *Christian Century* viewed the decision as racist and imperialistic. The liberal Catholic weekly the *Commonweal* tried to present a human face by printing photos and biographies of those taken away.[76]

During this period of anti-Japanese hostility, some people referred to Japanese Americans with the denigrating term "American-born Japanese." In February 1942, just weeks before President Roosevelt issued the order to intern those deemed at risk of siding with the motherland, *Los Angeles Times* columnist W. H. Anderson typified the view of the Japanese in America as racially inferior and unable to assimilate. He called for *all* Japanese in America to be interned "while we are at war with their race." "A viper is nonetheless a viper wherever the egg is hatched," he observed.[77]

"So a Japanese-American born of Japanese parents, nurtured upon Japanese traditions . . . living in a transplanted Japanese atmosphere and thoroughly inoculated with Japanese thoughts, Japanese ideas and Japanese ideals . . . almost inevitably and with the rarest exceptions grows up to be a Japanese, not an American, in his thoughts," he wrote. After the bombing, a Japanese American medical student at Creighton University, Kenneth Kurita Jr., was assaulted for his ethnicity. He also noted that Chinese students on campus wore tags that read: "I'm not Jap, I'm Chinese."[78]

Almost immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese Americans were looked upon with suspicion. Rumors questioning the loyalty of the territory's 160,000 residents of Japanese heritage spread across the Hawaii islands. Among the many anti-Japanese rumors to appear in the wake of the attack was the assertion that the body of a downed flier was wearing a ring from local McKinley High School. There were also claims that Japanese residents had poisoned the water supply, and Japanese plantation workers on the island of Oahu had cut stalks of cane sugar in the shape of arrows pointing in the direction of Pearl Harbor, to guide Japanese pilots to their prey. According to another rumor, the day before the attack, local Japanese were tipped off by coded messages appearing in a Honolulu newspaper advertisement. Yet another rumor held that many Japanese residents signaled passing Zero pilots by waving their kimonos at them.[79] Not a single claim was ever verified, yet the stories persisted in the press.

The mistreatment of Japanese Americans during World War II is a testament to the importance of analyzing the root causes underlying modern-day events. The mistreatment of the Japanese—and other so-called Mongolian races in America—was part of a global movement that viewed the world's people through the prism of race. The result was catastrophic: the persecution, scapegoating, and murder of six million European Jews, untold destruction to property, and a race-inspired world war that would leave 60 million people dead. When the Americans dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki that quickly drew World War II to a close, they were putting out a fire of their own creation.[80] The

American eugenics movement led to the legalization and legitimation of race-based immigration restrictions, alienated Japanese leaders, and left a global legacy, especially in Germany. Historian Garland Allen writes that "the race hygiene movement, with its emphasis on racial purity and on the inferiority of Jewish and non-Aryan stocks, provided the ideological foundation for the Holocaust. It is unlikely that the Nazis could have carried out such wide-spread decimation of Jewish people had not the ideology of race-hygiene existed, and claimed a scientific foundation."[81]

Will a mass incarceration based on a person's ethnic background, nationality, or religious beliefs happen again? Sadly, the answer is yes. We need only look to the mass arrests of Latin American migrants at the Mexican border during the spring and summer of 2018, and the strategy of separating children from their families in order to serve as a deterrent. Many of these people were refugees and asylum seekers fleeing violence and political persecution, only to find themselves behind bars and treated like criminals for seeking a better life for their families. There have been several other recent instances in our history when mass incarcerations have nearly happened. During the Cold War, an internal security emergency order was authorized, giving the attorney general the power to detain espionage suspects—most likely Communists—and it even provided for the creation of internment camps, but they were never built. During the Iranian hostage crisis of 1979–1981, President Jimmy Carter tried to collect the names and addresses of all Iranian university students in the country. While these latter two events never led to mass incarcerations and were based on ideological rather than ethnic and racial grounds, it is a reminder that specific groups of people may be targeted in the future.

While it is true that the Japanese internment was unprecedented for the twentieth century, there were similar events during the first half of the nineteenth century when the US government forced tens of thousands of Native Americans to leave their ancestral homelands to live on reservations. The forced removals, often overseen by soldiers with bayo-

nets, resulted in the deaths of an estimated four thousand Cherokee alone between 1838 and 1839, from disease, exhaustion, exposure, and starvation. General Winfield Scott oversaw the exodus as troops were placed throughout Cherokee country, where stockades had been built to hold the Native Americans before their removal. American anthropologist James Mooney describes the heartbreaking scenes that followed:

> From these, squads of troops were sent to search out with rifle and bayonet every small cabin hidden away in the coves or by the sides of mountain streams, to seize and bring in as prisoners all the occupants, however or wherever they might be found. Families at dinner were startled by the sudden gleam of bayonets in the doorway and rose up to be driven with blows and oaths along the weary miles of trail that led to the stockade. Men were seized in their fields or going along the road, women were taken from their wheels and children from their play. In many cases, on turning for one last look as they crossed the ridge, they saw their homes in flames, fired by the lawless rabble that followed on the heels of the soldiers to loot and pillage.[82]

During the Second World War, several high-ranking members of the American military harbored deep prejudices against Japanese Americans. Their views were a reflection of popular attitudes. Even Arizona Senator Henry Ashurst once proclaimed: "Against the Japanese and their civilization I have no evil word, but we are a different race. They will vitiate our population, and once it is vitiated, it is beyond repair."[83] For these officials, the conflict was a race war. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the commander of the Western Defense Force, General John DeWitt, sent a report to Secretary of War Henry Stimpson, urging the "evacuation" of Japanese from the West Coast. He asserted that it was not necessary to make a distinction between Japanese in Japan and Americans of Japanese ancestry because they both were part of the same race. He wrote: "The Japanese race is an enemy race and while many second and third generation Japanese . . . have become 'Americanized,' the racial strains are undiluted."[84] DeWitt viewed all Americans of Japanese ancestry as potential traitors. In April 1943, he would famously declare: "A Jap's a Jap," noting that even if they have American citizenship, "he is still a Japanese and you can't change him."[85] That he was not immediately dismissed from his command is a testament to just how deep and widespread anti-Japanese sentiments were at this time. Seventy-three years later in 2016, Donald Trump echoed DeWitt's sentiments in claiming that among Muslim immigrants to America, "there's no real assimilation" even for "the second and third generation."[86] This is why the mistreatment of Japanese Americans by their fellow citizens is an important lesson to remember, as it is just as relevant today as it was during World War II. As journalist Katelyn Taira observes, "when America forgets its past disgrace, it is likely to commit the same mistake again."[87] DeWitt's views put the military in an awkward position. Just three months earlier, the War Department had announced the formation of an all-volunteer all-Japanese American military unit. The official name was the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, or "RCT." While much was made about the military trusting Japanese Americans to join in the war effort, the reality was very different. Many of those who signed up would instead be assigned to the Military Intelligence Service.[88]

A government report would later conclude that there is not a single known incidence of a Japanese American having been disloyal.[89] While civil-rights advocates filed lawsuits against the government's action, in 1944 the US Supreme Court ruled that the internments were constitutional because the right to protect the country against espionage outweighed individual rights of any group. In 1980, a special committee was formed to assess the validity of the internments, at the behest of President Jimmy Carter. It culminated in the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, after the committee concluded that the actions were the result of long-standing Asian racism and wartime hysteria, not because they were a legitimate national security threat. Congress offered an official apology and granted each camp survivor $20,000 in compensation for having been interred

for up to four years, in bleak camps scattered across the country.[90] In a few instances, overzealous guards shot and killed their captors.

In the wake of Pearl Harbor, the American government released a series of racially charged anti-Japanese propaganda images including pamphlets, films, and posters. Words like *Nip*, *yellow*, and *Jap* came into common usage as Japanese soldiers were depicted as bloodthirsty, slanted-eyed demonic figures devoid of morals.[91] But the most common images of the Japanese were of apes, monkeys, and rats, to emphasize that they were part of the primal Mongolian race that was supposedly lower on the evolutionary scale and a step closer to the animal kingdom.[92] It is the ultimate irony that during the war, Americans and their allies described the Japanese using the same racist imagery that the Germans had reserved for the Jews. There was even concern that the Japanese posed a threat to America's racial purity, just as the Nazis worried about contamination of the Aryan race.[93] While both groups were interred, the major difference between the Nazis and the Americans is that the former had taken their racist beliefs a step further and sought to eliminate, once and for all, those considered inferior.

CHAPTER 7

"THE JEWS ARE SPYING FOR HITLER!"

The Refugee Panic of World War II

The fault, dear Brutus, lies not in our stars, but in ourselves.

—Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*

The present-day fear of "killer refugees" from Syria and other Muslim countries, entering the United States to wreak havoc by committing acts of terrorism is an all-too-familiar theme in American history—and well worth recounting. In 1938, the American government closed its doors to the throngs of German Jews who were desperate to seek sanctuary from their Nazi nightmare. For many, it was tantamount to a death sentence. Propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels was fond of pointing out that while his government was more than willing to let them go, few countries would take them.[1] At the time, the Nazis were purging the Reich of Jews by transporting them to nearby countries. While President Franklin Roosevelt had harsh words for Hitler's treatment of Germany's Jewish population, his words alone were little comfort to those who were fighting for their very survival, and that of their families. The United States even put pressure on European countries *not* to take them in, because they supposedly posed an imminent threat to their national security.[2] This tragic episode took place amid great agitation that many Jewish asylum seekers were working for the Nazis and intent on infiltrating the country. Driven by anti-Semitism, bigotry, and a fear of spies, State Department officials

deliberately created piles of bureaucratic red tape to slow the flow of refugees to a trickle. During the entire period that America was at war with Germany, only 21,000 Jewish refugees were allowed into the country—a mere 10 percent of the overall quota.[3] Put another way, about 200,000 men, women, and children were turned away in their hour of need, without any compelling factual evidence—only fear and prejudice. This dark chapter in our history parallels present-day attempts by the American government to stem the intake of refugees from Muslim countries over concerns that some may be terrorists in disguise. As with the Jewish asylum seekers, there is little to substantiate these claims. One study of terrorist acts by refugees in the United States over the past forty years places the odds of being murdered by one at roughly one in three and a half billion (1 to 3,500,000,000).[4] In each era, a decision was made by government officials to shut out refugees based on emotions instead of facts, and popular perceptions and stereotypes instead of reality.

America's reaction to the appalling events of Nazi Germany was the result of several factors that built up during the 1930s to culminate in a social panic over Jewish refugees. The impact of the Great Depression was still raw. People had vivid memories of the indignity of soup kitchens and the humiliation of standing with hat in hand for hours in unemployment lines. There were concerns that non-Nordic immigrants would take away jobs and dilute the nation's racial purity. Anti-Semitism was rife. National opinion polls showed that the public was overwhelmingly against admitting Jewish immigrants. They were seen as Europe's problem. These factors gave rise to a spy mania that began in 1938 and would persist for the next four years. The fear of spies and saboteurs was the final nail in the coffin for refugees hoping that the Roosevelt administration might loosen its strict immigration policy and let more asylum seekers into the country.

While America was not alone in rejecting the Jews, they were the leading light of democracy at this crucial time, and almost certainly could have saved hundreds of thousands of lives. In viewing these events through the prism of life in the twenty-first century, inaction by the

American government and much of its citizenry may appear incomprehensible. How could the world's wealthiest and most technologically advanced country, with arguably the most sophisticated legal and education systems in the world, allow such a preventable calamity to occur? American officials were well aware of the dire situation for German Jews. Shortly after Hitler took power as chancellor in January 1933, the Nazi regime began a systematic campaign to persecute Jews by passing a series of laws severely impeding their rights. Each year the restrictions grew more severe; and their predicament more desperate. These events were reported in the press for all to see.

THE JEWISH EMERGENCY

Hitler rose to power by blaming the Jews for the harsh terms of the Treaty of Versailles, which officially ended the war with the Allies in June 1919. Having been despised in Europe for centuries, Jews were an ideal target. Since medieval times, when they were blamed for spreading the black death, the Jews had to endure widespread discrimination. Although the Nazis were not the only country discriminating against Jews, what separated them from the rest of Europe and North America were the extreme lengths to which they were willing to go to get rid of them. During the early years of Hitler's chancellery, the American media covered the escalating discrimination and persecution of the Jews in Germany, but rarely on their front pages.[5] It was not until late 1938 that US journalists began to headline the rapidly unfolding events.

In March 1933, the *Chicago Tribune* published a troubling report describing the widespread fear among German Jews after their mistreatment at the hands of the Nazis: "On the nights of March 9 and 10, bands of Nazis throughout Germany carried out wholesale raids to intimidate the opposition, particularly the Jews. . . . Men and women were insulted, slapped [and] punched in the face, hit over the heads with

blackjacks, dragged out of their homes in night clothes and otherwise molested. . . . Innocent Jews . . . are taken off to jail and put to work in a concentration camp where you may stay a year without any charge being brought against you."[6] By summer, America's German ambassador, William Dodd, briefed the president on the deteriorating situation, but Roosevelt said he had no intention of meddling in the internal affairs of another country. Despite knowledge of the human tragedy that was unfolding in the heart of Europe, instead of easing immigration laws to help Jews escape, the administration made them stricter. The American public also opposed admitting more German refugees at this time, even if they sympathized with their plight. In 1933, the Nazis organized a boycott of Jewish shops, while across Germany, troops collected and publicly burned tens of thousands of books by Jewish authors. On July 14, a law was passed calling for the forced sterilization of the handicapped. In 1935, the Nuremberg Laws prohibited marriage or sexual relations between "real" Aryan Germans and "inferior" Jewish Germans. Despite these obvious violations of human rights, after a national debate, America still participated in the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin. The number of participating countries was forty-nine—the most ever. Not long after, the Nazi campaign against the Jews was ramped up. By 1938, Jewish passports were revoked, Jewish doctors could no longer practice medicine, and Jewish lawyers were forbidden from practicing law. On November 9 and 10, hundreds of synagogues were set alight across the country as German firefighters stood idly by and did nothing; their job was to ensure that no German buildings caught fire. By daybreak on the 10th, nearly one hundred Jews had been killed after being indiscriminately beaten, stabbed, and shot, while thousands of businesses and homes were ransacked or burned by enraged citizens, and Nazi Storm Troopers acting on orders from their leaders. Even Jewish hospitals, schools, and cemeteries were looted. The event would become known as the Night of Broken Glass or *Kristallnacht* (literally "night of crystal") on account of the thousands of Jewish shops that had been ransacked and their windows

smashed. Upward of thirty thousand Jewish boys and men were soon rounded up and sent off to concentration camps. Before the year's end, Jews would be forced to hand over all of their business assets.

By late 1938, Germany's Jews were in the midst of the worst humanitarian crisis in history. A slow-motion catastrophe was playing out for the world to read about in the press, and to watch on the newsreels at the local movie theaters. Despite these grim circumstances, the German government was still allowing Jews to leave the country, and in December ten thousand Jewish children were allowed to travel to the relative safety of England in what became known as the *Kindertransport* or "children's transport." There was still time to act. With full knowledge of these and other horrors, the United States steadfastly refused to raise its modest quota of 27,000 immigrants from Germany and Austria, and take in more Jews.[7] It certainly was not because immigrants were pouring into the country, outstripping the capacity to process them. Immigration from eastern Europe was at an all-time low.[8] The Roosevelt administration's anti-refugee intentions were made clear in March 1938, when Germany invaded Austria, generating an additional 190,000 Jewish asylum seekers. Instead of keeping the quotas separate as they had been, the administration chose to combine them into one, eliminating the Austrian allotment.[9] The quota gave the illusion that the Roosevelt administration was doing more than it was, given that 90 percent of the allotment went unfilled during the war years. A poll taken in late November 1938, after the Night of Broken Glass, found an overwhelming 94 percent of Americans expressing sympathy for German Jews. Yet 77 percent were against raising the annual quota and letting more in.[10]

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, America was a hotbed of racism, be it against Mexicans, Chinese, Japanese, Native Americans, African Americans, or Jews. Similar sentiments were common throughout much of the world as people harbored misguided notions about the effect of race on intelligence and behavior. During this period, heredity was destiny. Like the modern-day gradual acceptance of homosexuality,

same-sex marriages, and, most recently, transgender bathrooms, old attitudes would stubbornly persist. By the late 1930s, the eugenics movement—the branch of science devoted to improving the genetic stock of a particular human population, was shifting rapidly away from heredity as the main determinant of a person's life course. Instead, there was an increasing realization that environment was destiny. Led by Columbia University anthropologist Franz Boas, himself a German American, most Western scientists by now had rejected the idea of superior races, but these sentiments stubbornly persisted. It is within this context that the American reaction to the Jewish refugee crisis must be understood. Even though there was no credible evidence for the existence of a large contingent of refugees posing as spies, many Americans were frightened of Jewish asylum seekers. These claims provided a convenient rationale for anti-Semites in the government to shut its gates to the weary and downtrodden of Nazi Germany.[11]

ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE RISE OF EUGENICS

When the Nazis rose to power in the early 1930s, long-standing feelings of anti-Semitism came to the fore as many groups emerged to promote Hitler's views on the Jewish "menace." Foremost among them was the German American Bund or Federation, a group of German-born Americans and German citizens. Members had to pledge that they were of pure Aryan descent and free of any traces of Jewish ancestry.[12] Established in 1936, the group's purpose was to spread the "good news" about the Nazis to America. Their charismatic leader, Fritz Kuhn, openly praised Hitler's extreme racial views. He criticized the president for having too many Jews in his inner circle of advisors, referring to him as "Franklin D. Rosenfeld," and his policies as "the Jew Deal." By 1939, seventy-one local branches were active across the country. Its headquarters were in the German suburb of Yorkville on Manhattan's Upper East Side. The organi-

zation's gatherings had all of the trappings of a Nazi party meeting, complete with Hitler salutes and swastikas. At the height of its popularity in 1939, membership approached thirty thousand. The Bund even operated camps similar to those of Hitler Youth. At its peak, its weekly newspaper had a circulation of ten thousand. The group was disbanded in 1941 after America declared war on Germany.[13]

The most influential pro-Nazi group in America at this time was the Christian Front, which was created by Father Charles Coughlin, a Catholic priest who had an enormous following and was one of the most popular public figures of the decade. Coughlin preached Nazi principles to an audience of 15 million during his Sunday-afternoon radio sermons that were heard throughout North America. Fiercely anti-Semitic, he blamed many of America's social problems on the Jews.[14] One historian boiled down his core message to a single sentence: "Jews were evil, money-hungry conspirators who were destroying every value that Christians held sacred."[15] Such was the level of anti-Semitism in the lead-up to the Second World War that in 1937, New York City's exclusive Colony Club excluded the wife of US Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau for being Jewish. President Roosevelt's wife, Eleanor, resigned from the club in solidarity.[16] Despite an outpouring of sympathy for the Jews during the 1930s, American anti-Semitism remained strong. Even by 1946, after the horrors of the Holocaust were known, most Americans still singled out the Jews as posing the greatest single menace to the country.[17]

In the decade leading up to the war, prominent American scientists working in the fields of biology and genetics enthusiastically supported the Nazi eugenics program. In his study of the movement, anthropologist Robert Sussman documents the close relationship between American eugenicists and their Nazi counterparts. The two sides frequently corresponded, fraternized at conferences, and took encouragement and inspiration from one another. The Nazi eugenics program had the fingerprints of American scientists all over it. For example, Americans pioneered the concept of sterilizing the physically and socially unfit well before the

Nazis. Throughout the 1930s, many American scientists were cheerleaders of Nazi eugenic policies, even though the Jews were suffering immeasurably as a direct result of it. Sussman writes that "American eugenicists had essentially written Nazi ideology and policy" and that America's legislation on immigration and sterilization had been "used as the model for the new Germany."[18] In 1933, when Germany introduced mandatory sterilization laws, prominent American publications such as the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and the *American Journal of Public Health* applauded the action.[19] In 1935, influential eugenicist Harry Laughlin was still promoting his now-discredited ideas about racial contamination. During the early 1920s, he had testified before congressional committees that the "Mongolian races," such as the Japanese and Chinese, posed an imminent threat to America's racial purity. Laughlin's testimony was instrumental in the passage of the landmark 1924 Immigration Act, which restricted the migration of so-called inferior races. He was now testifying to Congress against allowing German Jews to immigrate to the United States, using similar logic: their interbreeding would pollute the "Nordic race." He even authored a 267-page report justifying his call for restrictions, arguing that if more Jews were allowed into the country to reproduce in significant numbers, it would cause America's downfall.[20] As late as 1939, Laughlin called for reduced immigration quotas for Jews, warning that they represented "human dross" (rubbish) that endangered America's racial stock.[21] The Nazi euthanasia program and its later policy to exterminate Jews were both based on a eugenic theory of racial inferiority that was widely circulated and promoted in America and Europe.

In 1936, an extravagant celebration was to be held in Germany to mark the 550th anniversary of Heidelberg University, a leading light in Nazi eugenics research. Many American eugenicists were in attendance. The *New York Times* called for a boycott and labeled as Nazi propaganda stooges anyone who attended. Despite the warning and years of oppressive laws targeting German Jews, representatives from several major American universities sent delegates, including Harvard, Yale, Columbia,

Cornell, Johns Hopkins, Michigan, and Vassar College. Several weeks later, Virginia physician and staunch eugenicist Walter Plecker traveled to Germany and presented a paper on his state's efforts to stop the "spread of the Mongrel races."[22] Plecker was the state's first registrar of vital statistics, a position he held from 1912 to 1946. Even in 1939, the year that Germany was at war with Poland, Britain, and France, American writer Lothrop Stoddard was allowed to visit the Reich for over four months and was granted an audience with Hitler. Stoddard was the author of the bestselling book *The Rising Tide of Color: The Threat Against White World-Supremacy*. Published in 1920, it advanced the notion that only through eugenics could the white races of the world ensure their future survival against the faster-breeding lower races.[23] During his visit, Stoddard noted that at one gathering, without the subject having been previously breached, someone spontaneously raised a toast and called for the death of the Jews. He later wrote that the Jewish question would soon be resolved "by the physical elimination of the Jews themselves from the Third Reich."[24]

Several American businesses and foundations supported Nazi research into eugenics. The Rockefeller Foundation poured in millions between 1922 and 1936, at which point it cut most funding due to the dire political situation in Germany. Industrialist Henry Ford was a major supporter of Hitler and a virulent anti-Semite who published a series of booklets under the title *International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem*. An admirer and reader of Ford's writings, Hitler kept his picture in his office, and in July 1938, he sent two representatives to Dearborn, Michigan, to present him with a special award. *International Jew* was translated into German and became a bestseller in Nazi Germany.[25] Hitler was mesmerized by Ford's writings to the extent that he plagiarized from them. Several passages in *Mein Kampf* are nearly identical to Ford's newspaper articles.[26] In the American edition of *Mein Kampf* published in 1939, the editors cautioned readers: "These reflections are copied, for the most part, from the *Dearborn Independent*, Mr. Henry Ford's newspaper."[27] The

great irony is that an American had essentially written significant tracts of *Mein Kampf*—the Nazi bible—and American scientists were role models for Hitler's sterilization campaign. Both would serve as blueprints for the persecution of the Jews.

TURNING AWAY JEWISH CHILDREN

If there were any lingering doubts as to whether anti-Semitism played a role in the American government turning its back on the plight of Jewish refugees, they were answered in the spring of 1939. That year, a bill was proposed to allow twenty thousand children to escape Nazi Germany and migrate to the United States over two years. It stipulated that the children must be under the age of fourteen.[28] To the astonishment of many, it failed. When Senator Robert Wagner of New York and Representative Edith Rogers of Massachusetts introduced the idea, it won immediate and widespread support from a broad spectrum of Americans: church leaders, academics, the YMCA—even the Boy Scouts. No less than fifty-eight newspapers from thirty-six states wrote positively about the bill, among them were twenty-six from the south where immigration restriction was usually favored.[29] On February 20, the editor of the *Galveston News* in Texas, a state known for restricting immigration, even came out for it: "It is impossible to offer sanctuary in this country to all refugees, however urgent their need. It would dishonor our traditions of humanity and freedom, however, to refuse the small measure of help contemplated by the Wagner resolution."[30] There was no sound rationale for rejecting the bill, save one: anti-Semitism. Those opposing the resolution on the grounds that immigrants would take jobs hardly had a case to object, given the age of the would-be newcomers.

Fear and anti-Semitism eventually killed the bill, as opposition mounted over concerns that its passage would be the first step to the repeal of immigration laws. Public sentiment shifted. A January 1939

Gallup poll found that Americans opposed the children's bill by a margin of two to one.[31] Four months later, a poll by the *Cincinnati Post* asked one thousand women about the issue: nearly eight in ten were opposed.[32] Laura Delano, wife of the immigration commissioner, further enflamed passions by crudely asserting that "20,000 charming children would all too soon grow up into 20,000 ugly adults."[33] Several powerful lobby groups using the battle cry of "America First," including the American Legion and the American Immigration Restrictionist League, pressured Congress into rejecting the bill. Opponents were angry at the lack of non-Jewish children. A writer in the *Nation* argued against the plan because it was "a Jewish bill."[34] Others complained that American children were also in need and should be taken care of first.[35] Ohio Senator Robert Taft made the absurd claim that in taking in the children, the government would be a party to breaking up Jewish families. He concluded that they would be better off staying in Germany![36] The bill died in committee before the summer was out. Ironically, the very next year when the issue of taking in British children was raised to keep them out of harm's way during the bombing of Britain, the Blitz, the administration worked with Congress to quickly approve the acceptance of five thousand. They were promptly shipped over to stay with relatives and host families.[37] Surely, the children of German Jews were in far graver danger. Another revealing event occurred in late 1940 when *Pets* magazine published the photo of a puppy under the heading "I want a home." It asked readers if they would be willing to provide a temporary shelter for a British purebred. Thousands of readers wrote in, offering to help.[38] As the Wagner bill was dying in committee, another drama was playing out just off America's east coast as a cruise ship packed with Jewish refugees sought haven.

NO SAFE HARBOR

In June 1939, the SS *St. Louis* was bound for Cuba with 936 passengers. All but six were Jewish refugees who had bought Cuban landing visas. Since most of the refugees were on waiting lists to enter the United States, they planned to stay in Cuba until being allowed to enter. Their plan was doomed from the start, as Cuban president Federico Laredo Bru signed a decree invalidating the certificates just before the ship left Hamburg. Their documents were now useless, and the passengers were not let off the ship once it reached Havana Harbor.[39] While most newspapers blamed the Cuban government for the crisis, some showed understanding for the Cuban decision because of the country's economic woes. Many American newspaper editors offered possible locations where the refugees could settle. Suggestions included British Guiana, Dutch Guiana, North Rhodesia, the Dominican Republic, and the Philippines.[40] These suggestions were not new. It was well-known that no suitable area and no country existed that was willing to admit Jewish refugees at this point in time. American officials made no attempt to help the refugees that had come agonizingly close to its coast. Their reluctance to act was firmly supported by the American people. Just months earlier, an April 1939 poll found that only 8 percent were willing to expand the quota for European refugees.[41] The saga of the *St. Louis* was used by the Nazis as a propaganda tool to reinforce their claim that the Jews were an inferior race that no one wanted. The *St. Louis* eventually returned to Hamburg. No one knows how many of its passengers later perished in the Holocaust. One small success story was the SS *Quanza*. In September 1940, the Portuguese freighter tried to reach Virginia with eighty-six Jewish refugees on board, after failing to receive permission to dock elsewhere. Only after Eleanor Roosevelt lobbied her husband to intervene were the passengers saved. Franklin Roosevelt circumvented strict visa protocols by issuing an Executive Order allowing the passengers to be admitted into the country, much to the dismay of State Department officials who were incensed by the action.[42]

NEWS OF THE HOLOCAUST EMERGES

In August 1942, an official of the World Jewish Congress in Geneva, Switzerland, received troubling news. Gerhart Riegner had obtained reliable information about a plan by Hitler to exterminate millions of European Jews. His source was a trusted friend who had met with a German businessman who said he had knowledge of the scheme. The confidential source would be identified decades later as industrialist Eduard Schulte. Riegner contacted local law professor Paul Guggenheim, who helped him write an urgent cable to be sent to American and British diplomats in Washington and London.[43] On the morning of August 8, Riegner visited both consulates in Geneva and relayed the information, which was sent by cipher. The original cable to London read as follows: "Received alarming report stating that, in the Fuehrer's Headquarters, a plan has been discussed, and is under consideration, according to which all Jews in countries occupied or controlled by Germany numbering 3 1/2 to 4 millions should, after deportation and concentration in the East, be at one blow exterminated, in order to resolve, once and for all the Jewish question in Europe. Action is reported to be planned for the autumn. Ways of execution are still being discussed including the use of prussic acid." At Guggenheim's urging, the end of the cable was cautiously worded: "We transmit this information with all the necessary reservation, as exactitude cannot be confirmed by us. Our informant is reported to have close connexions with the highest German authorities and his reports are generally reliable. Please inform and consult New York."[44]

Riegner asked that the cable be shared with Rabbi Stephen Wise of the World Jewish Congress in New York, a close confidant of President Roosevelt. But when the US State Department received the cable, they refused to share its contents, citing the "unsubstantiated character of the information."[45] Elbridge Durbrow, the department's assistant chief of eastern European affairs, opposed any move to disclose the information, based on "the fantastic nature of the allegation, and the impossi-

bility of our being of any assistance if such action were taken." Historian Rebecca Erbelding has examined correspondence of State Department officials during this period and observed that they failed to understand "why atrocity information was transmitted, and were such reports true, they believed any assistance to the victims to be impossible."[46] It is clear from their foot-dragging and inaction that key State Department officials were at best apathetic, and almost certainly anti-Semitic. Wise eventually received news of the cable, but not from the Americans; it came from the British Consul. It was not until November 24, 1942, that Wise was given permission to release the information publicly after the US government had become convinced from various sources that the report was true. In reality, one key aspect of the cable was inaccurate: the claim that the mass exterminations were set to begin in autumn 1942. The mass killing of European Jews had been underway for over a year, in a systematic, ongoing process—not as a planned single blow, as stated in the telegram. However, the central premise was correct: the Nazis were intent on exterminating the Jews of Europe.[47]

While the Final Solution was formally approved in January 1942 at a gathering outside of Berlin, the Allies were already aware of the mass slaughter of Jews and other groups that was being perpetrated in Europe. Since summer 1941, and the German invasion of the Soviet Union, intercepts of German radio transmissions detailed "dozens of reports of mass executions" conducted by special mobile death squads of Nazi police and security personnel known as the *SS Einsatzgruppen*.[48] Clearly, by the time of Riegner's cable, the Roosevelt administration was aware that mass atrocities were taking place across Europe at the hands of the Nazis, their only uncertainty was as to the scale.

During 1943, several senior aides to Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau uncovered a pattern in the State Department: it became clear that some officials had been blocking efforts to rescue Jews. On January 16, 1944, FDR received a scathing report from the Treasury office, charging that officials in the State Department not only had been apathetic toward Jews but had been working to actively obstruct Jewish refugees from reaching sanctuary in the United States by denying them visas. Several Treasury aides helped to draft the report, which was written by an aid named Josiah DuBois and approved by Morgenthau. As the highest ranking Jew in the Roosevelt administration, Morgenthau's family had migrated from Germany, making him particularly sympathetic. DuBois, who was not Jewish, did not mince words. He began: "One of the greatest crimes in history, the slaughter of the Jewish people in Europe, is continuing unabated."[49] He went on to charge that State Department officials were complicit in the mass murder of Jews. "I am convinced on the basis of the information which is available to me that certain officials in our State Department, which is charged with carrying out this policy, have been guilty not only of gross procrastination and wilful failure to act, but even of wilful attempts to prevent action from being taken to rescue Jews from Hitler."

The report said that the State Department had placed unnecessary restrictions on Jewish refugees who were trying to obtain visas to enter the country, all under the guise of security. It noted that many asylum seekers were denied entry because they had close relatives in Axis-controlled countries, which stoked fears that they may be coerced to act as spies under the threat of harm to family members. Another complaint was the ludicrous amount of red tape that was required for a refugee to be sponsored, including references from two reputable American citizens. Historian David Wyman would later observe that Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long had constructed a "paper wall" of bureaucracy and red tape designed to keep Jewish immigrants out.[50] DuBois wrote tersely: "It is obvious of course that these restrictions are not essential for security reasons. Thus refugees upon arriving in this country could be placed in internment camps similar to those used for the Japanese on the West Coast and released only after a satisfactory investigation. Furthermore, even if we took these refugees and treated them as prisoners of war it would be better than letting them die."[51]

DuBois was blunt and forceful in his criticism of Long, who was in charge of issuing European visas, whom he claimed had given "false and misleading" information about the refugee crisis, and downplayed the mass killing of Jews. DuBois continued: "State Department officials not only have failed to facilitate the obtaining of information concerning Hitler's plans to exterminate the Jews of Europe but in their official capacity have gone so far as to surreptitiously attempt to stop the obtaining of information concerning the murder of the Jewish population in Europe." DuBois remarked that "the evidence supporting this conclusion is so shocking and so tragic that it is difficult to believe."[52] After digesting the report's findings, Roosevelt moved quickly to create the War Refugee Board on January 22, with the goal being the "immediate rescue and relief of the Jews of Europe and other victims of enemy persecution."

THE FIFTH COLUMN SCARE

Historian Bruce Hodge has examined the actions of Breckinridge Long between 1940 and 1944, when he was in charge of the State Department's visa section. Already an enormously powerful position in the best of times, during the war, the role of the assistant secretary of state was even more important; decisions made by the person in this position often determined who lived and died. After analyzing archives and his personal diary, Hodge concludes that Long was a product of his time, and his apathy was a reflection of the prevailing war hysteria and fears of the fifth column infiltrating the country.[53] The term *fifth column* originated in the 1930s during the Spanish Civil War, when General Emilio Mola, who was in charge of four columns of troops heading for Madrid, proclaimed that he had a fifth column of sympathizers inside the city. The term refers to any group in a country at war who are aiding its enemies.[54] As early as 1940, before America had entered the war, Long was advocating for tougher visa restrictions out of fears that enemy agents were already in

the country. He wrote that America was harboring "thousands of aliens, some of them known to be active German agents, and many illegally in this country."[55] Fifth column fears were heightened in May 1940, with the Tyler Kent affair. A clerk at the US embassy in London, Kent managed to copy hundreds of sensitive documents before his arrest. Fearing that other embassies may have been compromised, Long concluded that Kent's activities "made it apparent that he may have accomplices and confederates or that there may be other cells . . . of another Government representing their interests in our own offices abroad."[56]

Some Americans were hesitant to raise the issue of Jewish refugees, for fear of being viewed as disloyal and unpatriotic.[57] During the late 1930s and early 1940s, a significant portion of American Jews were noncommittal toward German Jewry, despite the steady stream of news reports detailing the hardships they were facing.[58] Historian Joyce Delgado writes that disagreement and disorder "permeated every aspect of the Jewish community's plans to help the victims of Nazism. Some Jewish organizations championed emigration to the United States while others opposed this, fearful that increased Jewish immigration might result in violent anti-Semitic eruptions . . . 20% of the American Jews polled favoured the absolute exclusionist policy."[59] By summer 1940, a Roper poll found that seven in ten Americans believed that a German fifth column was at work in the country.[60] A Gallup survey conducted at about the same time found that 48 percent of Americans were convinced that *their own communities* had been infiltrated.[61] During summer and fall of 1940, several prominent newspapers each published a series of articles on how the fifth column had gained a foothold in America. These included the *New York Journal-American*, the *New York Post*, the *Pittsburgh Press*, and the *New York World-Telegram*. While FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover had earlier urged Americans to be on guard against the fifth column, he had grown so alarmed by the spy panic that by the following year he was warning against the dangers posed by "vigilantes," "fearmongers," and "hysterical mobs" that were threatening American democracy.[62]

In his study of American immigration policy during the war, historian Saul Friedman concurs with Hodge's assessment that national self-interests were more influential than anti-Semitism in solidifying attitudes against Jewish refugees.[63] Well before the war, conspiracy theorists had spread the notion that Hitler was preparing a network of spies to infiltrate the country.[64] This fear grew into a full-fledged spy mania that lasted from 1938 until 1942. Although the threat was real, it was massively inflated. As Interior Secretary Harold Ickes later observed, many citizens had worked themselves into a panic and viewed "every alien as a possible enemy spy or saboteur."[65] Even President Roosevelt contributed to the scare. On May 26, 1940, he told a national radio audience: "Today's threat to our national security is not a matter of military weapons alone. We know of new methods of attack. The Trojan Horse. The Fifth Column that betrays a nation unprepared for treachery. Spies, saboteurs and traitors are the actors in this new tragedy. With all of this, we must and will deal vigorously."[66] By 1941, the Justice Department and the FBI tried to reassure an anxious public that spies were not lurking in every community. It was true that the Nazis had pro-German spies and groups in America—people who supported the idea of a superior Aryan race and the concept of a European Reich. But these groups never formed a spy network, and they did not pose a threat to the extent that the American public liked to believe and that the press attributed to them. Nevertheless, the idea of an underground movement of Nazi spies made good headlines and drew much attention. The media reported on Nazi groups that pledged allegiance to a foreign power and had militaristic training, leaving the impression that they posed an actual threat to the American people, when they did not.[67]

SPIES EVERYWHERE

The impact of the espionage scare on the refugee issue cannot be understated. In his examination of the fifth column scare in the United States during the Second World War, historian Francis MacDonnell found that despite the commotion and concern, "Axis operations in the United States never amounted to much," and what existed was easily countered by the FBI. Nevertheless, by the time the United States had entered the war in December 1941, he stated that "the Fifth Column scare had deeply penetrated the nation's psyche."[68] In one instance during January 1940, the FBI arrested, with great media fanfare, seventeen members of the pro-Nazi Christian Front and charged them with plotting terrorist acts. Hoover claimed that they had intended to "knock off about a dozen congressmen" and "blow up the goddamned Police Department" [of New York City].[69] When their case went to trial, it was so weak that a jury failed to convict a single member. Some of the material entered as evidence against them was laughable. For instance, two of the confiscated weapons included an 1873 Springfield rifle and an old cavalry sword.[70] Of the few cases that were uncovered, most involved amateurs who were easily captured. Another prominent case involved twenty-eight-year-old Herbert Bahr. In June 1942, the German engineer boarded an ocean liner from Sweden and traveled to New York, where he tried to pass himself off as a refugee. While he may have been a respectable engineer, he was a thoroughly incompetent spy. He was quickly caught after his story unraveled and he admitted to spying for Germany after being given $7,000 by the Gestapo and sent to steal industrial secrets. He drew the attention of authorities after he was found to be carrying the entire wad of money in his pants. After a rushed trial, he was sentenced to thirty years in prison.[71]

The motion-picture industry also fed the flames of hysteria. Between 1940 and 1942 alone, Hollywood released no less than seventy-two films dealing with the fifth column.[72] The result was a refugee spy scare that would grip the nation and cloud judgments on the immigration issue

for much of the war. The failure of the US State Department to relax immigration restrictions and accept more Jews was a reflection of the spy mania. *Time* captured the mood, reporting that from Lake George, New York, to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, America had become a nation engulfed by "morbid fears of invisible enemies," as people began to chase "ghosts and phantoms."[73] George Britt's 1940 book, *The Fifth Column Is Here*, further fanned the hysteria, becoming an immediate bestseller. In it he made the sensational claim that over a million enemy agents and subversives were scattered about the country, including Germans, Italians, and Communists.[74] After one fireside chat by Roosevelt about the threat posed from subversives, public anxieties increased to such an extent that FBI offices received nearly three thousand reports of suspicious people in a single day, nearly twice the number for the entire previous year.[75] The rise of the spy mania can be tracked by looking at the number of reports of suspected espionage and subversive acts that were received by the FBI. Between 1933 and 1938, the bureau averaged thirty-five reports per year. In 1939 it shot up to 1,615, and by the following year on a single day in May, an astounding 2,871 complaints were logged. In fact, when the FBI released these figures, J. Edgar Hoover noted that the number of confirmed sabotage cases to that point was "negligible."[76]

HISTORY REPEATS

While America prides itself as a nation of immigrants, it is no small irony that many of the descendants of those who flocked to our shores seeking protection from discrimination and bigotry have shown intolerance toward Islamic and Central American refugees. These hostilities are grounded not in reality but in a fear of the foreign and the unfamiliar. The rise of American Islamophobia and depictions of Muslims as terrorists parallels historical attempts to demonize Catholics as enemies of the state, and Jews as Nazi collaborators. Even before the United States was

founded, the Puritans fled religious persecution in England by voyaging to the Massachusetts Bay Colony to worship in freedom. The persecuted soon became the persecutors, as their leaders began arresting and executing those who were different from them, culminating in the infamous Salem witch trials of 1692. The fundamental problem facing Jewish refugees during World War II was that fear and anti-Semitism were driving the government's refugee policy. Throughout the war, there remained a widespread belief that Jews were an inferior Semitic race that posed a threat to America's security. There is no other way to explain the refusal to accept twenty thousand Jewish children, or why America's wartime German refugee quota was only at 10 percent of capacity. Few events in our history compare to the government's treatment of Jewish refugees during the Second World War. It was a preventable, human-created catastrophe that remains one of our greatest failures. In the second decade of the twenty-first century, history is repeating itself as the American government attempts to block the intake of Islamic refugees who are fleeing war and persecution and Central American asylum seekers who are trying to escape poverty and drug and gang violence. Equally disturbing is the realization that America and much of the world have failed to learn from the lessons of the past. If we fail to act again, history will judge us harshly.